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## Don't Panic Over LPG Disruption, Spread Only Verified Information: PM Modi

Prime Minister says global conflict has impacted energy supply chain; attacks DMK government at Tamil Nadu rally

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**TIRUCHIRAPPALLI (TAMIL NADU), MAR 11:** Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged people not to panic or pay attention to rumours regarding the disruption in LPG supply caused by the ongoing conflict in West Asia, asking citizens to rely only on verified information.

Addressing a mega NDA rally in Tiruchirappalli, the Prime Minister said the conflict involving Iran, Israel and the United States has affected the global energy supply chain,



but assured that the government is capable of managing the situation. "I appeal to people to spread only correct and verified information. There is no need to

panic or pay attention to rumours," Modi said. His remarks come amid concerns over a commercial LPG short supply that has

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### Kashmir has stable fuel stocks: Div Com

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO



**SRINAGAR, MAR 11:** Assuring residents of stable fuel availability in the Kashmir Division, Divisional Commissioner Anshul Gargon Wednesday said there is no immediate cause for concern over LPG, petrol, or diesel supplies.

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### No shortage of fuel in J&K: Minister Sharma

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO



**JAMMU, MAR 11:** Warning black marketers and hoarders of dire consequences, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Satish Sharma, on Wednesday urged residents of Jammu & Kashmir to stay calm as there is

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### No LPG Crisis in Kashmir: Hotelier Mushtaq Chaya

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES



**SRINAGAR, MAR 11:** Amid concerns over liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) shortages reported from several parts of the country, the hospitality sector in Kashmir on Tuesday asserted that the Valley is not facing any such crisis and that supplies remain stable. Prominent hotelier Mushtaq Chaya

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## LeT Terrorist, Launching Operative Neutralised Along LoC in Rajouri

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**JAMMU, MAR 11:** A launching operative of Pakistan-based terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba was killed along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district while attempting to infiltrate into the Indian side, officials said on Wednesday.

The army said the terrorist was neutralised in the Jhangar area of the Nowshera sector around 3 pm on Tuesday when troops detected suspicious movement close to the LoC. The infiltrator, accompanied by another associate, was attempt-

ing to sneak across the border when alert troops engaged them, leading to an exchange of fire.

Based on documents recovered from the scene and intelligence inputs, the slain terrorist has been identified as Hamza Yousaf, a resident of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Officials said Yousaf was a senior operative linked to the launchpad network of the outfit and was responsible for facilitating infiltration of armed terrorists into Indian territory.

Security officials described the killing as a major setback to the infiltration infrastructure

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## Omar Abdullah Pushes for Expansion of JK House Network Across India

CM says new and revamped facilities must reflect J&K's cultural identity while providing modern infrastructure

HT NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI, MAR 11:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday reviewed plans to expand and modernise Jammu and Kashmir House properties across several cities in the country, including proposals for new facilities in Dwarka in the national capital and Navi Mumbai.

The review meeting, attended by Resident Commissioner Ramesh Kumar and senior offi-



cial of the J&K Resident Commission, focused on strengthening the Union Territory's institutional infrastructure

outside Jammu and Kashmir and improving facilities for officials, students, patients and other visitors.

Officials briefed the Chief Minister on the status of government properties in Dwarka

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## Security Tightened Across Kashmir Ahead of Festive Season

IGP V K Birdi reviews preparedness, calls for heightened vigilance and effective crowd management

HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAR 11:** Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, V K Birdi, on Wednesday directed officers to maintain strict vigilance and strengthen security measures across the Valley in view of the upcoming



festive season.

Chairing a security review meeting at the Police Control Room in Srinagar, Birdi assessed arrangements for major festivals including Shab-e-Barat, Navratri, Eid-ul-Fitr and Nowruz, which are expected to draw large gatherings at religious places across

Kashmir.

During the meeting, the IGP stressed the importance of enhanced security arrangements to ensure public safety and maintain law and order during the celebrations. He directed officers to implement

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## CS reviews road safety measures across J&K

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAR 11:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Transport Department to assess the measures being taken for effective traffic management, reduction of road accidents and strengthening of road safety mechanisms across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting besides ACS Finance; ACS, PWD; Principal Secretary, Home; Commissioner Secretary, GAD; and Secretary, Transport was attended by IGP, Traffic; Transport Commissioner; Director, Motor Garages and other concerned officers.

Deputy Commissioners and

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**Don't Panic.....**

reportedly affected the hotel industry across the country and triggered fears of a possible spike in petrol and diesel prices.

Expressing confidence in the country's ability to deal with the situation, the Prime Minister said the government always places India's interests above everything. "In any situation, our government has always ensured that the interests of the nation come first. I am confident that as a country we will navigate every situation successfully," he said.

During the rally, Modi also launched a sharp attack on the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government in Tamil Nadu, alleging that power in the state revolves around a single family.

"In DMK rule, everything starts and ends with one family," he said, accusing the party of following a "scientific corruption model."

Targeting Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, Modi alleged that corruption and scams, including the alleged cash-for-jobs case, had shattered the dreams of the poor and middle class.

He claimed that people in Tamil Nadu were now looking for change and said the National Democratic Alliance could bring development to the state.

The Prime Minister also highlighted infrastructure initiatives in the region, including the modern terminal at Tiruchirappalli International Airport and the granting of international airport status to Madurai Airport.

Among those present at the rally were Edappadi K. Palaniswami, T. T. V. Dhinakaran and Anbumani Ramadoss, among others. (Agencies)

**Kashmir has.....**

Addressing the media at his office in Srinagar, the Div Com said that the region currently holds around 13 days of LPG stock and more than 15 days of petrol and diesel reserves.

"We have a storage capacity of 15 to 20 days at maximum levels and the position of LPG is quite comfortable," he said.

Garg said the Department of Food, Health and Civil Supplies, along with daily monitoring from the divisional control room, keeps a close watch on essential supply chains.

He appealed to the public to rely solely on official updates, cautioning against panic buying and misinformation. "The Government of India and the Government of J&K are closely monitoring the situation. Any official decisions will be communicated promptly," he said.

The Divisional Commissioner also addressed concerns about commercial restrictions on LPG, clarifying that these do not affect domestic consumers, hospitals, or educational institutions. He warned of strict action against hoarding and black marketing. "Deputy Commissioners have constituted squads and our district control rooms are ready to take immediate action against violators," he said.

On essential commodities beyond fuel, Garg said the market remains stable. With the holy month of Ramadan ongoing and Eid approaching, district-level committees have ramped up inspections and monitoring to ensure smooth supply and price regulation during the festive season. "Market inspections for food quality and price control have increased in the last 15-20 days and more are planned in the coming week," he said.

The Div Com appealed to the media and public to ensure the dissemination of accurate information and avoid spreading panic or fake news. (KNO)

**No shortage.....**

no shortage of fuel in the Union Territory. Speaking to reporters here, Minister Sharma assured the public that petroleum and LPG supplies are adequate across the region.

He said the government is closely monitoring all fuel stations and LPG outlets and anyone found hoarding or indulging in black marketing will face stringent legal action.

Earlier in the day, Sharma chaired a high-level meeting to review the stock position and supply of petroleum products, including petrol, diesel, kerosene and LPG, in view of ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. The meeting was attended by Commissioner/Secretary FCS&CA Saurabh Bhagat, Directors of FCS&CA Jammu and Kashmir Rifat Kohli and Dr. Sagar Dattaraya, representatives from major oil marketing companies including Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and officials from Legal Metrology, finance and distribution wings.

During the meeting, further Sharma reviewed stock levels, operational status of fuel depots and LPG bottling plants, and the supply chain mechanism to ensure uninterrupted availability of fuel to consumers.

He stressed maintaining buffer stocks, strengthening coordination with oil companies and proactive planning to address potential supply disruptions.

Reassuring the public, the minister said the administration is fully vigilant and committed to safeguarding consumer interests.

He also directed officials to maintain strict vigil against hoarding, black marketing and overcharging, instructing Legal Metrology and enforcement teams to intensify inspections at fuel stations and LPG outlets to ensure compliance with regulations.

Highlighting the global nature of energy markets, Sharma drew parallels with past disruptions in the Gulf and appealed to citizens

not to panic. "In this era, we are a global village. Vigilance and reason must prevail," he said, reiterating the government's commitment, under Omar Abdullah's leadership, to peace, prosperity and communal harmony.

He further urged the public to report any irregularities, assuring swift action against offenders and uninterrupted supply of essential fuels throughout Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

**No LPG Crisis.....**

said there is no panic-like situation regarding LPG cylinders in the region, adding that the availability of domestic cooking gas continues without disruption.

"As of now, there is no panic-like situation when it comes to LPG cylinders; things are functioning absolutely smoothly," Chaya said, noting that both households and hotels in the Valley are receiving adequate supplies.

He acknowledged that some regions in the country, including parts of Rajasthan and South India, are facing supply disruptions but expressed confidence that Jammu and Kashmir would remain unaffected.

Chaya said he remains hopeful that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the Union Territory will not encounter any issues related to LPG supply.

With the Valley preparing to welcome the spring tourist season, the hotelier also highlighted that major tourist attractions are set to open shortly, including the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden and the historic Badamwari Garden.

He appealed to the central and local leadership to send a positive message encouraging tourists to visit Kashmir, saying the tourism sector is hopeful that the coming summer will prove fruitful after a difficult previous year.

**Let Terrorist.....**

operating from across the border. A significant cache of arms and ammunition was recovered from the possession of the slain terrorist, including an AK-type rifle with two magazines, two pistols with four magazines, 58 rounds of ammunition, three hand grenades, a mobile phone, two SIM cards and some Pakistani currency.

While one terrorist was killed, his associate managed to escape and retreat back to the Pakistani side during the encounter, officials said.

The incident marks the second infiltration attempt foiled by the army in the Rajouri sector this month. On March 4, troops had opened fire on a group of infiltrating terrorists in the Turkandi area, forcing them to retreat. Earlier, during the intervening night of February 19 and 20, an infiltration bid was foiled in the Sunderbani area of Rajouri and arms and ammunition were recovered.

Army officials said troops remain on a high state of alert along the LoC. "A robust operational posture and heightened vigilance continue across the sector. The wall stands vigilant — every infiltration bid will fail," the army said.

**Omar Abdullah.....**

and 5, Prithviraj Road in New Delhi, as well as those located in Chandigarh, Amritsar and Mumbai. They also presented updates on ongoing works, budgetary requirements and future development plans.

During the meeting, Abdullah stressed that all upcoming constructions and renovation projects must reflect the rich cultural heritage and distinctive identity of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the new infrastructure should incorporate elements of the region's architectural and cultural legacy while maintaining modern functionality so that these government properties stand as dignified representations of Jammu and Kashmir in different parts of the country.

The meeting was informed that the government has initiated steps to establish a new JK House in Dwarka to augment accommodation and administrative infrastructure for J&K officials and visitors in New Delhi. Similarly, the administration is pursuing the development of a JK House at Kharghar in Navi Mumbai to strengthen the Union Territory's presence in the country's financial capital.

While reviewing the proposed JK House in Amritsar, the Chief Minister directed the concerned authorities to take up the issue of land consolidation with the Punjab government, noting that the currently available land parcels are scattered and may not serve the intended purpose of building a functional facility. He asked officials to request the allotment of a single consolidated plot to facilitate proper planning and development.

Regarding the Navi Mumbai project, officials informed the meeting that a Detailed Project Report worth Rs. 29.56 crore has been submitted to the administrative department along with a capital expenditure proposal of about Rs. 30 crore for construction of the facility.

