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Link Education With Real Economy, Focus On AI: PM Modi

PM says fulfilling people's aspirations remains government's core resolve

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 9: Narendra Modi on Monday stressed the need to accelerate efforts to connect India's education system with the real-world economy while increasing focus on emerging fields such as artificial intelligence and automation.

Addressing a post-budget webinar attended by stakeholders from various ministries, departments and the private sector, the prime minister said fulfilling the aspirations of the people remains the core resolve of the government.

"Fulfilling the aspirations of the people is not just a subject but the core objective and resolution of this government," Modi said, adding that sectors like education, skill development, health, tourism, sports and culture serve as key mediums to achieve this goal.



He said India must further strengthen the process of linking education with economic opportunities, while giving greater emphasis to areas like AI, automation, the digital economy and design-driven manufacturing.

Highlighting the importance of STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics—the prime minister noted that more girls in the country are showing keen interest in these subjects.

"It is important that no daughter is held back due to lack of opportunities. We must create a research ecosystem where young researchers get ample opportunities to work on new ideas," he said.

Speaking about the healthcare sector, He said the well-being of the Indian commu-

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India Calls For Dialogue To Ease West Asia Tensions, Prioritises Safety Of Citizens

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 9: India on Monday called for de-escalation of tensions in West Asia and urged all parties to return to dialogue and diplomacy, stressing that the safety of nearly one crore Indians living in the region remains the government's top priority.

Making a suo motu statement in Parliament, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar said the government has been closely monitoring the evolving situation and has already evacuated about 67,000 Indians stranded in conflict-affected areas.

Jaishankar emphasised that India stands for peace and the respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states in the region. "India is in favour of peace and urges a return to dialogue and diplomacy. We advocate de-escalation, restraint and ensuring the safety of civilians," he said in identical statements in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.



nity in West Asia, along with national interests such as energy security and trade, remains paramount for the government.

The minister's statement came amid intensifying conflict in the region following a major military attack by the United States and Israel on Iran on February 28, which reportedly

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No Immediate Fuel Price Hike Despite Global Oil Surge

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 9: The government on Monday said there will be no immediate increase in petrol and diesel prices despite international crude oil rates crossing USD 100 per barrel, as authorities assured that adequate fuel stocks are available to meet any contingency.

Top government sources said the Centre is closely monitoring global oil markets but has, for now, decided against revising



retail fuel prices. Oil marketing companies are expected to absorb the current cost pressures arising from the spike in crude prices.

The assurance comes amid escalating tensions in West Asia

that have rattled global markets. As the conflict entered its tenth day, Brent crude – the international benchmark – surged to nearly USD 120 a barrel, around 65 per cent higher than levels recorded before the conflict began, before slightly easing.

Officials said India currently has sufficient stocks of crude oil and finished petroleum products to meet domestic requirements for the next six to eight weeks.

However, as a precautionary step, the government has

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J&K Gears Up for First Digital Census in 2027

CS Atal Dulloo reviews preparations as officials outline two-phase exercise, digital enumeration plan

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 9: Jammu and Kashmir on Monday reviewed preparations for the upcoming Census-2027, which will be conducted digitally for the first time in the country, with Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo chairing a high-level sensitisation meeting of senior officials.

The meeting was attended by Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India Mritunjay Kumar Narayan, administrative secretaries, senior

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Narayan reviews preparations for Census 2027

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 09: Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India, Mritunjay Kumar Narayan today reviewed preparations for the upcoming Census 2027

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445 Challans Issued, 60 Vehicles Seized in Massive Traffic Enforcement Drive Across Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 9: Authorities issued 445 traffic violation notices and seized 60 vehicles for serious offences during a special enforcement drive conducted across the Jammu division to strengthen road safety, officials said on Monday.

The operation was carried out by the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) on the directions of Transport Commissioner J&K Vishesh Paul Mahajan across the districts of Jammu, Udhampur, Samba, Reasi, Rajouri, Poonch, Ramban, Kishtwar and Doda on Sunday.

During the drive, enforcement teams set up 24 checkpoints at key locations and inspected 2,494 vehicles. Officials said 445

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BRO Achieves Winter Breakthrough, Keeps Zojila Pass Open

HT NEWS DESK / KNO

SRINAGAR, MAR 9: In a significant boost to winter connectivity with Ladakh, the strategically important Zojila Pass remained largely operational during the winter season this year, marking a historic achievement in maintaining road access to the high-altitude region.

Officials said the development ensured the continued movement of essential supplies to Kargil and other parts of Ladakh, even as harsh weather



conditions prevailed across the Himalayan region.

Brigadier Rahul Oberoi, Chief Engineer of Project Vijay under the Border Roads Organisation

(BRO), said keeping Zojila open for such a long duration during winter is a major strategic and logistical milestone.

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Jahangir Bukhari Condolences Demise of Veteran Journalist G.N. Shah Noorani

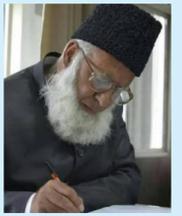
Editor-in-Chief of Daily Headlines Today says Noorani's passing is a great loss to the journalistic fraternity

HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MAR 9: Editor-in-Chief of Daily Headlines Today, Jahangir Bukhari, has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of noted journalist and editor of the Urdu daily Kareani Kashmir, Gh. Nabi Shah Noorani, who passed away yesterday.

In his condolence message,

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J&K to Begin Panchayat Electoral Roll Revision This Month

Draft rolls expected in late March; final lists likely by early May

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 9: The revision of electoral rolls for Panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir is set to begin later this month, with the final electoral rolls expected to be published by early May.

Jammu and Kashmir State Election Commissioner Shantmanu on Monday directed officials to make necessary preparations for the exercise during a high-level meeting convened to review the readiness of the administration.

The meeting was attended by the



divisional commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir divisions, deputy commissioners, commissioners of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Jammu Municipal Corporation, and senior officials of the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department.

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Schools Up to Class 8 Reopen in Kashmir After Winter Break

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 9: Academic activities resumed in all educational institutions across the Kashmir Valley on Monday, with schools up to Class 8 reopening after more than two months of winter vacation.

The reopening of schools up to the 8th standard had been delayed by a week after the government ordered the closure of all schools, colleges and universities as a precautionary measure amid tensions in the Middle East.

The decision followed widespread protests across Jammu and Kashmir after the

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Sakeena Itoo reviews performance, functioning of JKMSCL

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 09: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today emphasized on stricter quality checks and greater accountability in the procurement and supply of medicines and medical equipments for Health facilities across Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that patient safety remains government's top priority.

The Minister made these remarks while chairing a high-level review meeting at Civil Secretariat here to assess the performance and functioning of Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL).

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Health and Medical Education (H&ME), M Raju; MD NHM, Akriti Sagar; MD JKMSCL, Tariq Hussain Ganie; Director SKIMS, Prof M. Ashraf Ganie; Director Finance H&ME, Director Planning H&ME, Director Health Services Kashmir/Jammu, Principals of all GMCs, Principal Dental College Srinagar/Jammu, State Drug Controller, Medical Superintendents of all Hospitals, Chief Medical Officers and other concerned officers attended the meeting, either in person or through video conferencing.

Addressing the officers during the meeting, the Minister underlined the impact of corporation's responsibilities, stating that JKMS-

SCL plays a vital role in public healthcare delivery system by ensuring timely availability of medicines, surgical consumables and medical equipments in government health institutions. "Any compromise in quality, transparency or efficiency will not be tolerated, as it directly affects patient safety and credibility of the public health system", she maintained. While reviewing quality control measures and other protocols, the Minister instructed the MD to maintain constant check on the quality of medicines and equipments procured by the Corporation. "Tighten quality control protocols at every stage, from procurement and testing to storage and final distribution", she said.

The Minister further instructed the corporation to ensure that only certified, safe and standard-compliant medicines and equipment reach government hospitals, warning that any negligence in quality verification will invite strict action.

"Conduct regular quality audits, enhanced laboratory testing and strict vendor scrutiny so that suppliers adhere fully to prescribed standards and contractual obligations", the Minister maintained.

While reviewing procurement procedures, supply chain management, inventory status, vendor performance and existing quality testing mechanisms of the corporation, the Minister directed the MD to take action

against firms/vendors delaying supply of essential drugs or medical equipments. She also sought a detailed report from the Corporation on action taken since 2021 against ill-performing firms/vendors.

Emphasising on timely availability of life saving drugs, the Minister delved on the Corporation to follow protocol of prominent medical institutions regarding Cancer medicines. She directed all medical Superintendents and hospital administrators to submit life saving drug requirements as per that protocol. Highlighting the challenges faced by healthcare institutions in far-flung and rural areas, the Minister instructed JKMSCL to improve supply chain coordina-

tion and maintain adequate buffer stocks of essential medicines and life-saving equipment so that hospital faces no shortages.

She also directed the corporation to strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms and ensure immediate response to complaints from healthcare institutions regarding supply delays or quality issues.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to strengthening healthcare services in Jammu and Kashmir, the Minister said that accessibility, affordability and quality of medicines and medical equipments remain at the core priorities of present Omar Abdullah led Government.

During the meeting, MD JKMSCL gave a detailed presentation

on the functioning of Corporation. Regarding quality testing, he informed the Minister that during year 2024-25, 3390 medicine samples were tested, out of which 32 were declared Not of Standard Quality (NoSQ). In 2025-26, he informed that out of 2806 tested samples, 65 were declared NoSQ with reports of 361 samples still pending. The MD also apprised the Minister about the active rate contracts in JKMSCL and informed that 3478 rate contracts in categories like machinery and equipment, hospital furniture, drugs and vaccines, instruments and others are available. He also informed the Minister about the Drug and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS) portal usage by health institutions across JK&K.

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Link Education.....

Modi said initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat and the establishment of health and wellness centres have strengthened health services, especially in rural areas.

Referring to the growing "care economy", he said the demand for trained caregivers will increase as the senior citizen population rises and called for the development of new training models to meet future requirements.

The prime minister also highlighted the importance of youth in nation-building, saying the country's "youth power" becomes true "national power" only when it is healthy, disciplined and confident.

He added that initiatives like Khelo India have infused new energy into the sports ecosystem, with sports infrastructure being strengthened across the country. (With inputs from PTI)

India Calls.....

killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. According to officials, the conflict has so far claimed at least 1,230 lives in Iran, 397 in Lebanon and 11 in Israel.

Jaishankar said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is closely monitoring developments and has spoken to several leaders in West Asia, receiving assurances that the safety of the Indian community would remain a priority.

He added that India has maintained regular diplomatic contacts with concerned countries. While leadership-level engagement with Iran remains difficult due to the situation, Jaishankar said he had spoken with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on February 28 and March 5 and would continue such interactions.

The minister also defended the government's decision to allow the Iranian vessel IRIS LAVAN to dock at Kochi on humanitarian grounds after Tehran sought permission for three ships in the region to access Indian ports. The ship docked on March 4 and its crew is currently being accommodated in Indian naval facilities.

Opposition members protested in both Houses of Parliament as Jaishankar began his statement, demanding a detailed discussion on the situation in West Asia. The Opposition staged a walkout in the Rajya Sabha and created noisy scenes in the Lok Sabha, leading to a brief adjournment of the House.

Jaishankar noted that the Gulf region remains crucial for India due to the presence of a large Indian diaspora and its importance to the country's energy security and trade, which accounts for nearly USD 200 billion in commerce.

He also said attacks on merchant shipping in the region have affected Indian seafarers, with casualties reported and one Indian mariner still missing.

The Ministry of External Affairs has set up a dedicated control room to monitor the situation and assist Indian nationals, while Indian embassies in the region continue issuing advisories urging citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Iran and remain in contact with diplomatic missions.

No Immediate.....

increased the minimum waiting period for booking a domestic LPG refill from 21 days to 25 days to prevent hoarding and ensure equitable distribution of cylinders.

Sources said an average household consumes seven to eight LPG cylinders of 14.2 kg in a year and typically does not require a refill in less than six weeks. The change in booking rules is aimed at preventing artificial shortages even though oil companies currently maintain adequate LPG supplies.

The ongoing Middle East conflict, which began after the United States and Israel carried out strikes on Iran on February 28 followed by retaliatory attacks from Tehran, has disrupted energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz — a vital shipping route for global oil and gas supplies.

Nearly 40-50 per cent of India's crude oil imports and about 85-90 per cent of its LPG shipments from Gulf nations pass through the narrow corridor, making the situation particularly sensitive for India's energy security.

Officials said that while crude oil can be sourced from alternative suppliers such as Russia, replacing LPG supplies could take longer since other major sources are located in the United States and Canada.

To ensure uninterrupted supplies, refineries have been directed to maximise LPG production and avoid diverting streams meant for cooking gas towards petrochemical manufacturing.

Sources maintained that the supply situation for petrol and diesel remains "very comfortable", with petrol pumps, CNG stations and piped natural gas networks functioning normally across the country.

India imports nearly 88 per cent of its crude oil requirement and roughly half of its natural gas demand. Higher global oil prices usually translate into a larger import bill and potential inflationary pressures.

Retail petrol and diesel prices in the country have largely remained frozen since April 2022, with state-run oil marketing companies absorbing losses when crude prices rise and recovering margins when global rates soften.

Sources said the government intends to continue shielding consumers under its calibrated pricing approach unless there is an exceptionally sharp and sustained spike in international crude prices.

J&K Gears.....

officers of the Union Territory administration, and officials from divisional and district administrations.

Addressing the gathering, Dulloo stressed the need for coordinated and proactive preparations to ensure the smooth conduct of the census across the Union Territory. He said all departments must work in close coordination and extend full support to the census machinery so that the exercise is carried out in a systematic, transparent and efficient manner.

He also highlighted the importance of public awareness and outreach, urging citizens to actively participate in the census process and provide accurate information. According to him, effective cooperation between the administration and the public is essential for ensuring the credibility and completeness of the data collected.

Speaking on the occasion, Narayan expressed satisfaction over the level of preparedness in Jammu and Kashmir and said the discussions reflected that census operations in both phases would be carried out diligently within the prescribed timelines.

He emphasised that census data plays a crucial role in determining the share of states and Union Territories in Finance Commission allocations and various development programmes, besides serving as a key dataset for policy planning and development initiatives for the next decade.

During the session, Director Census Operations for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Amit Sharma gave a detailed presentation on the strategy, methodology and digital systems planned for conducting the census in the Union Territory.

Officials informed that Census-2027 will be conducted in two phases. The first phase will involve House Listing Operations followed by the second phase of Population Enumeration.

Under the training plan, National Trainers and Master Trainers will train 614 Field Trainers, who will subsequently train nearly 30,871 enumerators and supervisors across Jammu and Kashmir. These field functionaries will undergo specialised three-day training programmes between May 7 and May 25, 2026.

Phase-I will begin with a 15-day self-enumeration window from May 17 to May 31, 2026, allowing citizens to submit their details digitally. This will be followed by a

month-long house-to-house enumeration in June 2026 focusing on housing conditions, household amenities and infrastructure.

Considering the region's climatic conditions, Phase-II of Population Enumeration will begin in September 2026 in snow-bound areas and in February 2027 in non-snow-bound regions.

Officials said the government has sanctioned an honorarium of 25,000 each for enumerators and supervisors, while the census reference date has been fixed as March 1, 2027 for most areas and October 1, 2026 for snow-bound regions.