The meeting also discussed the possibility of entrusting the execution of the project to agencies such as National Buildings Construction Corporation and Central Public Works Department to ensure efficient implementation.

Abdullah also advised officers to study similar government guest houses and institutional facilities developed by other states and Union Territories across the country so that best practices in infrastructure development, architecture and service delivery can be incorporated into the upcoming projects.

Earlier, Resident Commissioner Ramesh Kumar presented a detailed overview of the government properties managed by the Resident Commission, including offices, staff quarters, guest houses and VIP accommodation. He also highlighted proposals for upgrading VIP rooms into suites at the Chanakyapuri JK House complex, redevelopment of the Rajaji Marg property in New Delhi and extension of guest house facilities at 5, Prithviraj Road. The condition of other properties under the Resident Commission's management in Chandigarh, Amritsar, Malabar Hill in Mumbai and Sirsa in Haryana was also reviewed.

**Security Tightened.....**

effective crowd management measures to prevent overcrowding and ensure smooth conduct of religious events.

Birdi also instructed the police to regulate entry and exit points at major mosques, shrines and temples, deploy security personnel at strategic locations and maintain close coordination with local community leaders for better management of gatherings.

Emphasising the need for increased vigilance, the IGP asked officers to conduct random checks at sensitive locations and intensify security patrols to prevent any untoward incidents during the festive period.

Senior officers from various security agencies, including the Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force, the Criminal Investigation Department, traffic police and other wings of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, attended the meeting.

Officials said the review also focused on district-level preparedness and stressed the need for close coordination among different security agencies to ensure peaceful celebrations across the Valley.

**CS reviews.....**

representatives from NHAI, BRO, SAMPARK and NHIDCL attended the meeting through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reviewed the implementation of key road safety initiatives, including enforcement drives by the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) and Traffic Police, functioning of the Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD) portal, and the rollout of the PM Rahat Scheme aimed at providing immediate assistance to road accident victims.

The Chief Secretary directed all departments concerned to ensure timely uploading and verification of accident data on the iRAD portal to facilitate accurate analysis and prompt corrective measures, particularly at identified blackspots. He called for strict implementation of all the Supreme Court directions in letter and spirit with mandatory submission of reports of each major mishap happening on the roads here.

The Chief Secretary emphasized strict enforcement of the road safety policy on ground besides taking of engineering measures by the concerned executing agencies involved in construction of roads here.

The Chief Secretary stressed the need for stronger coordination among departments including Transport, Traffic Police, Health, Public Works and district administrations to ensure effective implementation of road safety measures. He directed for the utilization of road safety fund in favour of accident victims besides effectively implementing the PM Rahat scheme for saving the lives of such individuals.

He also directed that District Road Safety Committees must hold regular meetings and prepare district-level action plans aimed at reducing accidents and improving traffic management. He also instructed road construction agencies to regularly conduct road safety audits of existing and new roads and ensure prompt rectification of hazardous locations to minimize accident risks.

The Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa took this occasion to inform the meeting that the Transport Department, in coordination with other agencies, has been undertaking detailed analysis of road accidents through the iRAD portal, which helps identify accident hotspots and enables data-driven interventions.

She elaborated that the Integrated Road Accident Database (iRAD) system digitally records accident data and supports scientific accident investigation besides helping in taking corrective measures eventually to reduce the occurrence of such mishaps leading to loss of precious lives.

The Secretary Transport further informed that stakeholders have been directed to ensure timely punching and verification of accident data on the portal. Training programmes are also being conducted in coordination with the National Informatics Centre to improve the quality and timeliness of accident reporting, she added.

Integration of electronic Detailed Accident Reports (eDAR) with judicial systems is also being pursued to streamline the accident reporting and compensation process, she apprised the meeting.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the Prime Minister's Road Accident Victims' Hospitalization and Assured Treatment (PM Rahat) Scheme, which provides cashless treatment to accident victims during the critical "golden hour" upto the amount of Rs 1.5 lakhs in each case.

It was revealed that the accident analysis carried out through the portal has helped

identify 16 major accident hotspots across J&K, including locations in districts such as Jammu, Udhampur, Reasi and Srinagar. She added that since June 2022, over 3,800 accidents have been reported in Jammu district alone, while around 1,500 accidents were recorded in Srinagar, highlighting the need for targeted interventions in high-risk corridors.

The review also highlighted the extensive enforcement measures being undertaken by the Traffic Police and Motor Vehicles Department to curb violations and ensure safer roads.

The IGP Traffic, M.Suleiman reported that strict action is being taken against traffic violators under the Motor Vehicles Act. During 2025, a total of 15,947 vehicles were seized, while 786 vehicles have already been seized during 2026 so far for serious violations.

To strengthen enforcement, he added that the department has also deployed modern traffic management equipment including breath analysers, body-worn cameras, speed detection devices, reflective safety gear, traffic cones and LED traffic batons for field units.

Additionally, it was highlighted that 16 Highway Patrol Vehicles and 19 Interceptor Vehicles have been deployed for enhanced patrolling and monitoring on national and state highways, enabling

swift action against traffic violations.

About the PM Rahat Scheme the Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Paul Mahajan gave out that this scheme aims to ensure immediate hospitalization of road accident victims without financial constraints and facilitates coordination among police, hospitals and the Transport Department.

Regarding its implementation the Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Paul informed that all districts of the UT had been onboarded under the scheme. Necessary financial and digital infrastructure, including RBI and PFMS accounts, has been established and live entry of accident cases under the scheme started from March 9, 2026.

The Transport Commissioner further apprised the meeting about the Road Accident Victim Fund (RAVF) being utilized to support accident-related interventions and relief measures. He divulged that Rs. 1226.10 lakh has been received under the fund, out of which Rs. 1153.10 lakh has already been released to RTOs and ARTOs, while Rs. 73 lakh remains available for further utilization. Reiterating the government's commitment to safer roads, the Chief Secretary called for greater use of technology, strict enforcement of traffic laws and enhanced public awareness campaigns to significantly reduce road accidents across Jammu and Kashmir.

**CS reviews mining sector reforms; Calls for stronger surveillance to curb illegal mining**

HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MAR 11:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high-level meeting to review the ongoing reforms in the mining sector and assess measures aimed at curbing illegal mining across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Mining; Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Committee; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Secretary, IT; IGP Jammu; Managing Director, Jammu and Kashmir Minerals Limited; Director, Geology and Mining; and other senior officers. The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and Deputy Commissioners of various districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reviewed the progress achieved under various mining sector reforms aimed at strengthening surveillance mechanisms, preventing illegal extraction of minerals and enhancing revenue realization from the sector.

The Chief Secretary also took a live demonstration of the Integrated Mining Surveillance System (IMSS), a digital platform designed to monitor the movement of vehicles transporting mining material across different districts of Jammu and Kashmir. While appreciating the initiative, he observed that there is still scope for further improvement in the system to ensure stricter checks against illegal mining activities.

Emphasising the need for strengthening the technological framework, the Chief Secretary directed the department to share a clear problem statement with BISAG-N so that appropriate triggers can be developed to detect instances of illegal mining or extraction beyond permissible areas.

He also called for increasing the frequency of such automated alerts to weekly intervals, enabling the department to take timely corrective action on the ground. He further asked the department to specify a clear timeline for achieving the desired improvements in the surveillance system.

While reviewing the progress of e-auctioning of mineral blocks, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of closely following up pending matters with the concerned Union Ministry to ensure timely completion of the auction process. He also interacted with Deputy Commissioners regarding the status of clearances for identified minor mineral blocks in their respective districts.

The Chief Secretary urged the district administrations to expedite the process of granting the necessary clearances so that the auctioning of minor mineral blocks could be completed at the earliest. He reviewed cases pending at different stages, including those awaiting Environmental Impact Assessment, approvals from the Pollution Control Committee and forest clearances from the concerned department.

Stressing the need to augment the availability of construction material and enhance revenue generation, the Chief Secretary directed the officers to examine

each pending case on priority and explore possibilities of operationalizing all non-operational minor mineral blocks across the districts.

He further called for effective implementation of all reforms envisaged under the mining policy and the guidelines of the Union Ministry, reiterating that robust enforcement and surveillance mechanisms must be put in place to completely curb illegal mining in the Union Territory.

Additional Chief Secretary, Mining, Ashwani Kumar, informed the meeting that the department is actively working on upgrading the IMSS in coordination with BISAG-N. He emphasized that both enhanced surveillance and a foolproof enforcement mechanism are essential to effectively regulate the sector and prevent illegal mining.

He added that the IMSS dashboard is being integrated with the e-challan and e-market systems, which will enable generation of relevant alerts at shorter intervals and facilitate swift action by field functionaries.

Earlier, Director, Geology and Mining, S.P. Rukwal, in a detailed presentation, apprised the meeting about the current status of mining activities across Jammu and Kashmir. He informed that investigations related to minerals such as graphite, granite, sapphire, shallow gas and lithium are being carried out by the concerned agencies.

The meeting was informed that out of 235 identified minor mineral blocks in the Union Territory, 81 are currently operational. Extension of Letters of Intent (LoIs) has been issued to 10 blocks, while eight cases are pending before the competent authorities for issuance of LoIs. Mining leases in favour of four blocks are expected to be granted shortly, cumulatively projected to generate revenue of around Rs. 57 Cr for the UT.

Regarding the identification of new blocks, it was informed that seven minor mineral blocks have been auctioned by the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, while 22 more are in the pipeline and 47 blocks are awaiting No Objection Certificates from different departments across the districts.

With respect to the installation of GPS tracking devices on vehicles involved in mining activities, the meeting was informed that GPS devices had been installed on 3,942 such vehicles and 3,515 of them have already been integrated with the IMSS platform by BISAG-N, while the remaining are expected to be integrated shortly.

The department also informed that enforcement measures have led to realization of a penalty amount of Rs. 1.10 Cr from violators of mining regulations. It was further noted that on-spot penalties are being collected using PoS machines to ensure transparency and efficiency.

Additionally, the meeting was apprised that during the first two months of 2026 alone, the mining sector has generated revenue of Rs. 137.27 Cr. The meeting also reviewed several measures including revision of penalties and operationalization of minor mineral leases across districts aimed at further augmenting revenue in the coming months.



## Div Com reviews progress of digitization of Jamabandis, backlog mutations across Kashmir Division

Directs rectification of errors, time-bound completion of pending mutations

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MAR 11:** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg today chaired a meeting to review the progress of digitization of Jamabandis across the Kashmir Division and to assess the status of backlog mutations and implementation of the SVAMITVA Scheme.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Survey & Land Records, Deputy Commissioners of the Kashmir Division, Additional Commissioner (Central) with the Finance Commissioner Revenue, besides other concerned officers.

Deputy Commissioners briefed the Divisional Commissioner about the progress of digitization of Jamabandis, digitization of backlog mutations and grievances received during the public reading camps of Jamabandis held across their respective districts.

The Divisional Commissioner directed that the errors identified during the public reading of digitized Jamabandis should be rectified promptly to ensure accuracy and transparency in land



records.

While reviewing the status of digitization of backlog mutations, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized the need for a district-level strategy to ensure timely disposal of pending mutation cases. He directed all Deputy Commissioners to expedite the process so that the backlog is cleared within the stipulated timeline.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioners raised certain technical issues being faced while punching backlog mutation data on the portal. The Commissioner Survey & Land Records informed that these technical issues are being addressed and will be resolved by the technical team soon.

The meeting also reviewed the status of the SVAMITVA Scheme, including villages surveyed, submission of Maps, and generation and distribution of property cards. The Divisional Commissioner directed the Deputy Commissioners to expedite submission of corrected maps wherever required and ensure timely generation and distribution of property cards among beneficiaries.

## Kulgam Police Conduct Surprise Inspections of Chemical, Fertilizer Shops and Garages

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, MAR 11:** In a move aimed at preventing the misuse of agricultural chemicals and ensuring strict adherence to safety norms, Kulgam Police on Wednesday carried out a series of inspections at chemical and fertilizer shops as well as garages across various parts of the district.

The inspection drives were conducted by teams of Kulgam Police under the supervision of senior officers. During the drive, officials thoroughly examined the stock registers, sale records, licenses, and storage facilities of the shops dealing with chemicals and fertilizers.

According to officials, the primary objective of the inspections was to ensure that the regulated materials are not diverted for unlawful purposes and that the shopkeepers strictly follow the prescribed safety guidelines. The police teams also inspected garages to verify compliance with legal



norms and to check any suspicious activities related to storage or handling of hazardous substances.

Shopkeepers were directed to maintain proper documentation, including updated stock registers and sale records, and to ensure that the chemicals and fertilizers are stored in accordance with the prescribed safety standards. They were also advised to cooperate with the authorities during such inspections and to report any suspicious activity to the police.

Kulgam Police reiterated their commitment to maintaining public safety and preventing any misuse of regulated materials. Officials stated that such inspection drives will continue in the future to promote transparency, ensure lawful trade practices, and strengthen overall security across the district.

Police also appealed to the general public to remain vigilant and extend cooperation to law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and safety in the area.

## Youth Crucial in Curbing Road Mishaps, Experts Stress at GDC Bholderwah's Safety Drive

■ AMIR IQBAL KHAN

**BHADERWAH, MAR 11:** Aiming to sensitise the younger generation about the critical need for responsible driving, Government Degree College (GDC) Bholderwah concluded a multi-day Road Safety Awareness Programme, with experts urging students to take the lead in minimising traffic accidents.

Organised by the college's Debate and Seminar Committee under the patronage of Principal Prof. Mohd Farooq, the initiative featured a series of expert lectures and creative competitions designed to instill a culture of traffic compliance among the youth.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Ajaz Wani called upon the student body to become active ambassadors of change. "Students must evolve into responsible citizens by not only adhering to traffic regulations themselves but also by actively spreading awareness within our society," Dr. Wani stated.

The sentiment was echoed by expert speaker Dr. Bharat Singh who outlined practical preventive measures for road safety. He underlined the pivotal role that the youth can play in significantly bringing down the alarming rate of road fatalities, urging them to prioritize caution over speed.

To channel the students' creativity towards the cause, the college hosted a Slogan Writing and a Painting Competition on March 5, followed by an Elocution Competition at the MP Hall on March 7. Participants



eloquently expressed their views on mindful driving and the broader implications of traffic rule compliance.

The competitive events were evaluated by a jury comprising Dr. Rajni Kumari, Dr. Anayetullah Wani and Dr. Ambish Malik.

The prize distribution ceremony hosted by Dr. Akhter Hussain, celebrated the outstanding performances of the participants. Muzammil Raja, Kashish Kotwal and Ramisa Khan stood first in Slogan Writing, Meenakshi Parihar, Sukania Kotwal and Sheikh Abu Hazim were adjudged first, second and third in Painting competition. Likewise, Disha Sharma, Tahreen Kouser and Tamanna Bhagat bagged first, second and third positions in elocution competition.

The awareness drive was spearheaded by Prof. Zain ul Abdeen Bandy and Dr. Renuka Gorla, who ensured the smooth conduct of the events with logistical assistance from student coordinators Mehran Ahmed and Basit Rashid.

Prominent faculty members including Prof. Amit Kumar, Dr. Neelam Saba, Dr. Bilal Ahmed, Dr. Deepika Devi and Prof. Arti Devi were present on the occasion. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Mohd Tauseef.

## Bank Employee Killed, Three Injured in Road Accident Near Sopat Tangpora in Kulgam

■ FAROOQ RATHER

**KULGAM, MAR 11:** A bank employee lost his life while three others sustained injuries after two passenger vehicles collided near Sopat Tangpora on the Qazigund-Kulgam road in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Wednesday.

According to reports, the accident occurred when an Alto car and a passenger Magic vehicle collided head-on near Sopat Tangpora. The impact of the collision was severe, leaving four persons seriously injured.

Soon after the accident, police and local residents rushed to the spot and launched a rescue operation. The

injured passengers were taken out from the damaged vehicles and immediately shifted to District Hospital Kulgam, where doctors provided them with initial medical treatment.

The injured were identified as Firdous Ahmad Dar, son of Mohammad Jabar Dar, a resident of Bregam Devsar; Shahnawaz Ahmad Rather, son of Ghulam Mohiuddin Rather, a resident of Watihal Qazigund; Waqas Bashir Wani, son of Bashir Ahmad Wani, a resident of Chowgam Devsar; and Shabir Ahmad Parray, son of Sanaulah Parray, also a resident of Chowgam Devsar.

Doctors said that the condition of

two injured persons, Shahnawaz Ahmad Rather and Firdous Ahmad Dar, was critical. Both were later referred to SKIMS Soura for advanced treatment.

However, Shahnawaz Ahmad Rather, who was working as a bank employee, succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. As soon as his body reached his native village Watihal, a pall of gloom descended on the area. He was laid to rest amid tearful scenes as a large number of mourners gathered to attend his funeral.

Meanwhile, police have registered a case in connection with the accident and initiated an investigation to ascertain the exact cause of the mishap.

## Poet Abdul Quddir Kundria Meets DIG, SSP; Proposes Anti-Drug Literary Drive

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**UDHAMPUR, MAR 11:** Eminent Dogri and Urdu poet Abdul Quddir Kundria met Sarah Rizvi, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Udhampur-Reasi Range, along with Amod Ashok Nagpure, Senior Superintendent of Police, Udhampur, and Sandeep Bhat, Additional Superintendent of Police, Udhampur, during his visit to Udhampur. During the meeting, Kundria presented his recently published Dogri poetry collection "Gottey Ge Gottey."

The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere where several social issues were discussed, particularly the growing menace of drug abuse and its adverse impact on society, especially the youth. Kundria emphasized that literature and cultural activities can play an important role in guiding society and spreading awareness among the masses. He appreciated the efforts of the police department in organizing awareness programmes against drug abuse in different parts of the region. Kundria suggested that such initiatives could be further strengthened by involving writers, poets, and artists so that the message against drugs reaches people in a more effective and meaningful way. Kundria proposed organizing literary programmes, mushairas, poetry recitations, and cultural events in different areas of Udhampur and Reasi districts with the cooperation of the police department. According to him, literary programmes are a powerful medium for social awareness, as poetry and literature directly touch the hearts and minds of the people.

He also mentioned that his book "Gottey Ge Gottey" contains several poems highlighting the issue of drug abuse and portraying its devastating impact on families and society. Through these poems, he has attempt-



ed to depict the pain caused by addiction and encourage the youth to stay away from drugs. DIG Sarah Rizvi, SSP Amod Ashok Nagpure, and Additional SP Sandeep Bhat appreciated Kundria's literary contributions and acknowledged the importance of community participation in the fight against drug abuse. They stated that the involvement of intellectuals, writers, poets, and artists can significantly strengthen awareness campaigns and help the police in spreading positive social messages among the public.

They further observed that literary and cultural initiatives can effectively connect with the younger generation and inspire them to stay away from drugs and other social evils. The officers welcomed the suggestion of organizing literary awareness programmes and assured their support for such initiatives in the region. At the conclusion of the meeting, Abdul Quddir Kundria reaffirmed his commitment to using literature and poetry as a tool for social awareness and expressed hope that collaborative cultural initiatives with the police department would help guide the youth towards a healthy and responsible future.

## Over 11.6 Lakh J&K Farmers Enrolled Under Crop Insurance Scheme

₹166.7 crore in claims paid to 2.8 lakh farmers till Kharif 2025, Centre Informs Lok Sabha

■ HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI, MAR 10:** More than 11.6 lakh farmer applications have been enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in Jammu and Kashmir since the inception of the scheme, with claims amounting to Rs. 166.7 crore paid to 2.8 lakh farmer applications up to the Kharif 2025 season, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha.

The information was shared by Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Bhagirath Choudhary in a written reply to a question raised by Member of Parliament Abdul Rashid Sheikh.

Choudhary said the government has introduced the yield-based PMFBY and the Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) from Kharif 2016 to provide financial protection to farmers facing crop losses due to natural calamities and adverse weather conditions. He said the schemes provide comprehensive risk coverage from pre-sowing to post-harvest losses and aim to stabilise farmers' income.

Under PMFBY, farmers pay a low premium rate of up to two per cent of the sum insured for Kharif crops, up to 1.5 per cent for Rabi crops and up to five per cent for commercial and horticultural crops.

The remaining actuarial premium is shared between the Centre and the states on a 50:50 basis. However, in northeastern and Himalayan states, including Jammu and Kashmir, the premium is shared in a 90:10 ratio between the Centre and the state or Union Territory government.



Responding to another part of the question, the minister said land and agriculture fall under the jurisdiction of state governments under the Constitution, which are responsible for taking measures to increase the area under cultivation and ensure optimal use of agricultural land.

He added that the Centre supports such efforts through policy initiatives and schemes such as the Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, which focuses on the development of rainfed and degraded land.

# DC Srinagar, SSP review anti-drug measures at District NCORD meeting

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR MARCH 11:** The monthly meeting of District Level Committee on Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was today held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to review the ongoing enforcement measures aimed at combating the drug menace across the District.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Sundeeep Chakravarty was also present in the meeting.

At the outset, the Committee conducted a comprehensive review of enforcement measures and chalk out a more stringent and result-oriented strategy to combat drug peddling and narcotics trafficking in Srinagar district. The Stress was laid on enhanced inter-departmental coordination and adopting a tough strategy to curb the drug menace.

Emphasis was also laid on further strengthening intelligence networks to combat drug abuse, identifying and cracking down on drug hotspots and intensifying confiscation of vehicles and disqualification of driving licences under the NDPS Act. The meeting also stressed intensifying anti-drug



IEC activities, particularly in educational institutions, coaching centres to sensitize youth about the harmful effects of narcotics

and to strengthen the capacity building of the concerned staff.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to disrupt the logistical support network of drug peddlers. He urged the Regional Transport Officer (RTO) to take strict measures against transporters involved in drug trafficking and peddling without any leniency.

The DC called for continued focused enforcement, preventive awareness and rehabilitation measures to effectively combat the drug menace in Srinagar district.

Reiterating the administration's commitment, the DC emphasized that stringent action will continue to curb the drug menace and dismantle the supply chain of narcotics trade. He underlined that the District Administration will leave no stone unturned to protect society, especially the youth, from the devastating impact of drugs.

The meeting was informed that, as per the directions of the NCORD Committee, the District Administration in coordination with the Police and other stakeholder departments has launched a massive crackdown on drug peddlers and trafficking networks. Acting firmly against offenders, the driving licences of

73 accused involved in narcotics cases have been disqualified. In addition, 63 vehicles have been blacklisted by the Regional Transport Office (RTO), Kashmir under the NDPS Act.

SSP Srinagar, in his remarks, stated that strict action against drug hotspots will continue and drug peddlers will face criminal prosecution and other punishments as warranted under law.

RTO Kashmir and SP Headquarters also briefed the meeting about the recent actions taken against drug peddlers in the district.