The upcoming census will capture detailed data on housing conditions, assets, language, literacy, education, economic activity and migration patterns, which will guide future policy planning and development initiatives across the country.

Narayan reviews.....

during his exclusive visit to the Directorate of Census Operations Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh at Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

The visit was focused on preparation and readiness of the Directorate of Census for conducting the processes and training workshops in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh for smooth conduct of the Census of India 2027.

Director Census Operations, Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh, Amit Sharma, apprised the Registrar General and Commissioner Census, India of the working and functioning of the office.

Mritunjay Kumar Narayan interacted with the senior officials and staff of the Directorate office and enquired about their roles and functions. He emphasized the significance of conducting the process of Census with utmost focus, vigilance and diligence with meticulous planning and robust mechanisms in place. He also highlighted the importance of training of field officials who will visit each district during the Census 2027.

Discussion was held on the workshops for awareness and publicity of Census for connecting the general masses with the national exercise that becomes the basis of several development and social planning at the National level.

Earlier, the Registrar General and Census Commissioner inaugurated Census e-library, medical room and canteen facility for the welfare of Census employees.

Several officers and officials of the Directorate of Census Operations Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh, staff were present during the visit.

445 Challans.....

challans were issued for violations of the Motor Vehicles Act, while 60 vehicles were seized for serious offences.

Authorities also recommended the suspension of 64 driving licences and 20 registration certificates for grave violations that pose a threat to road safety. A total penalty of 18.18 lakh was realised during the drive.

Officials said the checks uncovered multiple violations including overloading, driving without valid documents, permit violations, over-speeding and dangerous driving. They added that such enforcement drives will continue across the region to ensure strict compliance with traffic regulations and to enhance road safety.

BRO Achieves.....

"Maintaining traffic movement over the pass during winter ensured the continued supply of essential commodities to Kargil and other areas of Ladakh during the holy month of Ramadan," he said.

Oberoi noted that about a decade ago the pass used to remain closed for nearly five months during winter, effectively isolating Ladakh from the rest of the country. However, the induction of modern technology, advanced snow-clearance machinery and improved operational planning has enabled the BRO to significantly extend the operational window of the route.

Despite heavy snowfall and frequent avalanche threats this winter, the Srinagar-Leh Highway remained closed for only four days, he added.

Highlighting the strategic importance of the route, Oberoi said Ladakh has only two major road links with the rest of India—the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh Highway via Zojila and the Manali-Leh Highway. Keeping at least one of these axes operational is crucial to ensure uninterrupted movement of supplies and personnel to the region.

Jahangir Bukhari.....

Bukhari described the late Noorani as a dedicated journalist who served the profession with honesty, integrity and commitment. He said Noorani's contribution to Urdu journalism and his role in highlighting public issues will always be remembered.

Bukhari said the passing of Noorani has created a void in the media fraternity that will be difficult to fill. He extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, friends and colleagues, praying for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to bear the irreparable loss.

J&K to Begin.....

Sources said the revision process is likely to commence in the fourth week of March with the publication of draft electoral rolls across the Union Territory. The exercise is expected to conclude with the publication of final electoral rolls in the first or second week of May.

Officials said electoral rolls for Urban Local Bodies will be available only after the completion of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Assembly electoral rolls. The voter lists used for municipal polls are derived from Assembly rolls, which have not been revised since 2021.

The Special Intensive Revision exercise is expected to begin in April following a communication from the Election Commission of India to the Chief Electoral Officers of states and

Union Territories.

The tenure of the first two tiers of the Panchayati Raj system—Panchayats and Block Development Councils—ended on January 9, 2024, while the term of the third tier, District Development Councils, concluded on February 24, 2026. The tenure of elected Urban Local Bodies in Jammu and Kashmir had ended earlier in October-November 2023.

Schools Up to.....

reported killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in joint US-Israeli strikes.

Officials said that schools for Classes 9 to 12 had already reopened on February 23 in the Kashmir Division and winter zones of Jammu Division following a winter break of over 70 days. The government had earlier announced winter vacations for students of Class 9 and above from December 11, 2025 to February 22, 2026.

The School Education Department (SED) had on November 25 announced winter vacations in a phased manner for the Kashmir Division and winter zones of Jammu. As per the order, vacations for pre-primary classes (Balvatika) were scheduled from November 26 to February 28, while middle classes up to Class 8 observed winter break from December 1 to February 28.

The department had also directed teaching staff to remain available for academic activities during the vacation period and report to their respective schools on February 20 to make arrangements for reopening.

Meanwhile, colleges in the Kashmir Valley had resumed academic activities earlier on February 16 after a 52-day winter vacation. The Higher Education Department had announced winter vacations for degree colleges in the Kashmir Division and winter zones of Jammu from December 24, 2025 to February 14, 2026.



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J&K eyes AI to transform governance and citizen services

CS engages key stakeholders to chart future roadmap

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 09: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo today held detailed deliberations with stakeholders on the adoption and expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in governance and delivery of public services across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting besides the concerned Administrative Secretaries was attended by the Director, Indian Institute of Technology Jammu, CEO, India AI Mission; Special Director General, Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N), and other concerned officers of the Union Territory.

The meeting held detailed discussions on the potential of AI-based interventions in a range of citizen-centric governance sectors and explored ways to establish a robust institutional and technological framework for accelerating such initiatives in the UT. Participants deliberated on how advanced technologies could improve administrative efficiency, decision-making and accessibility of government services for citizens.

Speaking during the meeting, the Chief Secretary emphasized that Artificial Intelligence offers enormous potential to transform governance and enhance the quality and reach of public

services across Jammu and Kashmir. He urged all departments to proactively identify areas where AI-driven solutions could improve efficiency, transparency and outcomes in their respective sectors.

He stressed the importance of strong coordination between the UT administration, the Union Ministry concerned, IIT Jammu, BISAG-N and other technical institutions to ensure timely and effective implementation of all these AI-enabled initiatives.

To provide strategic direction and oversight, the Chief Secretary proposed the constitution of a high-level Steering Committee to be chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department. The committee would include representatives from IIT Jammu, BISAG-N with Secretary Information Technology and Inspector General of Police Jammu being the members of this committee and would guide the implementation of AI projects while addressing operational bottlenecks.

The Chief Secretary also directed the Information Technology Department to establish a dedicated anchoring mechanism within the department to coordinate AI-related initiatives with different departments. He stressed the need for identifying and deploying specialized human resources to support this institutional framework



and ensure effective on-ground implementation.

Highlighting the importance of capacity building, he underscored the need for earlier establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Emerging Technologies in Jammu and Kashmir and setting up Data Innovation Labs in skill development institutions. He maintained that such facilities would play a key role in preparing the region for future technological challenges and creating a skilled workforce in data science and AI-related domains.

The Chief Secretary further called upon the School Education Department to explore the possibility of introducing basic introductory courses on Artificial Intelligence at the secondary school level. He also suggested that AI-related skill programmes could be incorporated under Mission YUVA to enable youth to acquire emerging technology skills and improve their employment prospects.

During the meeting, Administrative Secretaries from various departments shared their perspectives on the use of AI-enabled tools to improve efficiency, data analysis, service delivery and decision-making within their sectors.

CEO of the India AI Mission, Abhishek Singh, suggested the creation of a core AI team within the Union Territory to guide the mission's implementation locally. He noted that the national mission has been mandated to catalyse AI-driven initiatives across the country and assured full support to Jammu and Kashmir for its AI-related programmes.

He further recommended that the Union Territory may initially identify five priority sectors for pilot-based AI implementation. Once these projects demonstrate success, additional initiatives could be gradually scaled up based on the expertise developed. He also emphasized the importance of establishing the proposed Centre

of Excellence and Data Labs to develop a strong pool of local talent capable of driving AI innovation in the region.

Director, Indian Institute of Technology Jammu, Prof Manoj Gaur, described the proposed initiatives as timely and significant. He stated that the institute possesses strong research capabilities in the area of disaster mitigation, risk reduction which could be leveraged to support AI-driven governance solutions in Jammu and Kashmir. He also highlighted the institute's work on developing data pipelines in local languages, which could further strengthen AI applications in the region.

Special Director General, BISAG-N, Vinay Thakur, assured full support from the organisation in rolling out AI-based solutions for governance in Jammu and Kashmir. He also stressed the importance of establishing a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) to facilitate smooth implementation and

monitoring of these initiatives across departments.

Inspector General of Police Jammu, Bhim Sen Tuti, informed the meeting that the police department as per the earlier directions had developed an AI-based tool aimed at improving investigation and litigation processes. He said that the project is currently at an advanced stage and would significantly enhance operational efficiency. Notably, the tool is being designed to function entirely in-house without the need for internet connectivity, he apprised the meeting.

Earlier, Secretary Information Technology, Dr Piyush Singla, briefed the meeting about the progress made by the Union Territory in leveraging AI for governance. He informed that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) worth 20 Cr for establishing a Centre of Excellence in Emerging Technologies has been jointly prepared by the IT Department and Indian IIT, Jammu and submitted to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for approval. The proposed centre is expected to be set up under a Centre-UT funding pattern of 90:10.

He further stated that eight additional Data Innovation Labs are proposed to be established with central funding in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across the Union Territory. These labs are expected to play

a pivotal role in strengthening the AI and data ecosystem and building grassroots-level capacity in data science.

The Secretary also highlighted the need for establishing a dedicated Jammu and Kashmir AI Mission (JK AIM) to coordinate AI-related initiatives across departments in a structured manner.

During the meeting, several potential AI applications across governance sectors were identified, including AI-based disaster risk and early warning systems, agriculture and horticulture advisory platforms, health triage and disease surveillance tools, office workflow automation, AI-supported learning systems in education, land asset and infrastructure monitoring, youth employment and skill-matching platforms, and AI-based grievance redressal systems along with a dozen of initiatives across different departments.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary also launched the inaugural issue of 'Digital Dhara', a bi-monthly magazine of the Information Technology Department. The publication aims to promote digital awareness and transparency while documenting key milestones in IT governance in Jammu and Kashmir. It will also highlight emerging technological trends and innovations to inform and engage readers across the UT on regular basis from today.

Welcome Day Commemorated at Government Middle School Chountipora

JAWAID IQBAL

CHOUNTIPORA, MAR 09: Following the culmination of the winter recess, the students of Government Middle School Chountipora reassembled within the scholastic precincts of the institution today. Upon their arrival, they were cordially and graciously received by the members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, who extended a warm and affectionate welcome to mark the recommencement of the academic session.

In order to make the occasion memorable, the students were greeted with garlands, toffees, dates, and other tokens of affection, symbolizing the institution's commitment to nurturing a welcoming and student-friendly environment. This gesture filled the young learners with joy and renewed motivation as they resumed their academic journey.

The school campus reverberated with an atmo-



sphere of delight and rejuvenated enthusiasm as the pupils recommenced their educational pursuits with remarkable zeal and intellectual curiosity. The faculty members greeted the learners with encouraging words and exhorted them to dedicate themselves earnestly to their studies while upholding the principles of discipline, diligence, and moral integrity throughout the academic session.

On this auspicious occasion, the Worthy Chief Education Officer Kupwara, accompanied by the Deputy Chief Education Officer and the Zonal Education Officer Mawar, conveyed their felicitations and best wishes to the students for a productive and successful academic year ahead. They further advised the students to pursue their aspirations with perseverance, commitment, and an unwavering spirit of hard work so as to accomplish their academic and personal ambitions.

The officers also hailed and appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Headmaster, Nazir Ahmad Bhat Sahab, for his commendable leadership and for fostering a vibrant, welcoming, and academically enriching environment within the institution.

May the Almighty Allah bless all the students with knowledge, wisdom, success, and a bright and prosperous future.

KU crowned national champion in 17th youth parliament competition

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 09: The University of Kashmir (KU) has achieved a remarkable national distinction by emerging as the Champion in the 17th National Youth Parliament Competition, organised by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Parliament of India, New Delhi.

The prestigious competition witnessed participation from 59 universities across the country at the group level. After rigorous rounds, eight premier universities from different zones qualified for the national stage. In the final round of the Group Level National Youth Parliament Competition, the KU outperformed all participating teams and emerged as the overall champion, bringing laurels to the institution and the



region. Congratulating the students, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan said, "This outstanding achievement reflects the intellectual strength, awareness and democratic spirit of our students. Their performance shows that the youth of Kashmir are capable of engaging meaningfully with national institutions and parli-

mentary traditions. The University is proud of this historic accomplishment."

Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal described the victory as a moment of pride for the institution and the region. He said, "Winning this prestigious national competition among leading universities of the country is a testament to the tal-

ent, discipline and commitment of our students."

As part of the recognition, 55 students from the varsity will now be invited by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to attend the prize distribution ceremony to be held within the Parliament of India in New Delhi. During the ceremony, the KU team will also

present a re-performance of their Youth Parliament session in the presence of senior officials and dignitaries of the country.

Dean Students Welfare KU, Prof. Pervez Ahmed also lauded the dedication of the students and the mentor.

The mentor of the team, Dr. Shahid Ali Khan, Cultural Officer DSW KU and coordinator of the University Youth Parliament initiative, expressed deep pride in the students' achievement.

The achievement marks a significant milestone in the University's youth engagement and leadership initiatives, further strengthening its presence in national academic and parliamentary platforms. It also reflects the growing confidence, awareness, and leadership potential among the youth of the University.

Poet Abdul Quddir Kundria Meets DIG Shiv Kumar Sharma

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 9: Eminent Dogri and Urdu poet Abdul Quddir Kundria today met Shiv Kumar Sharma, IPS, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range, at his office chamber in Jammu. During the meeting, Kundria presented and discussed his recently published Dogri poetry book "Gottey Ge Gottey."

The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere where various social issues were discussed, particularly the growing menace of drug abuse and its adverse impact on the younger generation. Kundria emphasized that literature and culture have always played an important role in guiding society and creating awareness among the masses.

He informed the DIG that the police department has been organizing several programmes in different areas of the Jammu Division to spread awareness against drug abuse, which has helped to a considerable extent in controlling the

problem. However, he suggested that more such initiatives should be carried forward in the Jammu-Samba-Kathua, Udhampur, and Reasi regions with the support of the police department.

Kundria proposed that literary programmes, mushairas, poetry recitations, and cultural events could be organized in various parts of the region in collaboration with the police department to further sensitize the public about the harmful effects of drugs and other social evils. He said that literary programmes are an effective medium to communicate social messages, as poetry and literature directly influence the hearts and minds of people.

He also mentioned that his book "Gottey Ge Gottey" contains several poems highlighting the issue of drug abuse and portraying its devastating effects on families and society. Through these poems, he has tried to reflect the pain and destruction caused by addiction and has urged the youth to stay away from drugs.

DIG Shiv Kumar Sharma appreciated Kundria's literary contribution and said that the fight against drug abuse is not only the responsibility of the police or government institutions but requires collective efforts from all sections of society. He added that the participation of intellectuals, writers, poets, and artists can further strengthen the campaign against drugs.

He further stated that literary and cultural activities can serve as an effective platform to reach the younger generation and spread awareness about the dangers of drug addiction. He welcomed Kundria's suggestion and assured that such programmes would be positively considered and continued in the future to help keep the youth away from this menace.