The meeting was attended by Regional Transport Officer Kashmir Qazi Irfan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Aadil Fareed, Joint Commissioner SMC Nuzhat Khurshid, Superintendent of Police Umar Shah, Programme Officer ICDS Bureeda Majeed, SDM West, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Umar Gulzar, District Social Welfare Officer Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, Assistant Labour Commissioner Adnan Tariq, Chief Medical Officer Dr Tahir Sajad and officers from Excise, Drug Control Organisation, heads of Anti-Trafficking Forces and other concerned departments.

## SMC holds Preliminary Review Meeting on Census 2027 Preparations

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MARCH 11:** Srinagar Municipal Corporation today convened a preliminary review meeting at its Headquarters to assess the progress of preparations for the forthcoming Census 2027 and to ensure effective coordination among all concerned departments.

The meeting was chaired by Nuzhat Qureshi, City Census Officer (Urban), along with Suhail Ul Islam, Census Charge Officer (Urban), and was attended by representatives from various line departments involved in the census exercise.



During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on the operational framework for the census, including inter-departmental coordination, verification of data, and logistical arrangements required for the smooth conduct of the exercise in urban areas of the city.

The chair underscored the significance of timely planning, institutional coordination, and proactive engagement of all departments to ensure the accuracy and reliability of census data.

Emphasis was also laid on streamlining field-level arrangements and strengthening coordination mechanisms to facilitate the effective implementation of census activities.

Officials from the participating departments assured their full cooperation and support to the Census authorities in carrying out

## Agriculture Department Bandipora conducts training on Soil Health Programme for PM SHRI Schools

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, MARCH 11:** Agriculture Department Bandipora conducted a practical training session under the Soil Health Programme for PM SHRI Schools to sensitize students about the importance of soil testing and sustainable agricultural practices.



During the programme, students from Higher Secondary Schools Shahgund, Shadipora and Ajas participated and were imparted practical knowledge on soil sample collection and the process of registering farmers on the Soil Health Portal.

The training was conducted by Dr. Shahid Haji, who demonstrated the correct methods of collecting soil samples from agricultural fields to ensure accurate soil testing. He also guided the students on the procedure for registering farmers on the Soil Health Portal so that they can obtain Soil Health Cards and receive scientific recommendations for improving soil fertility.

The programme proved highly informative and interactive, enabling students to gain hands-on knowledge about soil health management and the digital registration process for farmers.

## DIC Shopian holds awareness programme on Udyam Registration under RAMP at Zainapora Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, MARCH 11:** District Industries Centre (DIC) Shopian today organised an awareness programme under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme at the Block Development Office, Zainapora to sensitize local youth and entrepreneurs about the benefits of Udyam Registration.

During the programme, officials from DIC Shopian highlighted various

initiatives and benefits available for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The participants were informed about government initiatives aimed at strengthening MSMEs, improving access to finance, enhancing competitiveness and creating better market linkages. The officials also briefed the participants about different self-employment and entrepreneurship schemes being implemented through the Industries and Commerce Department and encouraged aspiring

entrepreneurs to avail the benefits of these schemes to establish their own ventures. The participants appreciated the initiative of DIC Shopian for organising the awareness programme at the grassroots level to promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the MSME ecosystem in the district.

The programme witnessed active participation from local youth, artisans, aspiring entrepreneurs and members of Self Help Groups associated with NRLM.

## SWD Srinagar concludes 3-Day Training Programme for HOIs, Teachers under NMBA

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MARCH 11:** Social Welfare Department (SWD) Srinagar today successfully concluded a three-day Training Programme for Heads of Institutions (HOIs) and teachers under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) at the NHM Hall, Old Secretariat Srinagar. The programme aimed at strengthening awareness and building institutional capacity to prevent substance abuse among youth. The training programme witnessed active participation from Heads of Institutions and teachers representing various educational institutions across the district. Over the course of three days, the sessions focused on enhancing participants' understanding of substance abuse, early identification of warning signs, counselling techniques, and the role of educational institutions in prevention and intervention.

During the sessions, experts from Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Srinagar shared valuable insights into the psychological and behavioural aspects of addiction. They highlighted the mental health dimensions of substance use disorders, explaining common behavioural

indicators among students and the importance of early psychosocial intervention, and also addressed the participants and elaborated on counselling approaches, emotional support mechanisms, and referral procedures for students requiring professional help. An interactive question-and-answer session was held during the programme, during which teachers and HOIs raised important queries regarding identification of at-risk students, referral mechanisms, counselling procedures, and community participation in tackling substance abuse. The experts addressed the concerns comprehensively, making the discussions highly informative and practical for the participants. The concluding day focused on strengthening counselling skills, developing referral networks, and promoting collaborative efforts between educational institutions, health professionals, and community stakeholders to effectively combat drug abuse among youth.

SWD Srinagar reaffirmed its commitment to continue such awareness and capacity-building initiatives under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan to ensure a safer and healthier future for the younger generation.

## SWD Srinagar conducts Intergenerational Bonding Programme, Medical Screening Camp for Senior Citizens

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MARCH 11:** Social Welfare Department (SWD) Srinagar organized an Intergenerational Bonding Programme along with a Screening-cum-Medical Camp for senior citizens at Miskeenbagh, Khanyar under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY).

The programme aimed to foster meaningful interaction between the younger generation and elderly citizens while simultaneously addressing the healthcare needs of senior citizens through medical screening and consultation services.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of about 200 senior citizens and students of about 150 from nearby educational institutions, and healthcare professionals.

During the Intergenerational Bonding Programme, students interacted with the elderly through engaging discussions, cultural exchanges, and storytelling sessions.

The senior citizens shared their experiences, life lessons, and wisdom with the students, creating a warm and

emotionally enriching environment. The interaction helped strengthen mutual understanding, respect, and empathy between generations.

Alongside the bonding activities, a Screening-cum-Medical Camp was conducted where medical professionals carried out general health check-ups and basic medical screening of dementia and other diseases for the senior citizens.

Doctors also provided consultations and guidance on preventive healthcare, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle practices to promote the well-being of the elderly.

The Tehsil Social Welfare officer, North, emphasized the importance of such initiatives in promoting the dignity, care, and active participation of senior citizens in society.

She also highlighted that involving students in intergenerational programmes helps instill values of compassion and respect towards the elderly among the youth.

SWD Srinagar reiterated its commitment to continue organizing similar activities under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana to enhance the quality of life and social inclusion of senior citizens.

# DDC Anantnag reviews progress of District Capex, Development Schemes Over 2,300 Works Completed Under District Capex

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, MARCH 11:** District Development Commissioner (DDC), Anantnag Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat on Tuesday chaired a comprehensive meeting of the concerned officers to review the physical and financial progress of the district on works being executed under District Capex and other development schemes at Dak Bunglalow, Khanabal.

During the meeting, the DDC undertook a comprehensive sector-wise evaluation of the District Capex Budget 2025-26,

Tribal Sub-Plan (Dharti Aaba Abhiyan), SAsCI (Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment), CDF Grants, MPLADS, and other flagship development programmes.

The chair was informed that out of 3,105 works taken up (including 107 ongoing and 2,998 new works) under District Capex (UT Component), 2342 works have been completed. An overall expenditure of Rs. 5174.04 lakh (64.33%) against the available funds of Rs. 8,042.49 lakhs has been achieved so far.

Similarly, under District Capex (CSS Component), against the

target of 150797 works, 147006 have been completed indicating physical progress of 97%. The overall financial progress against availability in this category has been 95% till date.

Significant progress was noted under MGNREGA, which achieved 77% of its physical target with an expenditure of Rs. 10,245.27 lakh. Other schemes like PM Poshan (Education & ICDS), PMGSY and NRLM reported 100% achievement against physical targets.

Under Area Development Grants, out of 2794 approved new works, 2139 stand

completed with district witnessing push for grassroots development through 2,289 works in PRI grants in which 1,763 have been completed and against total amount of Rs. 6346.97 lakh released, an expenditure of Rs. 4098.98 lakh has been realised.

The meeting was informed that under the scheme for revival and restoration of architecture, 21 heritage projects are being executed at an allotted cost of Rs. 2864.63 lakh. Notable projects like the Ziyarat Sharief Zain-uddin Wali (RA) and Mughal Hamam at Achabal have reached 100%

completion. Furthermore, projects under SAsCI allotted at Rs. 43.91 crore are underway in Culture, Higher Education, Health, Fisheries, Tourism, Tribal Affairs and other departments with current expenditure of Rs. 27.28 Crore. Likewise, 177 works have been completed under CDF out of 578 accorded projects and an expenditure of Rs 156.83 lakh has been achieved.

Under MPLADS, five works are complete and 17 in progress out of total 22 allotted works and an expenditure of Rs. 8.72 lakh stands incurred so far.

Reviewing the status of works under District Capex and other schemes, the DDC appreciated the departments for better physical achievements on various works. He, however, directed the officers to accelerate the pace of execution besides the financial expenditure in works showing appreciable gap between physical and financial progress.

Dr. Bilal noted that expenditure is the measurable outcome of successful administration adding that result oriented efforts should be made to up the expenditure during next two weeks before end of

current FY 2025-26 and the progress shall be personally monitored by all officers.

He called for better coordination among departments and instructed the officers to resolve issues particularly in Jal Shakti (JJM), Education and RDD to improve expenditure percentages against approved outlays.

The meeting was attended by ADC, DPO, ICDS; SES R&B along with Exens, CPO, ACD, CMO, CEO, CAO, CAHO, CHO, DD Fisheries, BDOs, EO MCs, officers from JAKEDA, MID, Ground Water, NRLM and other officers.

# DC Srinagar visits ST Boys hostel at Tulsibagh to assess student requirements

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**Srinagar March 11:** Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar Akshay Labroo on Wednesday visited ST Boys Hostel at Tulsibagh to take stock of the functioning of the hostel and facilities being provided to the enrolled students.

Among others, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs, Syed Mushtaq; Tehsildar South, Sajad Ahmad Shah; Wardens of Gujjar & Bakerwal Hostels for Boys and Girls, and other concerned Officers accompanied the DC during the visit, while Students of the ST Boys Hostel and Tribal Girls Hostel were present on the occasion.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with the staff and students of both the hostels and enquired about the lodging, boarding, academic, sports and other facilities being provided at the hostel.

On the occasion, the DC also inspected the newly procured bedding, furniture and other essential



items provided under the UT Capex for the ST Boys Hostel Tulsibagh to

strengthen basic facilities at the facility.

While interacting with the students, the Deputy Commissioner assured them of all possible support from the District Administration to ensure a nurturing and supportive environment for their overall development.

Responding to the demands put forth by the students of both hostels, the DC directed the concerned officers to make provisions for establishing a computer laboratory, library with books, sports equipment and other required facilities at both centres.

Regarding the construction of the building for the ST PG Boys Hostel at Tulsibagh, the Deputy Commissioner stated that efforts are underway to make the hostel functional in Phase-I to facilitate ST postgraduate students. He added that the District Administration has transferred state land in favour of construction of Girls Hostels at Batmaloo so that students can be shifted from rented accommodation to a permanent facility.

# DC Pulwama inaugurates Inter-Block District Level Competitions under Youth Engagement Programme

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**PULWAMA, MARCH 11:** Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, today inaugurated the Inter-Block District Level competitions in the disciplines of Volleyball and Football for Under-17 and Under-19 categories at the Sports Stadium Pulwama. The competitions were organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports under the Youth Engagement Programme being held under the banner "The League of Classics - Enjoy the Game."

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of more than 300 players representing 11 blocks of the district. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that sports activities form an integral part of the broader government plan aimed at constructive youth engagement and holistic development of young people. He emphasised that such initiatives encourage healthy lifestyles, discipline, teamwork and the positive utilisation of youth energy.

"Events like these provide an important platform for young players to showcase their sporting talent while also fostering community spirit and healthy competition," he added.

Dr. Qayoom further highlighted that



the Youth Engagement Plan envisions empowering young people by providing them opportunities to channelise their potential through sports, skill development and various self-employment schemes. He also underlined the importance of youth participation in the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, aimed at keeping young people away from the menace of drug abuse and promoting a healthy and vibrant society.

During the event, the Deputy Commissioner also administered the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan pledge, wherein all participants collectively resolved to work towards building a drug-free society.

The event was attended by District Youth Services and Sports Officer, Pulwama; District Social Welfare Officer, Pulwama; and is expected to continue over the next few days, drawing large crowds and highlighting emerging young talents.

# DLIC approves 69 beneficiaries under Mission YUVA in Ganderbal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**GANDERBAL, MARCH 11:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under Mission YUVA to review and approve cases submitted under the scheme.

During the meeting, the committee held detailed deliberations on the applications received. After thorough scrutiny, 69 cases were approved for financial and institutional support under Mission YUVA, aimed at enabling youth to establish their own income-generating ventures.

Mission YUVA is a flagship initiative of the government designed to promote youth entrepreneurship, encourage innovation and create sustainable employment opportunities by facilitating access to financial assistance, mentorship and institutional support for young entrepreneurs.

While reviewing the cases, the DC stressed the importance of timely processing of applications and directed the concerned departments to ensure prompt facilitation and guidance to the selected beneficiaries. He emphasized that proper handholding of beneficiaries and coordination among departments is essential to help youth successfully establish and sustain their enterprises.

He directed the concerned officers and banking institutions to expedite sanction and disbursement of cases so that the beneficiaries can commence their activities at the earliest.

The DC also called for intensified awareness at the grassroots level so that more eligible youth can come forward and take advantage of the opportunities available under Mission YUVA for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

The meeting also discussed training and capacity building and finalization of internal trainers who will act as Resource persons for capacity building under the said scheme.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Manzoor Ahmad; Lead District Manager, Assistant Director Employment; District Social Welfare Officer; District Nodal Officer JKEDI; Functional Manager, District Industries Centre; Lead District Manager, besides other concerned officers.

# DC Baramulla presides over Block Diwas Programme at Kanispora

Directs officers for swift redressal of issues raised and greater awareness of schemes at grassroots level

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BARAMULLA, MARCH 11:** To listen to the suggestions for the development plans, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, S F Hamid, today presided over Block Diwas programme at Panchayat Ghar Kanispora Baramulla.

During the programme, the general public raised several demands and grievances, including water scarcity issues in the block, upgradation of the drainage network, staff shortage at PHC

Delina, improvement of roads leading to orchards in various villages, regular sanitation in the area, and enhancement of local school infrastructure, among other issues, urging the DC to intervene for their prompt resolution.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC assured the public and their representatives that all their genuine issues and demands raised during the Block Diwas would be taken up on priority for swift redressal.

The DC while patiently hearing



the grievances raised by the public, directed all concerned officers to submit a detailed report on the issues highlighted during the Block Diwas to his office at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the DC directed the ACD to ensure that Gram Sabhas are held on a monthly basis so that issues and demands of the people pertaining to any panchayat are effectively discussed and taken up for prompt redressal.

Furthermore, the DC directed the officers to conduct comprehensive awareness

campaigns about various beneficiary schemes including HADP, Mission YUVA and others at the grassroots level to ensure that people are well informed and able to avail the benefits.

The program was attended by the Superintending Engineer R&B/PMGSY/PDD, Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, along with all the concerned district and sectoral officers, PRIs and residents from Kanispora and adjoining villages.

# SWD Bandipora organises awareness programme for Senior Citizens at Hajin

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, MARCH 11:** Social Welfare Department (SWD) Bandipora organised a sensitisation and awareness programme on Wednesday for senior citizens under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVAY) at Town Hall, Hajin.

During the programme, resource persons delivered lectures on digital and financial literacy and highlighted the rights, protection and dignity of senior citizens.

They also emphasised the need to create awareness about various welfare schemes meant for the elderly.

Addressing the gathering, the TSO spoke about the welfare schemes being implemented by the Social Welfare Department for the benefit of senior citizens. It was informed that the department



is organising a series of intergenerational bonding programmes for elderly persons to make them aware of different welfare schemes and support systems available to them.

The programme also focused on digital and financial literacy, particularly on educating senior citizens about safe banking practices and ways to safeguard themselves from online banking frauds.

On the occasion, a Nukkad Natak was also presented by Reshi Cultural Forum to raise awareness about welfare schemes for elderly persons and to sensitise the public about the importance of care and respect for senior citizens.

The programme was attended by officials from the Social Welfare Department, representatives from the banking sector, and a large number of senior citizens from the area.

# District Admin Bandipora conducts Awareness Programme under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA, MARCH 11:** As part of the ongoing awareness activities under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), an awareness programme was conducted at High School Trigam, Sumbal on Wednesday to sensitise students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of leading a healthy and responsible life.

The programme was organised with the School Education Department as the nodal department, in collaboration with the Health Department, Youth Services & Sports (YS&S), Excise & Taxation Department and the Social Welfare Department.



During the programme, students were sensitised about the dangers of substance abuse and its adverse impact on health, society and the future of young people. Resource persons highlighted the importance of awareness, prevention and collective community efforts in combating drug abuse.

Speakers emphasised that educational institutions play a crucial role in spreading awareness among youth and encouraging them to stay away from drugs.

On the occasion, students were also encouraged to act as ambassadors of the anti-drug campaign and spread the message of a drug-free society among their peers and communities.

District Admin Bandipora conducts Water Testing Demonstrations in Schools

# 3-Day Nasha Mukht Bharat training programme concludes successfully at Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, MARCH 11:** A three-day training programme organised by the District Surveillance Unit, Shopian under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan concluded successfully here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian today.

The programme, conducted on the directions of the Director Health Services Kashmir, aimed at strengthening awareness and preventive strategies against substance abuse at the community level.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Shopian, Dr. Arshid Hussain Tak, who had inaugurated the training programme, reiterated the importance of coordinated and collective efforts to address the growing challenge of drug abuse.

He stressed the need for active community participation to build a drug-free and healthy society.

During the training, resource persons including, DHO, Shopian, Dr. Shafiq Ahmed Khan, Dr. Rahil Hassan Khan and Quratul Ann delivered informative sessions on prevention, awareness and community



engagement to effectively tackle substance abuse.

The programme witnessed participation from lecturers and teachers of various Higher and Secondary Schools as well as members of NRLM Self Help Groups, who actively engaged in the sessions and discussions.

The participants appreciated the initiative and expressed their commitment to spreading awareness and supporting the mission of creating a Nasha Mukht (drug-free) society.

# Sports Kits distributed among schools by SHEW Mission Shakti Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SHOPIAN, MARCH 11:** Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women (SHEW), Mission Shakti Shopian, under the Department of Social Welfare, conducted a distribution drive today during which sports kits were distributed among various schools of the district.

The schools that benefited from the distribution included HS Melhura, GHSDK Pora, GMS Kellar, HS Sindoor Shirmal, GHS Vehil and HS Nowgam.

The initiative was carried out to encourage students, especially girls, to actively participate in sports and physical activities.

During the programme, officials highlighted that sports play a vital role in the overall development of students by promoting discipline, teamwork, confidence, and a healthy lifestyle. They also emphasized the importance of supporting girls in all spheres, including education and sports.

The drive was conducted under the spirit



of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, spreading the message of empowering the girl child, promoting gender equality, and ensuring equal opportunities for girls to grow and excel.

HT EDITORIAL

PM Surya Ghar Muff Bijli Yojana gaining momentum in J&K

The PM Surya Ghar Muff Bijli Yojana is turning out to be a hit among the masses of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir as around one lakh applications for installation of roof top solar systems have been received. According to the official figures 97,260 applications have been received in this regard and 25,160 rooftop solar systems have been installed in Jammu & Kashmir so far.

The official figures point out that an amount of Rs. 182.21 crores have been disbursed as central financial assistance (CFA) to the beneficiaries in the union territory. The roof top solar system scheme is demand-driven and available to all residential consumers with grid-connected electricity under the local DISCOM in Jammu & Kashmir. The rooftop solar initiative was launched in February 2024 and applications are submitted through the national portal of the scheme. With the passage of time the scheme is gaining popularity among the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

The figures say that between February 13 and December 31, 2024, a total of 7,097 applications were received in Jammu and Kashmir, out of which 560 rooftop solar systems were installed, with Rs 2.53 crore released as central assistance. In 2025, applications rose sharply to 76,146, leading to the installation of 17,939 rooftop solar systems, while Rs 128.23 crore was disbursed to beneficiaries under the subsidy component. From January 1 to March 5, 2026, the UT recorded 14,017 applications, 6,661 installations, with an amount of Rs. 51.45 crores released under CFA.

The concerned ministry is regularly monitoring the progress of the scheme at different levels, including coordination with DISCOMs. Regional review meetings are also conducted periodically. The programme is being implemented with the support of REC Limited, which acts as the national programme implementing agency. To accelerate rooftop solar adoption, the government has introduced several measures, including an online application-to-subsidy disbursement system through the national portal and collateral-free loans from nationalised banks at a concessional interest rate of repo rate plus 50 basis points, currently 5.75 per cent per annum, for a tenure of ten years.

The regulatory approval process has also been simplified by waiving technical feasibility requirements and enabling automatic load enhancement up to 10 kilowatts. Additional steps include vendor registration simplification, capacity-building programmes and nationwide awareness campaigns through print, television and radio. The ministry has also established a grievance redressal mechanism, including a call centre operating in 12 languages to address issues faced by consumers applying under the scheme.

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# Planting Trees Can Beautify the Heart of Srinagar



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Development is certain for every country. There are only a few countries in the world today that are economically sound and generate a good amount of employment through beneficial schemes. These countries have adequate sectors that offer employment with handsome earnings for their educated and skilled youth. As we know, in the future, most countries may be included in the list of developing countries.

Today, we have immense, effective, and useful communication tools, which are used for the exchange of business ideas from one corner of the world to the other. Most trade-related deals are carried out through virtual means such as emails, WhatsApp, video conferencing, etc. For the upliftment of any country, development is very crucial and plays an immense role in the economy. Development of roads, the transport sector, trade and commerce, and at the same time, management of cities while keeping environmental issues in mind are essential aspects of development.

The government has framed separate bodies that look after the management of environment-related issues in the country and issue guidelines from time to time for safeguarding the environment. Development is not only about the construction of giant tunnels, large buildings, long railway tracks, widening of roads, or construction of dams. Development is the need of the time. The development of any country requires proper planning, effective management, and coordination among different agencies, while keeping environmental concerns in mind. There is an intellectual class in the government sector that continuously addresses the grievances of the general public and ensures the availability of essential facilities.

In this article, I would like to highlight the importance of planting trees in cities and major business hubs of the district, where there is heavy movement of traffic. Day by day, our demands are increasing, and traffic flow pollutes the environment in various ways. Every factory in the manufacturing sector releases immense pollution into the air, water, and soil. Such activities cannot be stopped overnight.



Therefore, the only viable option we have is to minimize environmental damage by actively participating in environmental protection measures and addressing the threats we face today. The government administration is doing commendable work by taking cognizance of environmental issues and implementing necessary measures.