Abdul Quddir Kundria reaffirmed his commitment to using literature and poetry as a means to create social awareness and expressed hope that literary and cultural initiatives would help guide the youth away from drugs and contribute to building a healthier society.

Schools reopen after winter break across Ganderbal

HT NEWS NETWORK

GGANDERBAL, MAR 03: A warm and vibrant atmosphere marked the reopening of schools across the district as students were accorded an enthusiastic welcome on the first day after the winter vacation. School campuses came alive with joy and excitement as gates were beautifully decorated and teachers along with Heads of Institutions (HOIs) warmly received the students with welcoming gestures, creating a festive and encouraging environment for the beginning of the new academic session. On the occasion, the Chief Education Officer Ganderbal along with Zonal Education Officer Kangan visited several institutions to share the joy of the reopening with students and staff. During his visits to **BMS Kangan, BMS Barwalla and BMS Preng**, the officer interacted with students and teachers and distributed sweets and toffees among the children, adding to the cheerful spirit of the day. Later on the officer also visited various schools of zone Tullamulla including GMS Gund Roshan and PS Lati Gund Roshan.

While addressing the staff, the Chief Education Officer highlighted the pivotal role of teachers and Heads of Institutions in shaping the academic environment of schools and ensuring quality education. He emphasized that the beginning of the new academic session provides an important opportunity to renew commitment towards academic excellence and student development. The officer further urged all teachers and school heads to strictly follow the Academic Planner issued by the Directorate of School Education and ensure its effective implementation at the ground level so that academic activities proceed in a systematic and result-oriented manner throughout the session.

DC Budgam visits District Hospital; Inspects Blood Bank, Oxygen Plant

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 9: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today conducted an extensive visit to District Hospital (DH) Budgam to inspect its functioning, assess ongoing infrastructure development projects, and review the progress of critical facilities aimed at improving healthcare services in the district.

During the visit, the DC inspected the upgraded Blood Bank, which has been expanded to a second storey. He was apprised that all necessary machinery and equipment for conducting blood tests and storage of blood, including advanced diagnostic tools, have been installed. The DC emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Blood Bank operates efficiently to meet the critical healthcare needs of the residents.

He also reviewed the functioning of the Oxygen Plant at DH Budgam and interacted with the staff to assess its operational readiness. He directed the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted oxygen supply to cater to emergency requirements and patient care.

During his visit, the DC interacted with hospital staff and enquired about the availability of healthcare services, infrastructure, and maintenance. He also interacted with the patients and attendants. He stressed the need for cleanliness and sanitation in and around the hospital premises and called for



maintaining a patient-friendly environment. Later, the DC visited the under-construction 125-Bedded new District Hospital and 100-Bedded Critical Care Unit at Reshipora Budgam.

During the inspection, the DC reviewed various components of the under-construction health infrastructure and took stock of the pace and quality of the work. He was informed that the

structural skeleton of the building has been completed and the structural steel truss work is about 95 percent complete. Overall, nearly 65 percent of the project has been physically completed so far. The

project is expected to be completed by March 2027, while the target for substantial completion is December 2026.

The DC directed the executing agencies to expedite the pace of work while ensuring quality standards and compliance with accessibility norms so that the facility benefits patients and attendants once completed.

During the visit, the DC stated that the District Administration will conduct weekly monitoring of the construction works to ensure that the new hospital is completed within the stipulated timeframe and dedicated to the public at the earliest. He also remarked that the new District Hospital is a long-standing requirement of the people of Budgam as the existing hospital lacks adequate space to cater to the growing healthcare needs of the district. He said the new facility will significantly strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve patient care services in the district.

The DC reiterated that the District Administration remains committed to improving healthcare delivery and directed all concerned departments to ensure the timely completion of the ongoing projects.

Senior officials including the Chief Planning Officer Budgam, Chief Medical Officer Budgam, Executive Engineer R&B Budgam, Tehsildar Budgam and representatives from executing agencies accompanied the DC during the inspection.

DC Kulgam reviews NABARD projects under RIDF Sector

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MARCH 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today chaired a workshop cum review meeting of NABARD projects, funded under Rural Infrastructure Infrastructure Fund (RIDF) in the district.

The programme was attended by JDP, Malik Suhail; ACR, Riyaz Ahmad Shah; ACD, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar; ADDM NABARD, District Sectoral Officers and Executive Engineers of R&B, Jal Shakti, IFC, KPDCI.

The workshop aimed at sensitizing all the development departments of the district regarding the submission of projects by various departments under various sectors.

Giving a detailed presentation, DDM NABARD, Rouf Zargar outlining the operational guidelines, funding modalities, and strategic priorities of the RIDF scheme.



The presentation highlighted the 39 eligible activities categorized under three broad sectors, Agriculture and related sectors including minor irrigation, watershed development, cold storage, and flood protection, the Social Sector (covering rural drinking water, public health institutions, and anganwadi centers), and Rural Connectivity (focusing on the construction of rural roads and bridges). Presentation also covered the Information regarding DPR formulation, fund flow process and operational process involved in sanctioning the projects.

The DC was informed that a total of 112 projects with total outlay of Rs 349.63 Crore was sanctioned by NABARD in district since the inception out of which there are currently 22 ongoing projects with total outlay of Rs 106.12 Cr, under different sectors.

The DC undertook the detailed component wise review of each project, discussing the physical and financial progress of works.

He laid emphasis on the Executive Engineers to complete the projects under timelines fixed by NABARD. Executing agencies were instructed to speed up the slow moving projects and expedite submission of Utilization Certificates (UCs) and PCRs for completed projects.

ADC Handwara visits Schools, inspects facilities on Reopening Day

HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, MARCH 09: Schools across Sub-Division Handwara reopened today after three-month-long winter vacation, bringing renewed enthusiasm among students and teachers as academic activities resumed.

On the occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, accompanied by Zonal Education officer (ZEO) Handwara, conducted visits to various educational institutions to inspect the arrangements and welcome students back to their classrooms.



During his visit, the ADC interacted with students and teachers and expressed happiness over the cheerful atmosphere as students resumed their studies after the winter break. He reviewed the facilities available in the schools and directed the concerned heads to ensure cleanliness, and availability of basic amenities so that students can pursue their studies in a comfortable environment. The ADC also encouraged students to focus on their education and make the best use of the academic session. He appreciated the efforts of the school administration and teachers for maintaining discipline and ensuring a smooth reopening of schools.

Students expressed excitement and joy at meeting their classmates and teachers after the long winter break, marking a fresh start to the academic activities in the Sub-Division.

JKEDI launches 2nd Batch of ESDP under RAMP at Pulwama

HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MARCH 09: Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Pulwama, today launched the 2nd batch of the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Program (ESDP) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme at the Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Pulwama.

The program was formally inaugurated by Range Officer (South Kashmir) JKEDI, Nafia Nazir, in presence of District Nodal Officer (DNO), JKEDI Pulwama Raiyees Manzoor, Superintendent, ITI Pulwama, Gh Nabi Shah, and other senior officials from JKEDI.

Speaking on the occasion, Nafia Nazir outlined the key objectives of the RAMP scheme, emphasizing its vital role in nurturing grassroots-level



entrepreneurship across Jammu and Kashmir. She highlighted how such targeted program empower aspiring entrepreneurs with essential tools to build sustainable businesses.

Furthermore, the District Nodal Officer, commended the initiative

and stressed the critical importance of entrepreneurship in addressing unemployment challenges and fostering a self-reliant economy in the region.

The RAMP-funded ESDP is designed to equip prospective entrepreneurs with comprehensive skills in business development, financial planning, market awareness, and other foundational areas necessary for launching and successfully managing their ventures. The program forms part of a broader effort by JKEDI, in collaboration with the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME), Government of India, to promote youth entrepreneurship and strengthen the MSME ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

The event saw enthusiastic participation of 32 trainees, who expressed keen interest in the training modules.

MC Dooru empowers SHG Women as Community Mobilizers to strengthen Swachh Bharat Mission

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MARCH 09: Municipal Committee Dooru, Verinag has successfully engaged eight members from various Self-Help Groups (SHGs) as Community Mobilizers under the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) component of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0. The engagement process was conducted in accordance with the guidelines and directions issued by the Mission Directorate, SBM (U) J&K, and followed a transparent selection procedure that included personal interviews, verification of credentials, and execution of formal contractual agreements with the selected SHG members. This initiative is aimed at strengthening community participation at the grassroots level and enhancing public awareness regarding sanitation, solid waste

management, hygiene practices, and source segregation of waste within the municipal limits. The engaged Community Mobilizers will undertake door-to-door awareness campaigns, community outreach programmes, and public engagement activities to actively promote the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) 2.0.

The engagement of SHG members reflects the Government's commitment to empowering women-led community institutions, generating livelihood opportunities, and fostering a sense of community ownership in sanitation and cleanliness initiatives.

Through this initiative, Municipal Committee Dooru-Verinag seeks to further strengthen public participation in maintaining a clean, hygienic, and sustainable urban environment.

3-day Nasha Mukta Bharat training program under NMBA commences at Shopian

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MARCH 09: A three-day training programme organised by District Surveillance Unit, Shopian under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) commenced today at Shopian.

The programme was conducted on the directions of Director, Health Services Kashmir and was inaugurated by Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Shopian, Dr. Arshid Hussain Tak. The programme witnessed participation from lecturers, teachers of various Higher/Secondary Schools and members of NRLM Self Help Groups.

The first day of the training focused on strengthening awareness and preventive measures against substance abuse.

During the sessions, experts threw light on the harmful effects of substance abuse,

early identification of drug use among students and the role of teachers and community members in guiding youth towards career development.

Medical Officer, District Hospital Shopian, Dr. Aadil Farooq delivered a detailed presentation, highlighting strategies for drug prevention, early detection, counselling mechanisms and community-based interventions to combat substance abuse.

Other resource persons including Dr. Rahil Hassan Khan and Quratul Ann also shared valuable insights on prevention, awareness and community engagement.

Speaking on the occasion, CMO emphasized the importance of collective efforts in tackling the growing challenge of drug abuse and highlighted the need for community participation in building a drug-free society.

DLSA Budgam conducts Awareness Programme on International Women's Day

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 09: District Legal Services Authority, Budgam (DLSA Budgam), under the aegis of the J&K Legal Services Authority and under the chairmanship of O. P. Bhagat, Chairman, DLSA and Principal District & Sessions Judge, Budgam, successfully conducted an awareness programme on International Women's Day at Government Middle School Nagam, Chadoora. The programme was organized with the objective of spreading awareness about women's

rights, gender equality, legal remedies available to women, laws related to domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking, and cyber crimes against women, as well as various legal safeguards available for the protection and empowerment of women in society.

During the programme, the resource persons highlighted the significance of International Women's Day and stressed the importance of educating women about their legal rights and entitlements. They also informed the participants about various welfare schemes and legal provisions available

for the protection and empowerment of women.

The speakers further emphasized the role of the Legal Services Authorities in providing free legal aid and assistance to the needy and marginalized sections of society, particularly women who are victims of injustice or exploitation.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from the students, teachers, and local residents, who appreciated the initiative taken by DLSA Budgam in promoting legal awareness and empowering women at the grassroots level.

DC Kulgam visits Mirhama; inspects construction of transit accommodation for Migrant Employees

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MARCH 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today visited Mirhama to inspect the ongoing construction work of Transit Accommodation for Kashmiri Migrant Employees.

During the visit, the Executive Engineer R&B briefed the DC about the progress of the project. He informed that the project comprises 196 flats,



out of which 128 flats have been completed so far.

It was further informed that the allotted cost of the project is Rs 33.13

crore. The DC inspected various components of the project and took stock of the pace and quality of work. He directed the concerned officers to expedite the electrification work and landscaping to ensure timely completion of the remaining flats.

The DC emphasized the importance of completing the project within the stipulated timeframe so that the accommodation facilities are made available to the employees at the earliest.

Commissioner SMC reviews preparedness for Swachh Survekshan 2025-26

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MARCH 09: Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the preparedness and ongoing initiatives being undertaken by the Corporation under Swachh Survekshan 2025-26, the nationwide cleanliness assessment programme.

During the meeting, the Commissioner undertook a comprehensive review of sanitation measures being implemented across the city and directed officials to further strengthen cleanliness standards in accordance with the parameters laid down under Swachh Survekshan. He emphasized the need for strict adherence to efficient door-to-door waste collection, segregation of waste at source, and scientific processing and disposal



of municipal waste.

Stressing the importance of sustained and coordinated efforts, the Commissioner instructed the

concerned officers to intensify monitoring of sanitation services and ensure visible improvements in cleanliness across public spaces,

markets, residential localities, and other key areas of the city.

The Commissioner also highlighted the critical role of citizen participation in achieving the objectives of Swachh Survekshan and directed officials to strengthen public awareness and outreach initiatives aimed at encouraging community involvement in sanitation and waste management practices.

Reaffirming the commitment of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation towards making Srinagar a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable city, the Commissioner urged officers to work with dedication, efficiency, and accountability to achieve improved outcomes in the national cleanliness survey.

The meeting was attended by Joint Commissioners SMC and other senior officers of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

DC Ganderbal reviews progress of digitization of revenue records

Directs for time bound completion of exercise

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MARCH 09: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a meeting of revenue officers to review the progress of digitization of revenue records in the district.

During the meeting, the DC sought a detailed tehsil-wise report regarding the status of digitization including entry of backlog mutations as well as resolution of grievances received during public reading of Jamabandis in various villages. Stressing the need for expediting the process, he directed the officers to ensure timely and accurate completion of the exercise.

The DC instructed the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) to ensure strict monitoring of the progress and ensure daily reporting of targets achieved across the district.

The DC also reviewed the status of pending public grievances related to revenue matters and emphasized that these cases should



be disposed-off promptly to provide timely resolutions of the grievances raised during public hearings.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, Patwaris and other concerned revenue officials.

84 Bn CRPF organises Blood Donation Camp at Chanderkote

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, MARCH 09: In the run-up to the 87th Anniversary of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the 84 Battalion CRPF in collaboration with District Hospital Ramban organized a Blood Donation Camp at the Tactical Headquarters Boom, Chanderkote.

More than 25 personnel of the 84 Battalion CRPF voluntarily donated blood, demonstrating their commitment to humanitarian service.

The camp was inaugurated by First Lady N. Gayabati Devi in the presence of Commandant 84 Battalion CRPF N. Ranbir Singh, Second-in-Command Vikram Singh, Assistant Commandants Roop Ram Meena and Shree Ram Meena along with other personnel of the battalion.



Medical Officer Dr. Parvez Ahmed Katoch and other officials from District Hospital Ramban, along with Medical Officer Dr. Biranmol Singh and the paramedical staff of the 84 Battalion CRPF, successfully conducted the camp.

Entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining internal security across the vast and diverse nation of India, the CRPF has been serving the country with dedication and commitment. The Force was presented with its Colour by the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on March 19, 1950.

The camp was organized under the theme "Give Blood, Give Hope - Together We Save Lives."

Speaking on the occasion, Commandant Ranbir Singh appealed to people to voluntarily donate blood regularly, emphasizing that it helps save the lives of accident victims, cancer patients and patients undergoing surgeries, while also ensuring a steady and safe supply of blood for those in need.

He also assured the officials of District Hospital Ramban that whenever required in the future, the 84 Battalion CRPF would readily come forward to donate blood for needy patients.

Officials of the Blood Bank Ramban expressed their gratitude to the 84 Battalion CRPF for organizing the blood donation camp and supporting the hospital in maintaining adequate blood reserves.

Kathua Admin hosts grand Int'l Women's Day celebration at Sports Stadium

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA, MARCH 9: A grand programme to celebrate International Women's Day was held at Sports Stadium Kathua on Sunday evening, drawing enthusiastic participation from people from across the district.

The programme was organised by the Social Welfare Department in collaboration with the District Administration Kathua as part of the week-long celebration activities held across the district to mark International Women's Day.

Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) Kathua Dr Bharat Bhushan and Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) Jasrota Rajiv Jasrotia graced the occasion and lauded the achievements of women across various fields.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Dr Bharat Bhushan described the day as a celebration of women achievers who are excelling in diverse sectors and contributing significantly to society. He said it is the collective duty of every citizen to support and encourage girl child, mothers, sisters and women in every sphere of life so that they can realise their full potential.

Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma highlighted that the district administration organised a series of activities throughout the week to mark International Women's Day. "These included awareness drives, health and nutrition camps, sports events, awareness drives and legal and safety



sessions aimed at celebrating the strength and achievements of women," he added. He emphasised that empowering women is essential for building a progressive and inclusive society. Earlier, a thought-provoking panel discussion featuring women achievers from multiple fields was held. The panelists included SSP Mohita Sharma (IPS), Kangna Gupta (Judiciary), Dr Sulakshna Mengi (Retired Pediatrician), Pooja Devi and Reva Rani (Entrepreneurs). They shared insights from their journeys, highlighting challenges they overcame and delivered inspiring messages for fellow women to pursue their aspirations with confidence and determination.

The cultural segment of the programme enthralled the audience as budding talent Gayatri Kandley,

winner of Voice of Punjab-6, renowned singer Sonali Dogra and daughter of the soil Vibha Bharti, winner of Awaaz Punjab Di, mesmerised the jam-packed Sports Stadium with their captivating performances.

The panelists were felicitated for their achievements and contributions. Young sports achievers including Tania Sharma (Cricket), Anu Sharma (Shooting), Nysa Singh (Kabaddi) and Kamiya Rajput (Karate) were also honoured for bringing laurels to the district.

Among others present were Director Social Welfare Jammu Ranjit Singh; ADC Vishavjeet Singh; CPO Ranjeet Thakur; District Social Welfare Officer Varun Chaudhary, besides other district and sectoral officers and a large number of people.

MLAs call on CM Omar Abdullah, raise constituency issues

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 09: Several Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) today called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and discussed issues concerning development works and public welfare in their respective constituencies.



MLA Samba Surjeet Singh Slathia, MLA Banihal Sajad Shaheen, MLA Ramban Arjun Singh Raju, MLA Baderwah Daleep Singh Parihar, MLA Gulabgarh Er Khurshid Ahmed, and MLA Anantnag West Abdul Majeed Bhat Laram met the Chief Minister and apprised him of various issues pertaining to their respective constituencies.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the legislators and assured them that all genuine issues raised by them would be addressed in a time-bound manner.

He reiterated that his government remains committed to resolving people's concerns and ensuring timely relief and development across all regions.

Augmentation of seed storage, irrigation facilities underway at SM Farms

Director Agriculture reviews progress of work

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 9: Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta today chaired a meeting to review the progress of projects undertaken to augment irrigation and storage facilities at the Seed Multiplication Farms, Chinore and Chakroi.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Agriculture (Farms/SLUB) Aman Jyoti Sharma; Deputy Director Agriculture (Central) Agriculture Chemist Sanjeev Rai Gupta; Regional Level SMS Krishan Kant; Deputy Director Planning Mudassar Yaqoob Zargar; Accounts Officer Vriti Uppal; Farm Manager

Chinore Verinder Dogra; Farm Manager Chakroi Parshotam Kumar along with other senior officers and staff of the department.

At the outset, the Joint Director Agriculture (Farms/SLUB) briefed the Director about the ongoing and the projects proposed for the augmentation of irrigation infrastructure and storage facilities at the twin farms.

Detailed discussions were held regarding the availability of irrigation sources, status of functional and non-functional tubewells, land levelling works, installation of micro-irrigation systems, repair of irrigation channels and progress of NABARD-



funded projects, including proposals under Phase-II projects for further strengthening the infrastructure.

The Director Agriculture stressed the early completion of fencing and irrigation infrastructure development works. He further instructed for formulation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for Phase-II and submission of the

same to Directorate within 15 days for necessary processing.

The meeting also reviewed proposals aimed at enhancing seed storage capacity by developing new storage facilities. Detailed deliberations were held regarding the installation of Automatic Weighing Machine under CAPEX and other infrastructure required for efficient farm operations.

"The seed processing unit available at the farms shall be made operational at the earliest so that seed produced at the farms can be processed locally in a systematic manner," the Director Agriculture instructed. He further directed to expedite the repair of non-functional borewells to ensure adequate irrigation facilities for farm activities.

The meeting concluded with an emphasis on strengthening irrigation infrastructure, expanding storage capacity and improving seed processing facilities at the Seed Multiplication Farms to enhance quality seed production in the region.

Drug Control measures reviewed in Gool

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN, MARCH 9: Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Intiaz Ahmed today reviewed anti-narcotic measures and IEC activities being implemented under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) and the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) in the Sub-Division Gool.

The meeting was attended by Principal local Higher Secondary School Farooq Ahmed Wani; local Block Development Officer Sadam Hussain; BDO Sangaldan, Mohammed Irfan; CDPO Bashir Ahmed Malik and officials from the line departments including Agriculture, Horticulture, Police and Health.

The SDM reviewed awareness campaigns being conducted in educational institutions, community outreach activities and legal surveillance against Narcotic trafficking.

He directed stakeholder departments to prominently display drug de-addiction helpline numbers and organize awareness camps in their respective areas to educate the public about the dangers of drug addiction.

"Make it sure that drug de-addiction helpline numbers are displayed at every Anganwadi Centre and that awareness activities are conducted among women and children through these centres," he asked CDPO.

Security scenario reviewed at critical establishments in Baderwah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BHADERWAH, MARCH 09: Additional Deputy Commissioner Sunil Kumar Bhutyal convened a meeting today to review the security arrangements at critical infrastructure and important establishments in the Sub-Division Baderwah.

The meeting reviewed safety measures at Sub-District Hospital, Radio Station Baderwah, Fire and Emergency Service station, BSNL Exchange, Repeater Station Thuba, besides Fuel stations and Gas Agencies.



The ADC directed the concerned authorities and management of the establishments to strengthen security measures by installing

additional CCTV cameras, strengthening barricades, increasing deployments and developing fencing around the premises to safeguard

these important facilities.

The meeting emphasized the need for coordination among different departments to ensure safety and preparedness in view of the importance of these installations for public services.

Among others present in the meeting were Tehsildar Kamalpreet Singh, SDPO Naveed Shokat, BMO Dr Varsha Sharma, All India Radio Officer Pawan Khujuria, AEE Jal Shakti Iqbal Singh and TSO Mehmoor Mir, who discussed the security aspects and assured necessary action to implement the directions.

HT EDITORIAL

Career in civil services continues to attract J&K youth

In the past there were limited career opportunities for the youth of Jammu & Kashmir. With the passage of time there has been a change in the same and as on date many career fields and opportunities are available. Ever since Shah Faesal topped the civil services examinations IAS has become a craze among a sizable population of the youth irrespective of gender.

Career counselling was never given a thought by the youth and their parents. Things have changed and most of the youth decide about the career in their early days of education. Most of the youth decide about their career from 10th standard and remain focused towards their goal. These youth have one goal in mind and for attaining the same they are more than ready to walk an extra mile. These youth burn midnight oil so as to be successful in the fields they choose.

Over the years it has been observed that many youth who got degrees in different professional fields plunge into the civil services and crack the IAS or IPS examination. Doctors, engineers and other professionals after completing their degrees take up the civil service examination and emerge as civil servants after cracking the IAS examination. This trend needs to be stopped and whosoever wants to join the civil service examination should remain focused towards the same only.

In other words, we may say that simple graduates should be enthused to go through the civil services examination and then become IAS or IPS officers. Since there is a lot of competition for seats in professional courses like MBBS, BE, BTech the youth sweat it out in order to get admission for these coveted courses. A youth who wants to join the civil services should make the preparations for the first year of his or her degree course. There is no need to take admission in a medical college or engineering college and after completing the degree then take up the civil services examination.

The role of parents and career counsellors is very important in this regard. It is the duty of the parents to encourage their children to take up the careers of their choice and not pressurize them to take up a particular career. Career counsellors should also play their part to perfection and guide the youth towards a better future by motivating them to excel in the field they choose as their career.

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TET Link to Service Continuation Sparks Outcry



■ JAVAID BHAT

Concerns are mounting among members of the teaching fraternity over proposals to link the Teachers Eligibility Test with the continuation of routine services of in-service educators. Teachers and academic stakeholders argue that such a move could undermine the professional dignity and integrity of experienced educators who have served the system for decades.

The Teachers Eligibility Test (TET), introduced under the guidelines of the National Council for Teacher Education, was originally designed to ensure minimum qualifications for new entrants into the teaching profession. Over time, it has been widely accepted as a benchmark for recruitment. However, extending its applicability to the continuation of service for already appointed teachers has sparked debate.



Senior educators maintain that in-service teachers have consistently demonstrated their competence through classroom performance, student results, institutional contributions, and adherence to professional ethics. Making a written examination a mandatory condition for retaining routine service, they argue, may be perceived as a challenge to their credibility and years of

dedicated work. "Teaching is not merely theoretical knowledge that can be measured in a single test. It is reflected in classroom management, mentorship, leadership, and long-term student outcomes," said a senior academician. Many believe that while periodic professional development and assessment are important, they should not take the form of measures that create insecurity among serving teachers.

Education experts suggest that TET may serve as a constructive benchmark for promotions or career advancement, where higher responsibilities demand updated knowledge and skills. However, linking it to the continuation of routine service could negatively impact morale and create unnecessary stress within the system.

Instead of the recruitment-level TET, a specialized professional advancement assessment for promotions should be developed. This module should focus on advanced pedagogy, instructional leadership, mentoring capacity, classroom innovation, and use of educational technology rather than basic eligibility standard. However this Policy introduction must involve consultation with teacher representatives and educational experts.

Stakeholders have called upon authorities to adopt a balanced approach that respects experience and professional integrity while promoting academic excellence. The consensus emerging from discussions is clear: evaluation mechanisms should strengthen the education system without compromising the dignity of those who form its backbone; the teachers.

ICC T-20 World Cup – 2026

Present era is the era of team India



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Cricket is not only a sport in India but also a great passion for millions of people. Every street, playground and school field can be seen full of young boys playing cricket. India cricket team has great potential and strength that they can set unexpected world records in all the formats of cricket like One Day International, Test cricket and the short format Twenty-20 cricket.

The ICC T-20 World Cup 2026 final was one of the most exciting matches for cricket lovers. The final match was played between New Zealand and India on Sunday. It was a match full of thrill, energy and excitement. Hardly matters who is the opponent team, India always tries to create history. In the final match India created a big record by scoring more than 250 runs in the ICC T-20 World Cup final. It was a huge total which put great pressure on the opponent team.

Indian players showed wonderful performance in batting, bowling and fielding. The batting line up of India was very strong. Players like Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan played very aggressive cricket and entertained the audience with their powerful shots. Their confidence and attacking style made the match very interesting.

In the bowling department also Indian team showed great strength. Bowlers like Jasprit Bumrah, Mithun Chakraborty and Harshdeep Singh bowled with great control and discipline. Their bowling made it very difficult for the New Zealand batsmen to chase the big score. The bowlers took important wickets at the right time and helped the team to maintain the pressure.

Finally India won the ICC T-20 World Cup 2026 final and added one more glorious title in their list of achievements. It was a proud moment for the whole nation. People celebrated the victory with great joy and happiness. The victory once again proved that India has one of the best cricket teams in the world.

Indian team has very professional cricketers and they have great talent in batting, bowling and fielding. Their dedication, discipline and hard work make them successful at the international level. The players are always focused and ready to face every challenge on the field.

■ Cricket in India at the domestic level

Cricket in India is also very strong at the domestic level. This is one of the main reasons why India always produces talented cricketers. Domestic tournaments give many opportunities to young players to show their talent and improve their techniques. They learn many important skills under experienced coaches and trainers.

Young cricketers work very hard to reach the international level. It is not an easy journey. Players have to face many struggles and challenges in their careers. But their passion and love for cricket keeps



them motivated. Every player dreams to be among the playing eleven of the national team and represent the country at the international level.

■ Who is making the dreams of passionate cricketers come true?

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is playing a very important role in developing cricket in the country. The BCCI provides many facilities to the players at different levels. Through different sponsorship programs and development projects, the board supports young cricketers and encourages them to pursue their dreams.

Many cricket academies are established at school level, college level and university level. These academies provide professional training to the youngsters. Experienced cricketers and coaches guide the young players and help them to improve their skills. With proper guidance and facilities many talented players are coming forward and representing the country.

■ Is there any risk in taking cricket as a profession?

For me sports should be everyone's favourite activity because sports have many health benefits. Sports activities keep us physically fit and mentally strong. They help us to stay active and protect us from many harmful diseases. Playing sports also develops discipline, teamwork and confidence among young people.

Taking cricket as a profession can be challenging sometimes. Success in sports depends on hard work, talent, technique and also a little bit of luck. I have

seen that sometimes one ball is enough to make a player a star, and sometimes one ball can spoil a whole career. That is why players must stay focused and keep improving their performance.

One unfortunate thing in our society is that many people only like victory. Some people even support victory in an unfair or unprofessional way. But a real fan always respects the spirit of the game. Victory and defeat are both part of sports. True supporters always stand with their team whether they win or lose.

■ IPL and the emergence of talent

The Indian Premier League (IPL) is one of the biggest and most popular cricket leagues in the world today. In this league many world class players from different countries participate along with young and talented Indian cricketers. The IPL provides a great platform for new players to show their talent and gain international recognition.

Many great Indian players have emerged from the IPL. The league helps young cricketers to learn from experienced international players and improve their game. Because of the IPL, Indian cricket is continuously producing talented and fearless cricketers.

In conclusion, cricket is a great pride for India. The success in ICC T-20 World Cup 2026 once again showed the strength and talent of Indian cricket. With strong domestic structure, support from BCCI and platforms like IPL, the future of Indian cricket looks very bright.

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Urdu in J&K Identity, Challenges, and the Struggle for Recognition

"Urdu belongs to everyone; it is the shared heritage of the people of the subcontinent."

Ali Sardar Jafri



■ DR. MOHIUDIN ZORE KASHMIRI

Urdu has historically occupied a unique and influential position in the cultural and administrative life of Jammu and Kashmir. Despite this long-standing presence and the significant contributions made by writers and scholars from the region, Urdu writers from Jammu and Kashmir have rarely received the level of recognition and appreciation at the national level that their work deserves. This perceived marginalization has created a sense of disappointment among many scholars and literary figures associated with the language.