What is the environment? The environment plays a vital and significant role in our lives in many ways. Environment means our surroundings; it includes plants, water bodies, animals, birds, air, soil, and other natural elements. It is a vast and essential concept in our day-to-day life. First and foremost, we must understand the importance of the environment and its role in sustaining life. However, development in the form of roads, connectivity, bridges, buildings, railway tracks, airports, factories, industries, and hydroelectric dams is, in some ways, damaging our environment.

If we analyze how this damage occurs, one major reason is the cutting of trees during road widening and railway construction. This leads to soil erosion, which is the wearing away of the upper fertile layer of the soil. Soil erosion adversely affects soil fertility and increases the risk of flash floods, landslides, and other environmental hazards.

■ How to Maintain Temperature in Cities

Cities are considered busy business hubs. They enhance the beauty and economic strength of a country, state, union territory, or district. However, the temperature in cities often rises due to the

release of polluting gases from vehicles. Greenhouse gases are responsible for the increase in temperature in areas that experience heavy vehicular movement, and cities rank at the top in this regard.

Effective city management is crucial for the administration. While planning urban development, authorities must prioritize a clean environment, protection of water bodies, improvement of air quality, and proper management of drainage systems. These aspects should be carefully considered while widening roads, installing sewage systems, and managing solid waste generated from hospitals, business establishments, and households.

Planting more and more trees can significantly help in lowering city temperatures, improving air quality, and enhancing the overall beauty of urban areas. Trees act as natural air purifiers and provide shade, thereby reducing the heat island effect in cities. In addition, eco-friendly transportation options should be promoted. The use of e-rickshaws should be enhanced, as currently there are only 314 e-rickshaws operating in the city (source: Daily Sheherbeen).

In conclusion, planting trees is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to beautify the heart of Srinagar while protecting the environment. It is a shared responsibility of the government and citizens to ensure balanced development that harmonizes economic growth with environmental preservation.

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# Heaven's Tears Upon a Thirsty Land



■ JAWAID IQBAL

After an extended spell of parched stillness, when the earth lies fatigued beneath an unrelenting canopy of dust and desiccation, the advent of the rainy season emerges not merely as a meteorological transition but as a profound spiritual reprieve. The first droplets that descend from the laden firmament appear almost sacramental, consecrating the weary soil and rejuvenating the languishing spirit of humanity.

Prolonged dry weather often engenders a pervasive atmosphere of lethargy and discomfort. The landscape grows austere; verdure fades into pallid hues, streams shrink into timid rivulets, and the air becomes heavy with the monotony of heat. Such climatic austerity subtly infiltrates the human psyche as well, rendering the mind restless and the soul deprived of its innate tranquility.

It is in this context that the inaugural rainfall assumes an almost poetic magnificence. As the heavens gradually darken and clouds congregate in solemn procession, a palpable anticipation pervades the environment. When the first showers finally descend, they release the fragrance of petrichor—a scent so evocative that it seems to awaken forgotten memories buried deep within the human consciousness.

The rain does not merely moisten the earth; it revitalizes the entire ecological tapestry. Dormant seeds, long concealed beneath the hardened



crust of soil, suddenly awaken to life. Trees regain their emerald vibrancy, fields shimmer with renewed fertility, and rivers swell with revived vigor. Farmers, whose livelihoods are intimately intertwined with the rhythms of nature, often regard this rainfall as a divine benediction that promises sustenance and prosperity.

Yet the significance of rain extends beyond agriculture and ecology. There exists a subtle psychological solace in watching the rhythmic descent of raindrops. The gentle percussion of rain upon rooftops, leaves,

and pathways forms a natural symphony that soothes the restless mind. It invites contemplation, quiet reflection, and a momentary escape from the cacophony of daily existence.

Moreover, rain possesses a unique democratic generosity; it showers its bounty indiscriminately upon the humble cottage and the grand edifice alike. In this egalitarian distribution of nature's grace lies a silent reminder of the unity of life and the shared dependence of humanity upon the delicate balance of the natural world. Thus, the rainy season following a

prolonged dry spell becomes more than a climatic occurrence—it is an emotional and spiritual renaissance. It washes away not only the dust that settles upon the earth but also the invisible weariness that accumulates within the human soul.

In the end, the rain serves as nature's gentle proclamation that renewal is always possible, that after every season of barrenness there inevitably arrives a moment of revival, and that the world, despite its trials, continually finds ways to restore its harmony and hope.



# The Other Iran: A Civilization Beyond Politics



■ SHAHNAWAZ NAZIR

In times of political tension and war, nations are often reduced to simplified images. Complex societies with ancient histories are portrayed only through the lens of contemporary conflict. Iran is one such country. In much of today's political discourse, Iran is presented merely as a geopolitical adversary or as a rigid ideological state. Yet behind these narrow portrayals lies a civilization of immense depth, beauty, and intellectual richness—one that has shaped the cultural and spiritual history of humanity for thousands of years.

To understand Iran solely through modern politics is to overlook one of the world's oldest and most influential civilizations. Ancient Persia, the land we now call Iran, is among the great cradles of human culture. Archaeological evidence from the Zagros Mountains reveals early agricultural communities dating back nearly ten thousand years. These early societies laid the foundations for organized human settlement, long before the rise of classical empires.

Centuries later, Persia would give birth to one of history's most remarkable political systems: the Achaemenid Empire. Founded by Cyrus the Great in the sixth century BCE, this empire stretched from the Indus Valley to the Mediterranean and from Central Asia to Egypt. Unlike many empires of antiquity, the Achaemenids ruled through a model that emphasized tolerance, administrative sophistication,



and respect for local traditions. Conquered peoples were often allowed to maintain their religions, languages, and customs. The famous Cyrus Cylinder is frequently cited as one of the earliest expressions of principles resembling human rights.

But Persia's greatest legacy may not lie in political power or military achievement. Its deepest influence is found in its cultural and spiritual contributions—especially in its poetry. Persian literature stands among the greatest literary traditions in human history. The Persian language itself possesses a lyrical elegance that has captivated scholars, poets, and mystics for centuries.

Among the towering figures of Persian literature are poets whose words continue to echo across cultures and centuries. Jalal ad-Din Rumi, the great Sufi mystic of the thirteenth century, wrote poetry that transcends religious boundaries and speaks

directly to the human soul. His verses explore love, divine unity, and the mystical journey of the spirit. Today, Rumi remains one of the most widely read poets in the world.

Another giant of Persian poetry is Hafez of Shiraz, whose ghazals celebrate both earthly beauty and mystical longing. In Hafez's poetry, the tavern becomes a place of spiritual freedom, and the cup of wine symbolizes the intoxicating experience of divine love. His work is layered with metaphor, wit, and philosophical reflection.

Then there is Omar Khayyam, perhaps the most enigmatic of Persian poets. Known in his lifetime primarily as a mathematician and astronomer, Khayyam's quatrains—collected in the *Rubáiyát*—offer profound meditations on life, time, and existence. His poetry questions rigid dogma and invites readers to contemplate the fleeting nature of human life. The famous English

translation by Edward FitzGerald introduced Khayyam's verses to Western audiences in the nineteenth century, where they quickly became literary classics.

In Khayyam's poetry, the imagery of wine, gardens, and fleeting moments carries both literal and symbolic meanings. Some interpret his verses as expressions of skepticism toward conventional religion, while others see them as deeply mystical reflections on the human condition. Regardless of interpretation, the *Rubáiyát* captures a timeless philosophical insight: life is brief, and its beauty lies in our awareness of its impermanence.

These poets represent what might be called "the other Iran"—a civilization defined not only by politics or ideology but by imagination, spirituality, and artistic brilliance. This Iran is the Iran of gardens and nightingales, of calligraphy and miniature paintings, of philosophical inquiry

and mystical devotion. Throughout history, Iran has been home to diverse religious and cultural traditions. Before the rise of Islam, the region was the heartland of Zoroastrianism, one of the world's oldest monotheistic faiths. Later, Iran became a center of Islamic scholarship, philosophy, and mysticism. Over centuries, Sunni and Shiite traditions developed alongside Sufi spiritual movements that emphasized inner transformation and divine love.

This diversity reveals a fundamental truth: Iranian civilization has never been a single, monolithic identity. It has always been a tapestry woven from many spiritual, intellectual, and cultural threads.

In moments of global conflict, it is easy for societies to forget the deeper stories of other nations. Political narratives often overshadow cultural realities. Yet the legacy of Persian civilization reminds us that humanity's greatest achievements arise not from power alone but from creativity, wisdom, and the search for meaning.

The poetry of Rumi, Hafez, and Omar Khayyam continues to inspire readers across continents and cultures. Their verses speak of love, longing, doubt, and transcendence—experiences that unite all human beings regardless of nationality or belief.

To remember this "other Iran" is not merely an act of cultural appreciation; it is an act of historical honesty. It reminds us that beyond the headlines and political debates lies a civilization that has enriched the world with beauty, thought, and spiritual insight for millennia.

And perhaps, in rediscovering that deeper Iran, we rediscover something essential about ourselves: that the human story, at its best, is a story of shared wisdom, creativity, and the timeless search for truth.

The author is a columnist

# Existential Threats to Mankind : At The Door of World War III



■ DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Albert Einstein once warned, "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones." This haunting prediction encapsulates the existential threat posed by modern warfare, especially in an age where nuclear and technological capabilities have outpaced our moral and diplomatic maturity. The specter of war looms large over the global landscape, not merely as a relic of history but as a persistent and evolving danger. Despite the lessons of the past, humanity continues to flirt with catastrophe, driven by ambition, fear, and the failure to resolve disputes through peaceful means.

War has always been one of the most powerful subjects in literature, not because it is about battles and victories alone but because it exposes the deepest vulnerabilities of human beings, the fragility of societies, and the resilience of spirit. Three novels from different cultural and historical contexts—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, and Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate*—offer profound reflections on war, each shaped by the specific histories they narrate but united in their insistence that war is not only a political or military event but a human catastrophe. Together, they form a chorus of voices that speak across continents and decades, reminding us that war is both universal and particular, both collective and intimate, both destructive and strangely revelatory of human endurance.

Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* situates itself in the Nigerian Civil War of 1967–1970, a conflict that erupted when the Igbo people attempted to secede and form the Republic of Biafra. The war claimed over a million lives, many through starvation, and remains one of the most devastating episodes in modern African history. Adichie does not write a military chronicle; instead, she tells the story through three characters whose lives intersect with the war in different ways: Ugwu, a village boy who becomes a houseboy and later a reluctant soldier; Olanna, an educated woman from a wealthy family who experiences displacement and loss; and Richard, a British expatriate who becomes emotionally invested in Biafra. Through them, Adichie shows how war infiltrates the private sphere, turning homes into refugee camps, lovers into survi-

vors, and children into soldiers. Ugwu's transformation is particularly striking: from innocent boy to participant in violence, he embodies how war corrupts innocence and forces complicity. Olanna's experiences of massacre and starvation highlight the vulnerability of civilians, while Richard's outsider perspective underscores the incomprehensibility of such suffering to those not born into it. Yet Adichie also threads moments of resilience—families clinging to dignity, intellectuals clinging to the dream of a free Biafra, lovers clinging to intimacy. The "half of a yellow sun" on the Biafran flag becomes a symbol of both hope and tragedy, a reminder that even in devastation, people imagine a brighter future. For Adichie, war is not only destruction but also a crucible in which identity, memory, and hope are forged.