One frequently cited example in discussions about literary recognition in the region is the case of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the prominent political leader who served as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1988, he was awarded the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for his autobiography *Aatish-e-Chinar*. While the work itself is significant as a historical and political narrative, many literary observers note that the book was compiled with the help of a team of scholars and researchers. Among the prominent contributors were Professor Aali Ahmad Suroor and Mohammad Yousuf Tang, whose scholarly involvement played an important role in shaping the final manuscript. This example often leads critics to argue that recognition in literary circles sometimes depends more on the social or political stature of an individual than purely on literary merit.

Another significant figure in the literary landscape of Jammu and Kashmir was Professor Hamidi Kashmiri (formerly vice chancellor Kashmir University), a respected poet and scholar who received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2005 for his contributions to Kashmiri poetry. In recognition of his broader literary and cultural services, he was later honoured with the Padma Shri by the Government of India. While such acknowledgements highlight the importance of literature produced in the region, many Urdu writers believe that similar

recognition has not been extended adequately to scholars who primarily write in Urdu.

This situation has gradually led to a noticeable shift among writers and intellectuals in Jammu and Kashmir. A number of Urdu writers have begun to focus more on regional languages such as Kashmiri, Dogri, and others, primarily because these languages receive greater institutional encouragement within the region. Various government departments, semi-government institutions, and cultural organizations in Jammu and Kashmir actively promote regional languages through awards, grants, and literary programs. As a result, writers often feel that pursuing literature in regional languages provides better opportunities for recognition and professional advancement.

For many decades, scholars and literary activists have demanded the establishment of a dedicated Urdu academy in Jammu and Kashmir. Several Indian states and regions have established such institutions to promote Urdu language and literature. For instance, Urdu academies operate in places like Delhi, Lucknow, West Bengal, and Karnataka. These academies play an important role in encouraging writers, organizing literary events, publishing books, and supporting research. However, despite repeated appeals, a similar institutional framework has not been effectively established in Jammu and Kashmir, leaving many Urdu writers without adequate institutional support.

The status of Urdu in the region also underwent significant changes after the political developments of 5 August 2019, associated with the Revocation of Article 370. Following this constitutional reorganization, Jammu and Kashmir was transformed from a state into union territories, and several regional languages were granted unnecessary official status alongside Urdu. While the recognition of regional languages is an important step toward preserving linguistic diversity but not at the cost of Urdu, many Urdu scholars feel that the historical importance of Urdu in the region has been somewhat diminished.

Historically, Urdu enjoyed a prominent administrative position in Jammu and Kashmir. In 1886, the Dogra ruler Maharaja Pratap Singh officially adopted Urdu as the language of administration. From that time onward, Urdu served as an important medium of communication

among people belonging to different regions, religions, and social backgrounds. The linguistic diversity of Jammu and Kashmir includes Kashmiri, Dogri, Ladakhi, Gojri, Pahari, and several other languages, yet Urdu functioned as a unifying language that facilitated communication across communities.

Some advocates of regional languages argue that individuals can express themselves more authentically only in their mother tongue. While the importance of mother tongues cannot be denied, Khushwant Singh, whose mother tongue was also Punjabi, wrote primarily in English and achieved international recognition. Even the great classical literary history provides many examples where writers have achieved greatness in languages other than their native ones. For example, the philosopher-poet Muhammad Iqbal and the renowned short story writer Saadat Hasan Manto both had Punjabi as their mother tongue, yet their most influential works were written in Urdu. Similarly, the celebrated poet and prose writer Mirza Ghalib composed a substantial portion of his poetry in Persian alongside Urdu.

These examples demonstrate that literary expression is not necessarily limited by one's mother tongue. In the modern world, linguistic boundaries are increasingly fluid. Students and young professionals often need to master multiple languages to participate effectively in education, employment, and global communication. Therefore, promoting multilingual competence should be considered a strength rather than a weakness.

At the same time, challenges also exist within the educational system itself. In some cases, teachers and even university-level instructors associated with Urdu studies struggle to communicate effectively in the language they are supposed to teach. There have been instances where Urdu sentences are translated into regional languages during classroom instruction, sometimes in ways that diminish the seriousness of the subject. Such practices can undermine the quality of Urdu education and discourage students from pursuing advanced studies in the field.

Despite these difficulties, Urdu continues to maintain a strong presence in Kashmir. People from various religious and social backgrounds are familiar with the language and its script. Educational

institutions across the region enrol a large number of students studying Urdu at different levels. In fact, many young writers and poets in Kashmir are actively producing essays, poetry, and literary criticism in Urdu, often publishing their work in newspapers, magazines, and online platforms.

Nevertheless, many scholars believe that central institutions responsible for promoting Urdu have not provided adequate opportunities to writers from Kashmir. Organizations such as the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language have been criticized for not involving Kashmiri writers sufficiently in their programs and initiatives. Literary seminars, conferences, and workshops organized at the national level often feature participants from certain regions while writers from Kashmir remain underrepresented.

Another issue frequently raised concerns linguistic criticism directed at Kashmiri Urdu speakers. Some individuals from traditional Urdu-speaking regions such as Delhi or Uttar Pradesh argue that the pronunciation of Urdu in Kashmir is influenced by local languages. However, linguistic variation is a natural phenomenon. Even the classical traditions of Urdu associated with Delhi and Lucknow have evolved over time, and contemporary speech in these areas often incorporates elements of Hindi and regional dialects. Similarly, in Pakistan, where Urdu serves as the national language, it is commonly spoken with noticeable Punjabi or regional influences. Therefore, criticizing Kashmiri speakers for their accent or pronunciation appears unfair and ignores the dynamic nature of language.

A further concern relates to the limited representation of Kashmiri writers in national literary events. When institutions organize Urdu conferences or cultural programs, participants from Jammu and Kashmir are sometimes selected only from particular regions, leaving writers from the Kashmir Valley underrepresented. This pattern creates a perception that Kashmiri scholars are not being given equal opportunities to present their work on national platforms.

In addition, some editors of prominent Urdu journals reportedly hesitate to publish articles that mention "Kashmir" in their titles, fearing that the content might be politically sensitive. Such assumptions often lead to the rejection of scholarly work without proper evaluation.

This is unfortunate because Kashmir possesses a rich cultural heritage, and Urdu has long served as a medium through which this heritage is documented and shared.

The challenges extend beyond recognition and representation. Many qualified Urdu scholars in Jammu and Kashmir struggle to find stable employment opportunities. Recruitment processes conducted by institutions such as the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission are sometimes criticized for alleged irregularities and lack of transparency. As a result, numerous highly educated individuals remain unemployed or underemployed despite their expertise.

Furthermore, Urdu newspapers in the region often face financial difficulties because they receive limited government advertisements compared to publications in other languages. Literary writers also encounter obstacles when attempting to publish books, as financial assistance for printing and distribution is scarce. Organizing literary seminars, conferences, and workshops also requires resources that are often unavailable to independent writers and scholars.

In conclusion, the situation of Urdu language and literature in Jammu and Kashmir is complex and multifaceted. While Urdu continues to play an important cultural and communicative role in the region, its writers face a range of institutional, professional, and cultural challenges. Some of these issues arise from internal shortcomings within the community, while others result from inadequate support from national institutions and policy frameworks.

Addressing these concerns requires a balanced and constructive approach. Establishing stronger institutional support for Urdu in the region, ensuring fair representation of Kashmiri writers in national forums, improving educational standards, and providing financial assistance for literary activities could significantly strengthen the position of Urdu in Jammu and Kashmir. If these steps are taken sincerely, the region's rich Urdu literary tradition will continue to flourish and contribute meaningfully to the broader cultural landscape of India.

Dr Mohiudin Zore Kashmiri is Associate Professor of Urdu in the Dept. of higher education J&K Govt. he can be mailed: drzoreurdu@gmail.com

Therapeutic benefits of Fasting



■ MASROOF MANZOOR

In Islam, fasting during the month of Ramadan is a heavenly ordained act of worship aimed at fostering taqwa—a deep sense of consciousness and accountability before Allah. Renowned scholars of Quranic interpretation like Ibn Kathir explains that fasting serves as a practical method for self-discipline and moral development. By willingly giving up even permissible pleasures such as eating, drinking and marital relations for the sake of Allah, a believer strengthens the ability to resist sinful actions. In this way, the physical act of fasting gradually nurtures inner purity and strengthens one's spiritual resolve.

However, apart from its spiritual significance, recent researches have revealed that fasting during Ramadan with balanced nutrition during shur and iftar may also offer a range of health benefits. Despite not being a medical student, I have examined different studies and listened to various

doctors that suggest fasting has multiple health benefits. Studies & doctors suggest that;

Fasting is associated with improvements in heart health, including lower blood pressure, reduced cholesterol levels and decreased inflammation, all of which support a healthier cardiovascular system.

Fasting encourages weight control. When a person eats, the body primarily uses glucose from food as its main source of energy. However, during periods of fasting that last several hours, insulin levels begin to decline. As a result, the body gradually shifts from using glucose to burning stored fat for energy. Over time, this metabolic shift can help reduce overall body fat specifically abdominal fat, which is particularly harmful because it is strongly associated with an increased risk of diabetes and heart disease.

Fasting can serve as an important and positive turning point in a person's life as well as in the health of the digestive system. By limiting food intake for a certain period, the body gives the digestive system an opportunity to rest. Consuming smaller amounts of food allows the stomach to gradually adjust, which may help reduce appetite over time. As a result, fasting can sometimes produce outcomes comparable to even better than those achieved through many conventional dieting methods.



Fasting may have a beneficial impact on the immune system. It can stimulate the production of new white blood

cells, helping to strengthen the body's immune defenses. Fasting promotes autophagy, a natural

cellular process in which the body breaks down and removes damaged or dysfunctional cells and regenerates new healthier ones. This internal clean-up mechanism helps maintain cellular health. Scientific studies have linked autophagy to increased longevity, reduced inflammation and improved gut health, making fasting beneficial not only spiritually but also physiologically.

Yesterday I was reading a statement by Dr Shakeel Ahmad Mir, a general physician at DHSK, who said that fasting plays a crucial role in improving overall health outcomes. He noted that fasting instils discipline and patience while reducing the likelihood of developing metabolic disorders such as diabetes, hypertension, and fatty liver disease.

Although fasting offers numerous health benefits, if it is not observed properly it can sometimes have negative effects on health. This is why people often jokingly remark that they gain weight during the month of Ramadan. The main reason behind this is overindulgence during iftar. Excessive consumption of fried foods, sweets and large portions after a long day of fasting can counteract many of the potential health benefits of fasting.

The author is a Masters in Economics

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Cultivating Your Spring Glow



■ SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Spring is here, and we are ready to play with a little more colour in our makeup routines. As the chill of winter fades and the warmth of spring approaches, it's a new season in full bloom.

With its longer sunlit days and vivid blooming flowers, a freshness hangs in the air which lightens up your mood.

Spring combines warmth with brightness in tune with the rays of sunshine and blossoming nature.

Think of spring, and you immediately think of fresh florals and vibrant blooms. It's all about embracing colour in new and exciting ways.

Just like the blooming flowers, your beauty products need a seasonal update.

Spring is a great time to refresh and revive your makeup style and try new trends and looks that you have been eyeing for a long time.

■ Playful Eyes

It's all about the eyes this spring. As soon as the sun comes out, it's time to switch up the makeup routine, especially when it comes to the eyes.

Eye makeup deserves special attention, as our eyes remain our most expressive feature. Instead of using the typical black eyeliner/black liner, you must try a slightly bold, colored liner to add a pop of colour to the look.

Spring is the favourite time to try all those colourful eye makeup looks and pick warm berries and nude eyeshadow.

Give darker, dramatic colour palettes a miss and instead opt for playful combinations of textures that make your eyes pop.

"Primer is a must. Apply a tiny amount all over the lid, going up to the brow bone and allow it to dry naturally

It will prevent your eye makeup from creasing, feathering, smearing and looking like an unmade bed.

Apply a base colour to the lids, preferably an eyeshadow that is close to your skin tone.

Take the Wet/Dry Eye Brush again and apply eyeshadow on the lid, taking it into the crease area.

Now, using the same blending brush, smooth out the edges by blending with eyeshadow.

Add some colour by applying eyeliner. Take Eye Liner Pencil directly onto the upper lash lines. Next, smooth out the lines using the Eye Brush and wing the liner out.

Finish the eye look with some mascara. For dramatic lashes, apply 3 to 4 coats of Mascara.

Eye makeup in spring should reflect the season's playful and light-hearted spirit.

■ Hair Colour and Style

It's time to start thinking about the best spring hair colour makeover. Give one of the trendy spring and summer hair colours from a smokin' hot fiery red to a cool silvery blonde, try this season.

Warmer weather is a good reason to consider a hair refresh.

A refresh can be a daring new colour or a dramatic new cut, but it can also be a subtle enhancement to what you're already working with—think adding a little fullness with extensions or playing with new hair accessories.

Light hair colours with soft undertones, such as honey blonde or light auburn, can complement your spring palette. Hairstyles that embody the season's breezy and care-

free nature, like loose waves or casual braids, can add to the overall effect, creating a look that is both stylish and effortless.

This spring season is all about subtle but statement-making colour that doesn't require constant upkeep. That means low-maintenance colour in extra eye-catching shades.

Off-black shades, like deep espresso or dark chocolate, provide a softer alternative to true black. These off-black shades retain the depth and richness of black hair while being less dramatic, making them easier to wear for many people. The result is a luxurious, velvety tone that's just as striking but with a bit more softness and dimension.

Once you've achieved your new spring hair colour, prevent it from fading by opting for a gentle shampoo and conditioner that has been specifically formulated to keep your color fresh and vivid for longer.

Mild shampoos work by deeply nourishing and protecting the hair shaft to keep your colour locked in. It is also a good idea to limit how often you wash your hair because it speeds up colour loss—consider using a dry shampoo from time to time. Before styling, always apply a heat protection spray and lower the temperature of your styling tools, as too much heat can dull your colour.

■ Lips

The skin on the lips is thinner, more delicate and more sensitive than other parts of the skin. Because there is no sebaceous gland, there are many wrinkles on the lips.

Due to these skin properties, it is easier to lose water than other parts of the skin. Severe thirst, dry air, product irritation, and even saliva can cause skin dehydration. And because it is a part of everyday use, such as eating, drinking and talking, it is also slower on curing once you have a

problem.

For most, lip balm is a worthy ally in the fight against chapped lips. But some people can't take fragrances, flavours and preservatives found in popular balms.

Our lips are not protected from the weather onslaught as they can not be covered with clothes, mittens, and toboggans like any other parts of the body.

Since our lips are always exposed to weather conditions, we have to be extremely sensitive about our daily routine for lip care.

Chapped lips are not only unsightly but also a breeding ground for germs that can cause inflammation or a bacterial infection. The good thing is that there are plenty of things that you can do to repair your lips and get ready for the warm spring weather.

Some ingredients like Castor seed oil, Shea butter, White petroleum jelly, titanium oxide/zinc oxide, Hemp seed oil, Ceramides and Dimethicone can help maintain natural hydration level in the lips, while ingredients like Camphor, Eucalyptus, Cinnamon, citrus, mint, Lanolin, Menthol, Phenol and Salicylic acid can be especially irritating to lips during the springtime. Paperclips, jewelry, and other everyday products made of metal can irritate your already sensitive lips.

If you drink carbonated beverages or coffee instead of water, you feel thirsty. It can be a source of dryness in your lips. It is advised to avoid carbonated beverages as much as you can!

We generally wipe our lips with a napkin after meals and snacks. However, because lips are very sensitive and fragile parts, applying strong friction will instantly evaporate moisture and dry lips rapidly. Do not put the tissue directly on the lips; roll the lip balm in your hand and gently wipe it off.

When purchasing your lip product,

look for ingredients such as shea butter, vitamin E or natural oils that will nourish your skin. Synthetic products will only lead to a build-up on your lips that will make the problem worse. Chapstick, sunscreen and mild exfoliant will help you to fight off the effects of the weather. Look for a lip balm that includes an SPF of 30 or higher. (You will also want to use sunscreen on the rest of your face, so don't forget to get a facial moisturiser with SPF 30 too!)

■ Jewelry

If you're a jewellery fanatic and deep into current trends, you know that every season calls for something a bit different in your jewellery box.

Spring jewellery is all about embracing the beauty of the season. Spring calls for jewellery that is light and delicate, mirroring the gentle beauty of the season. It's not just the season that's changing—it's the ideal moment to give your jewellery collection a little refresh as well.

During spring in India, jewellery trends lean towards light, airy pieces with nature-inspired designs, floral motifs, and pastel gemstones, reflecting the season's fresh and vibrant energy. Opt for pieces in silver, white gold, or rose gold, which reflect the soft hues of spring. Mixing and matching jewellery with outfits is a trendy fashion game during the spring season. You can also go minimal with simple crystal or charm pendants with chains in rose gold plating to contrast the colourful spring outfits.

Dainty necklaces, thin bangles, and simple earrings with pastel gemstones like rose quartz, aquamarine, or moonstone can add a subtle sparkle that complements the freshness of your spring makeup.

The author is international fame beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO

Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo is a distinguished physician, medical educator, writer and public health fellow from Jammu and Kashmir, India. Internationally recognized for his contributions in health and wellness, Dr Itoo is a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health (FRSPH), United Kingdom; Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium); Member of the Academy of Medical Educators (MACadMed), UK, Member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB, UK) and International Practitioner of the Faculty of Public Health (IPFP, UK). He is also an active member of leading global medical organizations, including the American College of Physicians (ACP, USA) and Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI).

He has authored hundreds of health awareness articles published in reputed newspapers, magazines and journals, contributing significantly to health literacy and preventive healthcare. His expertise spans non-communicable diseases, medical education, and community health intervention strategies.

Beyond clinical work, Dr. Itoo is known as a motivational speaker, columnist, and youth mentor. Through his impactful leadership, advocacy, and educational initiatives, he continues to inspire young medical professionals and serve communities across India and beyond.

DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO (PHYSICIAN)

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Srinagar Master Plan-2035 amendments await cabinet approval

Draft memo circulated among departments, HODs of Housing & Urban Development for comments, concurrence

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, MAR 09: The amendments to the Srinagar Master Plan-2035 are awaiting cabinet approval. Documents accessed by news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveal that the Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) approved a short-term review of the Master Plan during its 82nd meeting. Later, the committee constituted by the SDA for this task was restructured to include representatives from the Srinagar Municipal Corporation and the Lakes & Conservation Management Authority. After examining objections and suggestions received from public, the committee prepared a comprehensive report containing its findings and recommendations. The draft proposal submitted by the committee was presented in a

meeting held on January 01, 2025, under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary. Subsequently, on June 17, 2025, another committee was constituted to examine the feasibility of Town Planning Scheme (TPS) areas and to identify any TPS area(s), if necessary, for the removal of preconditions related to issuing building permissions in such areas. The committee was also tasked with examining directions and orders issued by the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Based on the Court's orders regarding buffer zones of Dal and Nigeen lakes, the committee was asked to propose amendments to the Srinagar Master Plan-2035 and incorporate the directions accordingly. As per a document, the committee headed by the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir submitted its report

to the Administrative Department. "The Department has examined the recommendations of both committees," the document read. After examining the recommendations, the Housing & Urban Development Department circulated a cabinet note among all the administrative departments and Heads of Departments of Housing & Urban Development for seeking their comments, views, and concurrence, which are being compiled for submission to the Council of Ministers for consideration and approval. "Once the proposal seeking amendments to the Srinagar Master Plan-2035 is approved by the Council of Ministers, necessary modifications will be made to the Master Plan and the same will be notified under the relevant provisions of the J&K Development Act, 1970, and the Rules framed thereunder," the document states—(KNO)

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application ADIL AHMAD NAJAR S/O MOHD MAQBOL NAJAR R/O RESHIPORA Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward classes in his/her favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of RESHIPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the NAJAR community having annual income 125000 // (one lakh twenty five Thousand) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MOHD MAQBOL NAJAR FATHER 55 years carpenter
- 2..HAFFEEZA BEGUM Mother 52 years H/W
- 3... ADIL AH NAJAR self 21 years student
- 4....RAYEES AH NAJAR Brother 20 years //
- 5...TAHIRA MAQBOL sister 16 years //
6. YAWAR AH NAJAR Brother 15 years //

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of said certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application LIYAQAT ALI SOFI S/O MOHD ABDULLAH SOFI R/O RESHIPORA Tehsil for Issuance of EWS Financially weakened section in favour of his Son MUNTAZIR ABBASS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of (Ews) in favour of MUNTAZIR ABBASS this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of RESHIPORA of Tehsil KREERI and having annual income 95000 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1..LIYAQAT ALI SOFI Self 46 years Labour
- 2... MEHMOODA BAGUM wife 45 years H/W
- 3..ROUF ALI son 19 years student
- 4..MUNTAZIR ABBASS 17 years student
- 5....JUNAID ALI son 13 years student

According to report of patwari concerned that applicants family has not more than 5 acres of Land and does not have greater 1000 residential House...

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay of said EWS shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Naib Tehsild Kreeri

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
Office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla

e-mail, id: xenmhd.bla@jk.gov.in
TENDER NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
NIT NO: M&HDB/TS/2025-26/106/4792-97 | DATE: 09-03-2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla, invites online e-bids in Two Cover system on percentage wise basis from Authorized service providers of OEMs / Registered / Listed Contractors for the below mentioned works:

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	T.D Cost (In Rupees)	E/M	Time
01.	Installation of New Exhaust chimney and other allied works for installation of new Hot water Generator at CM Hut No. 02	0.42	200.00	840/-	10 days

Note:

- Project Authority: Director Hostility and Protocol J&K.
- AAA: Administrative Approval accorded by Director Hostility and Protocol J&K vide No. 92 DH&P of 2025 Dated: 08-09-2025
- Technical Sanction: Technical Sanction Accorded by Assistant Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospital Sub Division 2nd vide No. M&HDB/SD 2nd /TS-08 of 2025-26 Dated: - 06-03-2026.
- Executing Agency: Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla.

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	09-03-2026
2.	Period of downloading of the bidding document	From 09-03-2026 to 14-03-2026
3.	Bid Submission Start Date	From 09-03-2026 (18:15 HRS)
4.	Bid Submission End Date	14-03-2026 (18:55 HRS)
5.	Dates of Opening of Cover 1st	16-03-2026 (13:00 HRS)

The bidders are required to submit their offers in two (02) covers.
Cover-I shall contain: Scanned copies of following documents:

01.	Tender Fee	Rs. 200.00 (Rupees Two hundred only) in shape of e-Challan / e-receipt / online Bank transfer acknowledgement including m-Pay Delight+, to be uploaded with each online bid pledged to Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla. Tender ID to be written also on the voucher. Bank: J&K Bank. Branch: T.P Baramulla. IFSC Code: JAKA0TEHSIL Account No.: 0213010200000051.
02	EMD	Scanned copy of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in the shape of CDR/FDR equivalent to 02% of value of the advertised cost pledged to Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla. EMD of successful bidder shall be released on receipt of equivalent to / in the range of 03% to 10% Performance Guarantee of the value of the Contract from (L1) and execution of agreement with the Department. EMD of un-successful bidders shall be also released as per rules provided in J&K PWD Engineering Manual 2020.
03	Terms & Conditions	Scanned copy of the Annexure- "A" & "B" duly accepted by the bidder.
04	Tax Clearance	Registration Certificate of Sales Tax Department quoting GST Number.
05	GST	Scanned copies of PAN Card / GST Registration / Latest GST clearance certificate or acknowledgement of latest returns.
06	Undertaking	Undertaking as per format at Annexure "C" that the bidder has not been blacklisted or debarred by any Govt./Semi Govt. Department.
07	Contractor Registration	Scanned copy of valid Contractor Registration on JKPWDOMS of PWD J&K.
08	Eligibility / Work Experience Certificate	The Bidder Shall submit documentary proof of having successfully executed similar nature of work amounting to 80% of the estimated cost in single contract or 50% of the estimated cost in two contracts each or 40% of the estimated cost in three contracts each in last 07 years in any Govt. /Semi Govt./Autonomous institutions alongwith satisfactory performance certificate issued by a competent authority not below the rank of Assistant Executive Engineer.

Note:
The successful bidder has to furnish EMD document physically to the Divisional office alongwith fee receipt within three days from the date of opening price bid, without which his bid shall not be accepted for further processing of contract in his favour.
No EMD exemption shall be given to bidders.
Bidders / Firms shall refrain from uploading irrelevant documents.
Contractor/ Firm shall upload the contact / communication details separately on single page.
A. Cover-II shall contain:
01. Price bid, as per BOQ uploaded by this department. In no case, financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
02. The bids for the work shall remain valid for 180 days and the contract shall be valid for one complete year, starting from the date of allotment of the said contract.
03. The complete bidding process will be online.
04. The Financial bid of only qualifying bidders shall be opened online in the Office of the Executive Engineer M&HD Baramulla after evaluation of technical bid and decision thereof.
05. Bidder shall be penalized as per tender conditions if they withdraw their bid during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
06. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the rate below %age inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
07. The cost of tender documents is non-refundable and the tender shall in no case be accepted if submitted by any firm other than the purchaser.
08. Any tender found to have been submitted by the firm by furnishing false information to the department shall be cancelled and the firm shall be penalized as and when it comes to the notice of the Department even during the currency of the contract. The department reserves the right to debar /blacklist such firm(s).
09. Conditional tenders shall not be entertained.
10. Unbalanced Bid: In case bid of the lowest bidder is found unbalanced, the successful bidder shall have to produce additional performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/ Bank Guarantee within 07 days after opening of price bid as per the Circular directives of the J&K U.T Finance Department issued vide No. FD-Code/441/2021-22-158; Dated: - 08.08.2025 and relevant clauses of J&K (PWD) Engineering Manual 2020.
11. The tenders should be addressed to the Executive Engineer M&HD Baramulla.
No: M&HDB/TS/e-tender-106/4792-97 | Dated: 09-03-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla

DIPK: 11705/25 | Dated: 09-03-2026

Free Medical Camp Organised by 90 Bn CRPF at Dadoo; a large number of People Avail Healthcare Services

FAROOQ RATHER

ANANTNAG, MAR 09: To mark the 87th CRPF Day Parade celebrations and reaffirm its commitment to community welfare and public outreach, the Central Reserve Police Force's 90 Battalion organised a Free Medical Camp under the Civic Action Programme on Sunday at Government High School Dadoo in the Bijbehara area of Anantnag. The initiative aimed to provide essential healthcare services, medical diagnosis, and professional advice to residents of Dadoo village and its adjoining areas, while also strengthening goodwill and mutual trust between the security forces and the local community. The medical camp was inaugurated by Gh Haidar Khan in the presence of Kamleendra Pratap Singh. The programme was attended by several CRPF officers and Tassadiq Hussain. A dedicated medical team led by Dr. Suraj Kumar Singh conducted health check-ups and consultations



during the camp. The team also included Dr. Bilal Ahmad Mir and Dr. Insha Saleem, along with trained paramedical staff. The camp witnessed an overwhelming response from the local population. A total of 371 individuals, including men, women and children from Dadoo, Chak Dadoo, Marhama and nearby areas, benefitted from the initiative. During the camp, residents were provided with free general health check-ups, specialist consultations, medical advice and medicines, all free of cost. The CRPF effectively brought healthcare services closer to the people by organising the medical facility within their locality. Refreshments were also arranged for the attendees, and children accompanying their parents were distributed sweets and biscuits, adding a cheerful touch to the event. Officials said that such humanitarian initiatives under the Civic Action Programme are aimed not only at addressing healthcare needs but also at strengthening trust, cooperation and harmony between security forces and the local populace. The programme concluded with CRPF authorities assuring that similar outreach activities will continue to be organised in the future for the welfare and well-being of the local community.

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AIPWS Delegation Calls on DC Doda, Raises Public Issues Ahead of Ramzan

AMIR IQBAL KHAN

BHADARWAH, MAR 9: A delegation of the All India People's Welfare Society (AIPWS) on Monday called on the newly posted Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Krishan Lal (JKAS) and discussed various public issues including the provision of essential services during ongoing holy month of Ramzan and the upcoming festival of Eid-ul-Fitr. The delegation was led by AIPWS State President Zaffar Hussain Wani and comprised Umar Farooq Tak (State General Secretary), Anikat Sharma (Managing Organiser), Mohd Saleem Butt (Treasurer) and Badri Nath (ST President). During the meeting, the delegation extended a warm welcome to the Deputy Commissioner and apprised him of several issues concerning the welfare of people in different parts of the district. The members of the delegation emphasised the need for ensuring uninterrupted supply of essential commodities and basic amenities, particularly ration, drinking water and electricity to facilitate the public during the holy month of Ramzan and the forthcoming Eid-ul-Fitr festival. They also reiterated the organisation's commitment to working for youth advocacy and contributing constructive suggestions for the overall development and progress of district Doda. Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal gave a patient hearing to the issues raised by the delegation and assured them that the concerns highlighted would be looked into and addressed on priority. The AIPWS delegation expressed gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner for his receptive approach and for assuring prompt redressal of the issues faced by the public.

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertainingto Birth of MOHAMMAD ARHAN MALIK S/O BASHIR AHMAD MALIK R/O. DOULATPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 12/03/2014 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection.

If anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

Public Notice

It is here by notified that my name has been incorrectly mentioned on my Aadhar card as AAQIB AHMAD bearing aadhar no 2299 5424 9108 while my correct name is MOHAMMAD AQIB KHAN S/O GHULAM MOHAMMAD KHAN which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in the office concerned Aadhar authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....MOHAMM AD AQIB KHAN S/O ... GHULAM MOHAMMAD KHAN

Public Notice

I, Mohammad Maqbool Bhat, S/o Mohammad Shaban Bhat, R/o Kalantra Bala, hereby inform that I have lost my Class 8th School Certificates. I intend to apply for a duplicate certificate from Govt. Higher Secondary School Kachwa Muqam. If anyone has any objections, please submit them to the Office of The Principal, Govt. Higher Secondary School Kachwa Muqam, within 7 days from the date of this publication. Objections received after this period will not be considered.