Zusak's *The Book Thief*, set in Nazi Germany during World War II, takes a radically different narrative approach by making Death itself the narrator. Death follows Liesel Meminger, a young girl living with foster parents in a small German town, as she discovers the power of words amid bombings, persecution, and propaganda. By choosing Death as narrator, Zusak underscores the omnipresence of mortality during war, but he also imbues Death with irony, compassion, and even weariness, suggesting that war overwhelms even the figure most associated with endings. The novel highlights the banality of evil—ordinary Germans complicit in Nazi ideology—contrasted with quiet acts of resistance, such as Liesel's foster family hiding Max, a Jewish man, in their basement. The Holocaust looms large, not only in Max's presence but in the pervasive fear and silence that surround it. Yet Zusak insists on the power of words: Nazi propaganda fuels hatred, but books give Liesel solace and resistance. Storytelling becomes an act of defiance against war's attempt to erase humanity. Liesel's theft of books is not mere rebellion but a symbolic reclaiming of agency in a world where words are weaponized by the state. Zusak's vision of war is thus both absurd and profound: absurd in its cruelty, profound in its revelation that imagination and compassion endure even amid destruction. The novel insists that memory and storytelling are themselves forms of resistance, preserving humanity against erasure.

Grossman's *Life and Fate*, written in the Soviet Union and banned for decades, is a sweeping epic of the Battle of Stalingrad and its moral universe. Grossman, a war correspondent, witnessed firsthand the devastation of World War II, and his novel juxtaposes the battlefield with concentration camps and gulags, showing war as a system of oppression beyond combat. One of the novel's most striking features is its portrayal of Nazism and Stalinism as twin tyrannies, both crushing individuality and demanding absolute loyalty.

Grossman refuses to romanticize Soviet heroism; instead, he exposes the moral compromises, betrayals, and silences demanded by totalitarianism. Viktor Shtrum, a Jewish physicist, embodies the intellectual's dilemma—caught between loyalty to the Soviet state and moral conscience, he struggles with complicity and resistance. Grossman's panoramic vision includes soldiers, scientists, prisoners, and families, making the novel not only about war but about the entire social fabric under strain. Yet amid this bleakness, Grossman insists on human dignity. Even in camps and prisons, small acts of kindness preserve humanity. His vision of war is not heroic but tragic: ordinary people suffer, while ideologies consume them. The novel's breadth makes it a meditation on war's reach, showing that war is not only about battles but about systems of oppression that extend into every corner of life. Grossman's insistence on truth, even against censorship, makes the novel itself an act of resistance, preserving memory against erasure.

When these novels are read together, their differences in context—Nigeria, Nazi Germany, Soviet Union—highlight the universality of war's impact. Each novel insists that war is not only fought on battlefields but in kitchens, classrooms, and hearts. Adichie emphasizes civilian suffering and the fragmentation of identity; Zusak emphasizes mortality and the power of words; Grossman emphasizes totalitarian oppression and human dignity. Yet they share common threads. First, war is dehumanization: Adichie shows starvation stripping dignity, Zusak depicts propaganda reducing people to stereotypes, Grossman portrays camps erasing individuality. Second, war is a moral test: Ugwu's conscription forces him into complicity, Liesel's family risks their lives to shelter Max, Shtrum wrestles with loyalty versus conscience. Third, war is memory: Adichie memorializes Biafra's forgotten tragedy, Zusak insists on remembering victims through storytelling, Grossman preserves the truth of Soviet repression despite censorship. Fourth, war is paradoxically also hope: even amid devastation, each novel insists on resilience—whether through love, words, or kindness.

Two other powerful novels of the twentieth century—Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929)—stand as monumental testaments to the disillusionment, suffering, and existential questioning that war provokes. Written in the aftermath of World War I, both novels strip away the romantic veneer of battle and expose its brutal realities. Yet, while they share thematic ground, they differ in perspective, tone, and the personal experiences they convey. Together, they form a dialogue on war's futility, its destruction of youth, and its reshaping of

human values. Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* begins with Paul Bäumer, a young German soldier, reflecting on how he and his classmates were swept into the war by patriotic teachers and nationalist rhetoric. Initially, they were "crammed full of vague ideas which gave to life, and to the war also, an ideal almost romantic character." But this illusion collapses almost immediately as they confront the mud, blood, and mechanized slaughter of trench warfare. Remarque's prose is stark, unadorned, and relentless in its depiction of war as a machine that grinds down human bodies and spirits. The novel insists that war is not glorious but degrading, stripping men of individuality and reducing them to mere survival instincts. Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, though set in the same war, approaches the theme differently. His protagonist, Frederic Henry, an American ambulance driver in the Italian army, enters the war not with youthful illusions but with a detached pragmatism. Yet even he cannot escape the disillusionment that comes with witnessing endless casualties, bureaucratic incompetence, and the collapse of military morale. Hemingway's style—his famous "iceberg theory"—conveys war's futility through understatement, sparse dialogue, and moments of quiet despair. For Henry, war is not a rite of passage but a meaningless backdrop against which personal love and loss unfold.

Taken together, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *A Farewell to Arms* form a devastating indictment of war. Remarque emphasizes the collective destruction of a generation, while Hemingway highlights the personal devastation of love and identity. Both reject the romantic myths of glory and honor, replacing them with images of mud, blood, chaos, and despair. Their verdict is clear: war is not a noble enterprise but a meaningless catastrophe that leaves only loss in its wake. Both novels emphasize the sheer brutality of modern warfare. Remarque describes poison gas, shell bombardments, and the grotesque mutilations of soldiers. His narrative is filled with images of corpses, rats, and mud, underscoring the dehumanizing environment of trench life. The overriding theme is that war annihilates meaning: "We are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men, we are crude and sorrowful and superficial—I believe we are lost."

Hemingway's Henry is older and more worldly, but he too experiences a kind of loss—though his is more personal than generational. His love affair with Catherine Barkley becomes his refuge from war, a private sanctuary of meaning in a meaningless world. Yet even this is destroyed when Catherine dies in childbirth, leaving Henry utterly alone. For Hemingway, war is not only the destroyer of nations but also the backdrop against which personal happiness is shattered. The loss of

Catherine parallels the loss of innocence, underscoring that in war, nothing pure or hopeful can survive. Remarque's soldiers lose their individuality in the trenches. They become interchangeable, defined not by personal dreams but by their ability to endure hunger, bombardment, and fear. Paul reflects that the war has made them "a generation of men who, even though they may escape shells, will be destroyed by the war." Identity is eroded, replaced by a collective experience of suffering. The novel ends with Henry walking alone in the rain after Catherine's death, symbolizing the existential solitude that war imposes.

Despite their differences, both novels converge on the idea that war is a universal human tragedy. Remarque's German soldiers and Hemingway's American ambulance driver are on opposite sides of the conflict, yet their experiences are strikingly similar. Both novels reject nationalism and propaganda, insisting that war reduces all men to suffering bodies and grieving souls. In this sense, they are profoundly anti-war, not merely in political terms but in existential ones. They argue that war destroys the very essence of humanity—youth, love, identity, hope. In Remarque's words, war is "the disillusionment of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war." In Hemingway's vision, war is the backdrop against which even love cannot survive. Together, they remind us that the true legacy of war is not victory or defeat but the profound erosion of human life and meaning.

The threats of war today are multifaceted and deeply interconnected. At the heart of these dangers lies the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nine countries currently possess nuclear arsenals, and the doctrine of deterrence—while effective in preventing direct confrontation during the Cold War—now appears increasingly fragile. Cyber warfare adds a new dimension to the threat landscape. State-sponsored cyberattacks on infrastructure, financial systems, and government networks have become routine. These attacks can cripple economies, sow chaos, and provoke retaliatory measures. The lack of clear international norms governing cyber conduct makes it difficult to attribute responsibility and respond proportionately. As artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into military systems, the potential for autonomous weapons and algorithmic decision-making raises ethical and strategic concerns. The fusion of AI and warfare could lead to scenarios where machines make life-and-death decisions without human oversight.

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# Summer Proof Your Skin



SHAHNAZ HUSSAIN

Is your skin feeling sticky, sweaty, and confused lately? That's summer talking.

As the days stretch longer and the mercury climbs, there's a welcome shift in the air. As we move from the cooler, drier months into the warmth and humidity of early summer, our skin needs to evolve. When heat and humidity come into play, it's time to prep yourself for a season of fun-filled adventures.

The heat, humidity, and longer sun exposure can throw your regular skincare routine off balance.

With the right summer skincare routine, you can maintain hydrated skin and achieve a radiant complexion all season long.

## Natural SPF

Truth be told, the sun is not always our friend as it emits harmful UVA/UVB rays that can cause excessive tanning, sunburn or even skin cancer.

Protect your skin with natural sunscreen crafted from gentle botanicals using zinc oxide or titanium dioxide that suits sensitive skin.

Natural Glycerine and Olive Oil condition skin without making it greasy. Nourishing Shea Butter soothes irritation, repairs sunspots and other signs of sun damage.

These offer safe, non-toxic alternatives (SPF 30-70) that are often reef-safe, anti-inflammatory, and suitable for sensitive skin, though they may leave a slight white



cast.

Natural SPF typically refers to mineral-based sunscreens using zinc oxide or titanium dioxide to physically block UV rays, often blended with natural oils like carrot seed or raspberry seed for enhanced protection.

A light organic sunscreen containing natural-origin, UV protection minerals such as Titanium Dioxide and Zinc Dioxide, which reflect the sun's rays back from exposed skin. Pure essential oils of Nutmeg, Ginger and Lime leave the skin lightly and freshly scented.

## Natural Humectants

Humectants are hygroscopic ingredients, meaning they are able to attract and retain water molecules from their surrounding environment.

A cosmetic humectant is defined as a substance that moisturises the skin in a very specific way.

Natural humectants are plant-based water-loving ingredients that attract moisture from the environment or deeper layers of the skin, helping to keep the skin hydrated, plump, and soften the skin.

The function of humectants is to draw water either from the air to the skin or from the dermis to the stratum corneum (outer layer of the skin).

They offer effective hydration benefits like soothing, antioxidant protection, and support for the skin's barrier function. Natural humectants help restore the skin's moisture balance without clogging pores or causing irritation.

They are ideal for boosting moisture in all skin types, with options like aloe vera and honey also providing anti-inflammatory and antibacterial benefits.

## Natural Exfoliation

In short, exfoliation is the process of removing excess dead skin from your body to reveal the healthy, new skin underneath.

When you choose exfoliants with natural products and nutrients, you're keeping your skin from being exposed to chemical compounds and non-transparent ingredients.

Baking soda, finely ground sugar, coffee grounds, finely ground almonds, oatmeal, finely ground sea salt, and cinnamon are popular natural exfoliants.

It is a better alternative that is highly effective, affordable, and suitable for dry, oily, and sensitive skin types.

## Eco-Conscious Products

"If you can't eat it, don't use it" is the latest beauty mantra. Powered by natural ingredients and formulated with biodegradable components, they are increasingly becoming the norm for holistic wellness.

Adopting eco-friendly skincare means choosing products and practices that are conscious, sustainable, and thoughtfully made.

Natural ingredients such as tea tree, Edelweiss, aloe vera, jojoba oil, and shea butter offer effective alternatives to synthetic chemicals while reducing our ecological footprint.

By choosing eco-friendly options, you're helping reduce pollution and waste.

Incorporate facial oils made from sustainably sourced, plant-based ingredients. These oils are often produced with clean, low-impact methods that nurture both your skin and the planet.