Mohammad Maqbool Bhat S/O Mohammad Shaban Bhat R/O Kalantra Bala

Rana reviews development projects in Baramulla district

Emphasises efficient fund utilisation, timely work completion

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 09: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today virtually reviewed the progress on development projects besides assessing implementation of government schemes in Baramulla district.

During the meeting, the Minister conducted a detailed review of the progress achieved under several flagship schemes and development initiatives. These included Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Irrigation and Flood Control projects, CAMPA, Tribal Affairs schemes, Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), NABARD, District Capex and various Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

The meeting was attended by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chairman of the Pollution Control Committee, Director Tribal Affairs Department, Director Finance Tribal Affairs Department and other senior officers.

Legislators from various constituencies of the district, District Development Commissioner Baramulla and all district officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

The Minister emphasised that holistic and balanced development of every region remains the top priority of the current dispensation. He reaffirmed that the government under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed to accelerate infrastructure development and welfare initiatives to ensure timely and efficient delivery of services



to the people.

Rana stressed the need for greater accountability and coordination among the government officers to ensure effective implementation of developmental programmes, improved monitoring of public services and prompt resolution of issues affecting different constituencies of the district.

Highlighting the importance of optimal utilisation of resources, the Minister directed the concerned departments to ensure that allocated funds are utilised effectively and do not lapse, so that developmental works directly benefit the public. He also expressed concern over the apprehensions raised by MLAs regarding the possible lapse of funds and directed the Deputy Commissioner to work closely with the Legislators and concerned departments to ensure timely utilisation of allocated resources.

Addressing administrative

challenges faced by the public in Baramulla, the Minister asked the Deputy Commissioner to conduct a comprehensive exercise and submit a proposal for easing administrative hurdles arising from jurisdictional issues, so that appropriate corrective measures can be taken.

While expressing satisfaction over the overall progress achieved on various developmental works, the Minister noted that certain projects are still pending and require expedited execution. He urged the officers to adopt a proactive and result-oriented work culture to ensure timely completion of developmental projects.

During the meeting, Legislators from different constituencies raised several issues concerning infrastructure development and public services.

MLA Baramulla, Javed Hassan Beigh, raised key issues including decongestion of Old Town Baramulla, establishment of a

multi-level car parking facility, implementation of the water supply scheme under AMRUT 2.0 for Baramulla town, beautification and upgradation of the National Highway stretch from Delina to Khanpora and approval of the Sheeri-Shranz via Kawhar (Defence Road) project.

MLA Uri, Dr. Sajad Shafi Uri, highlighted the need for upgradation of existing power feeders and establishment of receiving stations at Nambla, Trikanjan and Bijhama. He also raised the issue of upgradation of the 33 KV Uri power line besides sanctioning of a Forest Guest House and a PHE Inspection Hut at Uri.

MLA Pattan, Javid Riyaz, sought implementation of the AMRUT water supply scheme for Pattan town, upgradation of Community Health Centre (CHC) Pattan to Sub-District Hospital (SDH) and establishment of a New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC) at Nihalpora along with an Urban

Health Centre in Pattan town.

He further requested for construction of Mini Secretariat and residential complex for government offices in Pattan town and development of a mini parking complex.

MLA Gulmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah, raised issues including construction of a multi-level car parking facility, water reservoir at Tangmarg, phased completion of the mini-secretariat at Tangmarg, development of an indoor stadium at Wussan, implementation of water supply schemes for Utikoo and Wussan and widening and upgradation of the Goigam-Pinjoora road.

MLA Sopore, Irshad Rasool Kar, demanded upgradation of SDH Sopore to a District Hospital, strengthening of Nahre-Zangeer canal and execution of special water supply schemes for Adipora, Sharkvara Sopore Rural, Check Nowpora and Wular Stage I & II.

MLA Wagoora-Kreeri, Irfan Hafiz Lone, raised issues related to restoration of canals, upgradation of health facilities, filling of vacancies in government departments, and construction and improvement of roads in his constituency.

Responding to the concerns raised, the Minister assured the MLAs that the issues highlighted during the meeting are under consideration of the government and will be addressed in a time-bound manner. He reiterated that all matters concerning the public welfare will receive due priority and necessary action will be taken to resolve them in the larger interest of the people.

Textiles Ministry invites application from artisans for Shilp Guru & National Award, Pension Scheme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MARCH 09 – The Union Ministry of Textiles has invited applications from registered artisans and craftsmen for National Handicrafts Awards (Shilp Guru & National Award) for the Award Year 2025 and Pension Scheme 2025-26, under its premier National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP) and Handicrafts Artisans Comprehensive Welfare Scheme.



In a press statement issued here today, a spokesman of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, stated that the office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, has invited applications from registered artisans for Handicrafts Award 2025 under HSC for Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal districts, the last date of which has been fixed for March 31, 2026.

"We urge the artisans to apply in online mode along with self-attested copies of documents including 02 recent passport size photographs, Adhaar, Artisan & PAN Cards, Award & Character Certificate, photograph of Award Entry, history of craft, his Brief Note along with videos and affidavit in a pen-drive," he said, adding that the copies of the notification, along with enclosures, are available on the department's official social media handles.

Similarly for Pension Scheme under the aegis of 'Financial Support Scheme to Artisans in Indigent Circumstances', the spokesman stated that the office of DC (Handicrafts), Government of India, has fixed April 02, 2026 as the last date of submission of forms in online mode from eligible artisans of Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal districts.

"The documents to be affixed with online form include 02 recent passport size photographs, Adhaar, Artisan and PAN cards, Awards certificate, if any, Income Certificate, Caste and Disability Certificate, Age Certificate and affidavit along with Bank Mandate form," he added.

The artisans have been further advised to submit their online applications complete in all respects

DLSA Reasi organizes series of Legal awareness events

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, MARCH 09: Under the leadership of the Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Reasi (also Pr. District and Sessions Judge) Khalil Choudhary and the guidance of Secretary Pooja Gupta, an awareness programme on "Prohibition of Child Marriage" was held at Legal Aid Clinic Channa Neosi, Tehsil Mahore by the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) of TLSC Mahore. The participants were sensitized to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. The PLVs highlighted that child marriage is a social evil that adversely affects the health, education and overall development of children, particularly girls.

The PLVs also made the public aware about the role of the Legal Services Authorities in providing free legal aid and assistance to the needy and marginalized sections of society. The participants were encouraged to report instances of child marriage and seek legal assistance through the Legal Services Institutions. Another awareness programme was organized on NALSA Schemes at Mahore. The participants were informed about the role and functions of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the free legal aid services available for the weaker and marginalized sections of society. The PLVs sensitized the local residents about their legal rights and the importance of approaching Legal Services Institutions for free legal assistance. Information regarding the welfare schemes, legal aid clinics and the availability of legal help through Legal Services Authorities was also disseminated among the participants.

Another awareness Programme on "Mediation and Role of Legal Aid" was held at Panchayat Ghar Garn, Katra by the Para Legal Volunteers of (PLVs) of TLSC. Advocate Rachni Sharma - the Resource Person and sensitized the participants about the importance of mediation as an effective and amicable method of dispute resolution. She also elaborated on the role of Legal Services Authorities in providing free legal aid and assistance to the eligible sections of society, ensuring access to justice for all. The participants were made aware about the benefits of mediation in resolving disputes peacefully and the availability of free legal services provided by the Legal Services Authorities under the Legal Services Authorities Act.

Floriculture Department organises one day training programme at KVK Bhaderwah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, MARCH 09: The Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens on Monday organised one-day training for farmers in commercial floriculture cultivation. The programme was held at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Bhaderwah under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Mission for Integrated Development of

Horticulture (MIDH) and Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA).

A group of 45 farmers including women farmers from different parts of District Doda participated in the programme and received practical as well as technical guidance in commercial floriculture.

The training aimed to promote scientific cultivation of flower crops

and encourage farmers to adopt floriculture as a viable source of income.

Scientists Dr Neeraj Kotwal and Dr Arvind Raina delivered detailed lectures on the modern practices in the cultivation of different flower crops. They shared field experiences with the farmers to enable them to enhance productivity and improve the quality of flowers.

High Court holds Full Court Reference to condole Justice Jhanji's demise

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 09: A Full Court Reference was held today in the Courtroom of the Chief Justice at Jammu Wing of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh to condole the demise of Justice V. K. Jhanji, Former Judge/Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, who passed away on 23rd February, 2026.

The Full Court Reference was convened in accordance with the long-standing conventions and institutional traditions of the High Court.

The Reference was attended by all the Judges of the High Court with the Judges from the Jammu Wing joined the Reference physically, while those present in the Srinagar Wing joined through virtual mode.

The proceedings were also attended by family members of Justice V. K. Jhanji, former Chief Justices and former Judges of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh; Senior Additional Advocate General;



Deputy Solicitors General of India at Jammu and Srinagar; President, Jammu & Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Jammu; Senior Advocates; Principal District and Sessions Judge, Jammu; Judicial

Officers and officers of the Registry. Besides, officers and officials and Advocates of the High Court from the Srinagar Wing joined the proceedings through virtual mode. On the occasion, the Senior

Additional Advocate General and the President, Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Jammu, in their condolence addresses, remembered the distinguished judicial career and invaluable

contribution of late Justice V. K. Jhanji to the administration of justice. They prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

Chief Justice of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Arun Palli, in his condolence address, recalled the remarkable judicial career of Justice V. K. Jhanji and observed that his profound knowledge of law and commitment to justice has left a lasting impression on the legal fraternity. He recalled the justice Jhanji's capacity to decide the complex legal issues.

The Chief Justice, on behalf of all the Judges of the High Court, placed on record collective respect and gratitude for the life and service of Justice Jhanji.

The proceedings concluded with observance of a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the departed soul and the Court work was suspended for the rest of the day.

The proceedings were conducted by M.K Sharma, Registrar General.

Capacity building in focus: 2-day specialised training programme inaugurated at ZPHQ Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 09: A two-day training programme on "Intelligence Generation" commenced today at the Zonal Police Headquarters (ZPHQ), Jammu. The training aims at strengthening the analytical and intelligence-gathering capabilities of police personnel.

The programme has been organised by ZPHQ Jammu for officers and officials from

different districts of the Zone. The programme was inaugurated by the Staff Officer to IGP Jammu, Shamsheer Hussain, who highlighted the importance of strengthening intelligence capabilities at the field level to effectively deal with emerging security challenges.

During the 2-day training programme, the experts from different security and intelligence organisations shall deliver 8 sessions covering the



fundamentals of intelligence in policing, sources of information and basic intelligence tradecraft. The resource persons would include officers from the IB, MI, RAW, BSF (G Branch) and CID. The sessions are designed to familiarise trainees with the role of intelligence in supporting investigation, prevention of crime and operational decision-making.

The training will also broadly focus on development and handling of information sources,

intelligence collection methods and an overview of technical and digital aspects of modern policing.

The trainees would further be introduced to basic analytical techniques used in intelligence assessment, threat evaluation and inter-agency coordination, particularly in the context of security and counter-terrorism related challenges.

The programme forms part of the capacity-building initiatives

of Jammu Police, aimed at enhancing the professional skills of its personnel in intelligence collection and analysis.

Later in the afternoon session, the Inspector General of Police Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti also interacted with the trainees and briefed them about the objectives of the course and the importance of quality intelligence generation for detection and prevention of crime as well as terror-related activities.

PM Modi lays foundation stone for Kota Airport, says project will accelerate development of Hadoti region

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 9: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday laid the foundation stone of the proposed airport in Kota through a virtual address, describing the project as a major step toward accelerating economic growth and connectivity across Rajasthan's Hadoti region.

Addressing the ceremony, Modi said the day marked "new hope and a new achievement" for the region comprising Kota, Bundi, Baran and Jhalawar. The airport project, estimated to cost about Rs 1,500 crore, is expected to significantly improve connectivity and boost trade and tourism once operational.

"Today is a day of new hope and new achievement for the entire Hadoti region including Kota, Bundi, Baran and Jhalawar," Modi said, adding that the modern airport "is going to give new momentum to the

development of the entire region in the coming times."

The Prime Minister said improved air connectivity would ease travel for residents and businesses that currently rely on distant airports in cities such as Jaipur and Jodhpur. "When this airport starts, travel will become easier and trade will grow rapidly across the entire area, including Kota," he said.

Highlighting the broader transformation underway in the region, Modi said Kota is rapidly emerging as a connectivity hub through improved air, rail and road networks. He noted that under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, Kota's two major railway stations are being upgraded with modern facilities to improve passenger experience and infrastructure.

The Prime Minister also referred to the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, which passes through Kota and Bundi, saying the highway is opening "a



new gateway for the development of the entire region." According to him, the addition of air connectivity will complement these ongoing projects and further accelerate economic activity. Modi described Kota as a unique centre com-

binning education and energy production. The city is widely known for its coaching institutes that attract students from across India, while the surrounding region hosts power generation from multiple sources, including nuclear, coal, gas and hy-

dropower. He also highlighted the economic potential of local products, saying the airport would help expand markets for regional specialties such as Kota Doria saree, Kota stone and agricultural produce including Bundi's

basmati rice. "This new airport in Kota will work to multiply these possibilities many times over," he said.

The Prime Minister further underlined the tourism prospects of the region, pointing to spiritual and natural attractions such as Mathuradhish Ji Temple, Garadia Mahadev Temple and the wildlife-rich Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve. Greater air connectivity, he said, would make it easier for domestic and international tourists to visit these destinations, benefiting local youth and businesses.

During his address, Modi recalled his visit to Ajmer earlier in the week, where development projects worth thousands of crores were inaugurated and appointment letters were distributed to more than 21,000 young people. Such back-to-back programmes, he said, reflect the rapid pace of development in Rajasthan.

The Prime Minister also

praised Kota Member of Parliament and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for his role in pushing development initiatives in the region. Referring to Birla's role in Parliament, Modi remarked that he "handles the entire class well even when facing unruly students from certain big families."

Placing the project in the context of India's expanding aviation infrastructure, Modi said the number of airports in the country has increased from about 70 in 2014 to more than 160 today. He expressed confidence that the Kota airport would become another catalyst for regional growth.

"I am confident that this new airport of Kota will also give new momentum to the development of this area," he said, adding that such infrastructure projects strengthen the vision of a developed Rajasthan and contribute to the broader national goal of building a developed India. (UNI)

Suchitra Sen: Tollywood's ultimate cine superstar

JAYANTA ROY CHOWDHURY

KOLKATA, MAR 09 (UNI): As the world celebrates women's day, one cannot but remember the one defining actress who epitomized female superstars of Indian cinema, certainly Bengali cinema, Suchitra Sen, often called "India's own Greta Garbo".

Some two decades back, on this very day, March 7, a lady rolled down a car window, lowered her shades and gave this writer, then a young man on a morning walk down Ballygunge Circular Road, a dazzling if apologetic smile as her car had almost knocked him down while turning in towards her driveway.

She was the one Indian superstar about whom people knew hardly anything beyond what she was willing to reveal. Born Rama Dasgupta in 1931 in the district town of Pabna in what is today's Bangladesh, Sen was the only true lady Superstar of Bengali Cinema.

Mrs Sen as she was called by everyone including big name directors and producers at Tollygunge, always believed in keeping her personal and professional life separate. She married soon after she came to Calcutta at the age of 16 (then the legal age of marriage) to Dibanath Sen, a businessman scion of an aristocratic Bengali family, which owned among other properties, the sprawling Villa on Ballygunge Circular Road which was to be her home till her death.

Though many thought of her as haughty and aloof, those who worked with her felt she was just the opposite. Lively, funny, sarcastic at times, but in a good natured way and very sensitively humane in real life to those few to whom she opened up, that is how her fellow actors and technicians saw her.

However, she drew her own lines. Everyone - from the producer to the junior-most spot boy had to call her Mrs Sen, not Suchitra. A few like Supriya Devi called her Rama-di. Even the legendary singer-music director Hemanta Kumar, who was certainly older than her, called her by her chosen Mrs Sen.

Directors often did not decide how she would emote, she did. Lines in the script often changed because, Mrs Sen felt that was what was needed. Dates were difficult to come by as Oscar-winning director Satyajit Ray found out to his discomfort, when he wanted to cast her in his never-made movie 'Debi Choudhrani'.

But then, often she would become the perfect pupil for those, whom she felt did have something to teach her. Lyricist-movie director Gulzar tells us how she insisted that she will call him 'sir' during the filming of Aandhi, the 1975 movie where she copied Mrs Indira Gandhi's mannerisms to act as Aarti Devi, a successful politician who leaves behind a marriage to take over her father's political legacy.

The movie with its memorable songs 'Tere Bina Zindagi' and 'Tum Agaye Ho', became a hit, only to be banned by a Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's paranoid Information minister V.C. Shukla during the emergency years of 1975-1977.

Some six years later she acted in her first film, 'Saat Number kayedi' (Prisoner No. 7). People say movie world legend Bimal Roy, who was a relative of her husband, introduced her to 'Tollywood'.

The screen name Suchitra was given to her by an assistant director, who felt it would be more saleable than a plain Rama, and it did sell! Her rise from then on was phenomenal.

Despite her success, or maybe because of her success, Suchitra Sen rarely called colleagues home and kept her family life totally separate from her professional one. Suchitra, was perhaps the only Indian actress who successfully shut one life from the other, as she crossed over in an ambassador car down Lansdowne Road and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Road towards Tollygunge's fabled studios. (UNI)

Women rule the cockpit: India's airlines break gender barriers

DEEPSHIKHA VERMA

NEW DELHI, MAR 9 (UNI): As the world marks International Women's Day on Sunday, Indian aviation is celebrating a significant shift in reshaping cockpits, control towers, and boardrooms alike.

Across the country's leading airlines, women are no longer just passengers of progress; they are the pilots, engineers, and leaders steering the industry toward a more inclusive future.

Two of the country's major carriers, IndiGo and Air India, are highlighting the growing presence of women in roles traditionally dominated by men, demonstrating how the skies and operational hubs are evolving into spaces of equal opportunity.

IndiGo employs more than 1,000 women pilots, making it the first and only airline in India to reach this milestone.

Women pilots now account for 17.5 percent of the airline's total pilot workforce, more than three times the global average. The achievement marks a significant step forward in an industry where gender representation has historically been uneven.

At a broader level, the airline says women now make up over 45 percent of its overall workforce. Their presence is steadily increasing across key operational and corporate functions, more than 30 percent of airport operations staff are women, nearly 25 percent work in the Operations Control Centre, over 20 percent are in finance roles, and more than 15 percent contribute to digital teams. Women also hold over 23 percent of leadership positions at the airline.

While interacting with Sukhjit Singh Pasricha, Group Chief Human Resources Officer at IndiGo, he told UNI, "On International Women's Day, we are proud to announce that IndiGo now has over 1,000 women pilots, among the highest in the world. This milestone truly reflects the spirit of Girl Power at IndiGo."

The airline also released a short film on social media celebrating "Girl Power," featuring women employees sharing the moments that inspired them to pursue aviation careers. The initiative forms part of IndiGo's wider diversity and



inclusion programme, 'EMBRACE,' which stands for Equity, Multiculturalism, Belonging, Respect, Accessibility, Community, and Empowerment.

Through programmes such as "Take-Off 2.0," which supports women returning to the workforce after career breaks, and the 6E Girl Power Community, a peer network aimed at mentoring and support, the airline is attempting to create a more inclusive workplace.

Other initiatives, such as #HerMatters and #MakingOurMothersSoar, focus on helping women navigate critical life stages while continuing their professional journeys.

Meanwhile, Air India is also

spotlighting women's contributions across its operations.

Women pilots make up around 16 percent of its pilot workforce, again significantly higher than the global average, while women are steadily increasing their presence across operational areas such as engineering, flight operations, ground services, and safety roles. The airline's Women's Day video takes a different approach, addressing stereotypes women often face in aviation.

In the film, employees from various departments candidly respond to questions reflecting common assumptions about women in the industry. The second half of the video reveals their actual roles, underscoring the

technical and operational expertise women bring to aviation, from aircraft engineering to safety management.

Air India says the initiative aims to encourage young women to imagine themselves across the full spectrum of aviation careers, not just in visible roles such as cabin crew but also in complex behind-the-scenes functions that keep airlines running.

The shift is already visible in several operational areas. At IndiGo, for instance, women's representation in airport operations has increased from 24 percent to 31 percent over the past two years, while participation in security roles has risen from 14 percent to 22 percent.

Together, these developments signal a broader transformation within Indian aviation, one where more women are entering the industry and shaping its future.

As airlines expand and modernise, the growing presence of women across cockpits, control rooms, and corporate offices reflects a larger cultural shift: a new generation of professionals determined to claim their space in the skies. (UNI)

PM Modi highlights Annapurna Devi's article on Women's role in nation-building

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 9: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday highlighted a write-up by Minister Annapurna Devi, emphasising the role of women in shaping India's development and the importance of the care economy in the country's journey toward a developed nation.

The post comes as the country prepares to celebrate International Women's Day.

In a post on the social media platform X, the Prime Minister shared the minister's article and underscored the central role of women's contributions in India's progress. "As the nation celebrates our Nari Shakti, union Minister Smt. Annapurna Devi writes that Bharat's story has been shaped by the strength of its women, drawing from a rich historical legacy," Modi said.

Annapurna Devi, who serves as a union minister in the Modi government, reflected on the historical and contemporary role of women in India's social and economic transformation. In her article, she wrote that the narrative of Bharat's growth is deeply intertwined with the resilience, leadership and contributions of women across generations.

"From ancient times to modern India, women have played a defining role in shaping the moral, cultural and economic fabric of the nation," she noted, adding that the empowerment of women remains a key pillar in the country's development vision. The minister highlighted the



significance of the care economy - comprising activities such as caregiving, nurturing families and supporting community well-being - as a foundational element in India's growth trajectory. She argued that recognising and strengthening this sector is essential for achieving the goal of a developed India, often referred to by the government as Viksit Bharat.

"The care economy forms an important foundation in our journey toward Viksit Bharat," she wrote, emphasising that valuing care work and enabling women to participate more fully in economic and social life will accelerate national progress.

The Prime Minister's amplification of the article comes in the lead-up to International Women's Day, observed annually on March 8, when governments, organisations and communities highlight the achievements of women and renew commitments toward gender equality.

In recent years, the Modi government has repeatedly stressed women-led development as a central theme of its policy framework, linking initiatives in education, financial inclusion, health and entrepreneurship to broader efforts aimed at empowering women and strengthening their role in the country's growth story. (UNI)

Rahul Gandhi accuses Centre of compromising India's data sovereignty

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 9: Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday accused the Modi government of compromising India's digital sovereignty, alleging that a recent agreement with the United States could allow foreign technology companies greater access to Indian data.

In a message posted on his WhatsApp channel, Gandhi said control over data would play a decisive role in determining leadership in the rapidly growing field of Artificial Intelligence. "India's future in AI depends on who controls our data," Gandhi said.

The Congress leader alleged that the government had entered into an arrangement that could effectively hand over Indian data to foreign entities. "By signing a deal that effectively hands Indian data to the United States and gives foreign tech companies a free pass, our compromised PM has sold out India's digital sovereignty and put the future of millions of Indian jobs at risk," he said. Gandhi's remarks come amid growing global debate over data governance, cross-border data flows and the role of data in training Artificial Intelligence systems. As countries race to build advanced AI capabilities, access to large datasets is increasingly seen as a strategic resource that can influence economic competitiveness and technological leadership.

India has been working on regulatory frameworks to manage the rapidly expanding digital ecosystem, including the enactment of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and initiatives aimed at boosting domestic technological capacity. The government has maintained that international collaboration and partnerships with global technology companies are necessary to accelerate innovation and strengthen India's digital economy. However, opposition leaders have repeatedly raised concerns about data security, privacy and the long-term implications of cross-border data arrangements. The issue is likely to intensify political debate over technology policy, data governance and employment prospects in India's growing digital and AI sectors. (UNI)



England, WI and SA to leave India over the weekend on charter flights

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: The England, South Africa and West Indies teams are set to leave India over the weekend on charter planes arranged by the ICC due to the disruption in air travel caused by the ongoing military conflict in West Asia.

England after losing their semi-final to India on Thursday, will depart from Mumbai on Saturday evening, while West Indies and South Africa will take a different charter flight from Kolkata.

England will fly direct to London. West Indies - along with South Africa - will go to Johannesburg first

and then to Antigua; both teams are still awaiting confirmation on when exactly they will depart but the understanding is that it will be on Sunday. Some of the South African contingent - the team management along with Keshav Maharaj, Jason Smith and George Linde - will be travelling to New Zealand on Sunday for a limited-overs tour that begins on March 15.

Both the South Africa and West Indies squads have been in Kolkata since their exit from the 2026 T20 World Cup. While South Africa lost to New Zealand in the first semi-final on March 4, West Indies have been in Kolkata since their defeat

against India in the last Super Eight game on March 1.

On Saturday, West Indies head coach Daren Sammy had posted "Day 6" on his X account, indicating the number of days they had been stranded in Kolkata after their final match. The Zimbabwe team had also faced delays in leaving India after playing their final match on March 1 but some of their contingent were able to leave on March 4.

India play New Zealand in the T20 World Cup final on Sunday in Ahmedabad, bringing an end to the tournament that began on February 7 in India and Sri Lanka.

No fear, only fireworks: India's T20 generation bats without brakes

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MUMBAI: The onslaughts are truly breathless. They are unrelenting, dizzying in scale, and unmoored now more than ever from what used to be the bedrock of a batting life. Humans are hard-wired by millions of years of evolution to be self-preserving. Batters, on top of this, are taught from the youngest ages to prize their wickets, to hang their worth on the number of runs that appears against their name on a scorecard. When you're making your way through the game, a fifty might get your name in the local newspaper. A hundred will get you noticed by selectors at whatever level is the next step up. Big runs get player-of-the-match awards.

But India's T20 batters over the last few years have slashed these ties to tradition. They have baked failure into the philosophy, treating it as a necessary ingredient of excellence, and in doing so found a freedom that is now turning them into a batting juggernaut that - whatever happens in Sunday's final in Ahmedabad - seems set to redefine the upper limits of T20 batting in the years to come. Leading up to that match, India have crossed 250 twice in three games - first against Zimbabwe in Chennai, before doing it in a knock-out against England at the Wankhede.

It is the outright outrageousness of the shots India now play that imprint themselves and live on for weeks in the brain. Sanju Samson was the chief provider of these little ridiculousnesses in the past two matches, smoking a shortish Jofra Archer ball way over midwicket in the powerplay, before to a wider length in the 12th over, he hung on the back foot and sizzled another six over long on, in addition to the five other sixes he struck.

But there is no hint of respite for bowlers from anyone else either. In that semi-final, Shivam Dube was yanked up the order to deliver his own cannonade against spin, the high-risk-high-reward blasting of an England attack utterly overwhelming any joy the opposition may have felt at making a breakthrough. India's batters take fewer balls than they ever have to acclimatise to conditions. Having done so, they make bolder plays at a more dazzling frequency than ever before, cutting bowlers' margins of error to infinitesimal proportions, only pinpoint yorkers a serious safeguard against being blasted. In this tournament Tilak Varma has slipped effortlessly down the order due to a tactical change at the top to keep India running wild. In the semi-final, he played one of the best shots of a heady evening of batting, backing away and slicing a slightly-off length yorker from Archer over deep backward point in an over in which he struck two other sixes that almost seemed almost prosaic in comparison.

When India play at high-scoring venues such as the Wankhede, with a full house reveling rapturously in every big hit, bowlers feel like mere logs to be cast into the white-hot furnace of Indian batting. England's attack, by the way, had been the most penetrative in the tournament until the semi-final. The great irony of India's batters putting such a low price on their wickets is that wickets don't end up meaning that much to the opposition either, one six-hitting powerhouse replaced by another and another all the way down until Axar Patel at No. 8. India have these riches because each of these batters has been primed year after year in the heat of the IPL. Ahmedabad may not necessarily be the venue for as fearsome ball-striking, given the strip the final is to be played on is a mix of red and black soil, the black soil perhaps lending some slowness to the surface.

England Women head to South Africa after Abu Dhabi cancellation

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

DERBY: A group of 30 England women's players will head to South Africa to begin making their cases for selection ahead of a home T20 World Cup later this year, after plans to travel to Abu Dhabi had to be hastily rearranged because of the ongoing conflict in the region.

The players will be split into two 15-strong squads to play a five-game intra-squad series in Pretoria between March 10 and 27. The squads will be known as Team Brittin and Team Heyhoe-Flint, after former England stars Jan Brittin and Rachael Heyhoe-Flint, who both lifted a World Cup trophy on home soil.

Nat Sciver-Brunt, the England captain, will lead Team Brittin, coached by former Durham batter and England Women assistant coach Jon Lewis, while vice-captain Charlie Dean will take charge of Team Heyhoe-Flint, coached by another assistant, Luke Williams.

England Women's head coach Charlotte Edwards will work with both squads and challenged the players to stake their claims for a place at the World Cup.



"This is a big opportunity for every player involved to put their hand up and demonstrate that they're an invaluable part of our World Cup plans," Edwards said. "It's the same chance for every player, whether they're new to the team or they've played 100

games. We want to use this series as a chance to stretch ourselves and put ourselves under pressure in competitive match situations."

Eight players on the tour are yet to make a senior appearance for England. Among them are Davina Perrin, the 19-year-old

opening batter who burst into public consciousness with a 43-ball 101 for Northern Superchargers in the Eliminator at last year's Hundred. She is joined by left-arm spinner and England Under 19s team-mate Tilly Corteen-Coleman, whose economy rate of 5.75

was the second-best among the top 10 wicket-takers in the Women's Hundred last year, where she claimed 11 at 14.81.

Former Under 19s captain Grace Scrivens will also travel, along with Alexa Stonehouse, Grace Potts and Jodi Grewcock. Ellie Threlkeld, the 27-year-old Lancashire women's captain, has also been picked to make the trip, as has fellow wicketkeeper-batter Rhianna Southby.

Sarah Glenn, the regular England Women's legspinner, will not travel after fracturing a finger during training in February.

It will be England's second training camp in South Africa this year, after skills-based trips to Oman in January then Stellenbosch last month. Edwards believes her plan for this next training block to have a "more competitive element" marks the next step in their preparation for the upcoming international season.

England will host New Zealand and India in white-ball series ahead of the T20 World Cup, which runs from June 12 to July 5. They will then take on India in the first women's Test to be played at Lord's.