The author is an internationally famous beauty expert and is called the herbal queen of India

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## Healthcare reach being expanded across J&K: Sakeena Itoo

Inaugurates newly constructed PHC at Kharote Kathua

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KATHUA, MAR 11:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo on Thursday dedicated a newly constructed Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Kharote to the public bringing healthcare closer to rural communities in the district.

Built at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.67 crore, the health facility is expected to ease the difficulties faced by residents of Kharote and nearby panchayats who earlier had to travel long distances for basic medical care. The centre will now provide accessible primary healthcare services at their doorstep.

Addressing a large gathering after inauguration ceremony, the Minister underlined that the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is placing special emphasis on strengthening healthcare and education sectors, describing them as the backbone of public welfare.

"Our focus is to ensure that quality healthcare reaches every citizen, especially those living in remote and rural areas," she stated. She added that upgrading and improving medical infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir remains a key priority of the government.

Highlighting recent healthcare initiatives, the



Health Minister said that advanced diagnostic facilities like MRI, Cath Lab and CT Scan services are being installed in major hospitals on priority. She added that Dialysis units have also been set up in several hospitals to provide relief to kidney patients who earlier struggled for access to treatment.

The Minister stressed that government hospitals must become reliable and efficient institutions for common people and underlined the need to strengthen existing facilities by ensuring adequate doctors, paramedics and essential medical equipment.

Responding to public demands raised during the event, the Minister directed the Director Health Services to provide an ambulance for PHC Kharote. She also assured that the feasibility of starting an ultrasound facility, along with the required staff, would be examined.

She also instructed the district administration to undertake blacktopping of the approach road leading to the health centre to improve accessibility.

Emphasising patient-friendly healthcare, the Minister said that additional ultrasound units are being planned for Government Medical Colleges to reduce waiting time and improve patient access.

Speaking regarding education sector, the Minister noted that college enrolment in Kashmir's winter zone has increased by nearly 12 percent, while examination results for Classes 10th, 11th and 12th have also shown marked improvement. She expressed optimism that similar progress would soon be seen in the Jammu region's summer zone.

The Minister also called for collective action against drug abuse, urging teachers and professors to play an active role in spreading awareness among youth. She said the health department is strengthening rehabilitation, counselling and treatment services, while police efforts remain crucial in tackling the menace.

Earlier, the MLA Kathua, Dr. Bharat Bhushan expressed gratitude to Minister for personally intervening to complete the PHC building, stating that the facility would benefit thousands of residents in the area. Deputy Commissioner, Kathua, Rajesh Sharma; Director Health Services Jammu, Director Family Welfare, Director Social Welfare Jammu, senior officers of district administration and large number of locals were also present on the occasion.

## Remembering My Father on His Ninth Death Anniversary



On the ninth death anniversary of my beloved father, Hajji Mohammad Sultan Bhat, we remember him with deep love, respect, and gratitude. His life reflected honesty, kindness, and strong moral values that continue to guide and inspire us.

Though years have passed since he left this world, his memories remain alive in our hearts.

We humbly request relatives, friends, and well-wishers to remember him in their prayers and pray that Almighty Allah grants him the highest place in Jannah and blesses him with eternal peace.

Family of Hajji Mohammad Sultan Bhat  
(By Javid Ahmad Bhat)

### Public Notice

My son's name has been wrongly mentioned as MOHAMMAD HASAN MIR & his mother's name SHAIISTA BEGUM W/O MUMTAZ AHMAD MIR in his date of Birth certificate issued by SHO kreeri bearing Registration No 157/15 A/psk While his correct name is MOHAMMAD HASAAN MIR & his correct mothers is SHAYISTA BANO as per Hospital date of Birth record Issued by District Hospital Baramulla which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of concerned authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name.....MUMTAZ AHMAD DAR  
F/O ...MOHAMMAD HASAAN MIR  
Mother's name...SHAYISTA BANO  
R/O ...Kreeri

### Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI

Subject: Application SHABIR AHMAD SHEIKH S/O GH MOHAMMAD SHEIKH R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his own favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the SHEIKHPORA community having annual income 118000 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1... SHABIR AHMAD SHEIKH self 55 years TAILOR
- 2...JABEENA BAGUM wife ,53 years H/W
- 3...ULFAT SHABIR daughter ,23 years H/W
- 4...RIFAT SHABIR daughter 19 years student
- 5...MUSKAAN SHABIR // 19 years //
- 6...MUBASHIR SHABIR SHEIKH 14 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 TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

### 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 pertaining to Birth of BILAL AHMAD PARRAY S/O MOHAMMAD ASRAF PARRAY R/O. HAIL Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 07/01/1993 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

### 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 pertaining to Birth of ABDUL RAZAK SOFI S/O AB AZIZ SOFI R/O. SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 02/01/1956 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

### Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI

Subject: Application AADIL AHMAD DAR S/O GH MOHAMMAD DAR R/O SHEIKHPORA Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his own favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of SHEIKHPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the DAR community having annual income 260000 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1... GH MOHAMMAD DAR self 70 years Farmer
- 2...HAJIRA BAGUM wife 65 years H/W
- 3...SHOWKAT AHMAD son 34 years Labour
- 4...WAZIRA BEGUM daughter in Law 33 years H/W
- 5...HAFSA SHOWKAT Grand daughter 04 years student
- 6...ABU BAKAR Grand son ,02 years infant
- 7...AADIL AHMAD DAR son 30 years student

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 TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

### Government Of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KALANTRA / KREERI

Subject: Application MOHAMMAD RAMZAN MIR S/O ALI MOHAMMAD MIR R/O KAKOTHAL Tehsil KREERI for issuance of RBA certificate in favour of self for the issuance of RBA in his own favor

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of RBA in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of KAKOTHAL of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the MIR community having annual income 130000 // the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...MOHAMMAD RAMZAN MIR Head of Family 62 years Labour
- 2...SARWA BAGUM wife 55 years H/W
- 3...REHANA BEGUM daughter 21 years student
- 4...RAZIA RAMZAAN daughter 21 years student
- 5...SABREENA BEGUM // 18 years student
- 6...UZMA RAMZAAN // 13 years student

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 TEHSILDAR KALANTRA

### Public Notice

My daughter's name has been wrongly mentioned asHAFSA WASEEM D/O WASEEM AHMAD WANI in her Date of Birth certificate issued by SDH kreeri while her correct name is ZOHA WASEEM D/O WASEEM AHMAD WANI which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BMO /SDH kreeri within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....WASERM AHMAD WANI  
F/O...ZOHA WASEEM , R/o...HARNOW KAWACHAK

### Public Notice

My son's name has been wrongly mentioned as MOHAMMAD BASSEL S/O KHURSHED AHMAD WAR in his Date of Birth certificate issued by SDH kreeri while his correct name is MOHAMMAD BASSAL WAR S/O KHURSHED AHMAD WAR which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BMO /SDH kreeri within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....KHURSHED AHMAD WAR  
F/O...MOHAMMAD BASSEL WAR  
R/O...SHEIKHPORA, Tehsil... KREERI

### Public Notice

Hilal Ahmad Gajree S/O Mohammad Ramzan Gajree R/O Bulgam Tehsil Khoie, District Baramulla,

That the BDO concerned has issued a date birth certificate in the name of my ward namely Ishan Hilal (date of Birth 07-05-2025).

In the BDO KREERI records my wards name has been wrongly mentioned as Ishan Hilal which is not correct while as my wards actual name is Mohammad Noraiz, now I am applying for its correction,

If any body have any objection contact BDO KREERI WITHIN A 7DAYS OFTER NO OBJECTION ENTERTANED

### Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that Mr. IMTIYAZ Ahmad chopan, S/o mohd Ramzan chopan R/o saloosa, has applied for registration of D-Class Contractor in his favour in the office of the Superintendent, R&B Division Baramulla.

If any person has any objection regarding the above, the same may be submitted in writing to the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Superintendent  
R&B Division Baramulla  
Date: 5/03/2026 | Place: Baramulla

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION KUPWARA

019551-3221002

### NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

**E- NIT NO. IFCDK/ 10 OF 2025-26 | DATED: 11-03-2026.**

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tender (in Single Cover System) on Percentage (%) basis is invited from approved and eligible contractors for the following works to be opened in the office of Executive Engineer Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara:

S No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost	E/M or Bid Security	T.D Cost
01	Stage contract for restoration of breaches, cuts, stacking and laying of earth filled, sand filled bags and construction of cross bunds at head sites of Irrigation khuls, Providing and fixing of gate valves and pipe outlets of various storage tanks and other urgent nature works in Kupwara area during irrigation season 2026-27 in respect of Irrigation sub-Division Kupwara. (Kralpora and Trehgam Area).	₹700000/-	₹14000/-	₹300.00
02	Stage contract for restoration of breaches, cuts, stacking and laying of earth filled, sand filled bags and construction of cross bunds at head sites of Irrigation khuls, Providing and fixing of gate valves and pipe outlets of various storage tanks and other urgent nature works in Kupwara area during irrigation season 2026-27 in respect of Irrigation sub-Division Kupwara. (Kupwara & Hyhama Area).	₹700000/-	₹14000/-	₹300.00
03	Stage contract for restoration of breaches, cuts, stacking and laying of earth filled, sand filled bags and construction of cross bunds at head sites of Irrigation khuls, Providing and fixing of gate valves and pipe outlets of various storage tanks and other urgent nature works in Lolab area during irrigation season 2026-27 in respect of Irrigation sub-Division Lolab.(Sogam, Wavoora, Tekipora, Lalpora, Kuligam & Khurhama Area)	₹700000/-	₹14000/-	₹300.00
04	Stage contract for restoration of breaches, cuts, stacking and laying of earth filled, sand filled bags and construction of cross bunds at head sites of Irrigation khuls, Providing and fixing of gate valves and pipe outlets of various storage tanks and other urgent nature works in Lolab area during irrigation season 2026-27 in respect of Irrigation sub-Division Lolab..(Kalaroose & Khumriyal Area)	₹700000/-	₹14000/-	₹300.00

MH of Account: 2702-M&R

Time for completion: 170 Days (w.e.f 01-04-2026 to 15-09-2026) As & When required

Class of Contract: CEE/ DEE

Position of AAA: Accorded vide District Superintending Engineer Hydraulic Circle Kupwara HQ. Handwara's order No. 20/DSE/HH/DB of 2025-26 Dated: 04.03.2026 issued vide endstt. No. DSE/HH/DB/2541-42 Dated: 04-03-2026.

Position of T.S: Under process.

Position of Funds: "Budgetary Provision under M&R for Financial Year (2026-27)".

The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, set of terms and conditions and other details can be seen/ downloaded on e-procurement portal <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>, as per schedule of dates given below:

01.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	11-03-2026 from 16:30 Hrs.
02.	Date of start of downloading bid	11-03-2026 from 17:00 Hrs.
03.	Bid submission start Date Technical/ Financial	11-03-2026 from 17:00 Hrs.
04.	Bid Submission end date	27-03-2026 up to 16:30 Hrs.
05.	Date and time of opening of Tenders (online)	28-03-2026 at 11:00 AM

Note: The Department shall not be responsible for any delay in the online submission of bids due to any reason whatsoever. Prospective bidders are advised to thoroughly read and understand the instructions provided in Annexure-A as well as the General Conditions of Contract detailed in Annexure-B prior to submitting their bids. Submission of the tender shall be deemed as conclusive evidence that the bidder has read, understood, and accepted all terms and conditions stipulated therein.

No: IFCDK/CS/4119-30 | Dated: 11-03-2026

Sd/- Executive Engineer Irrigation & F C Division Kupwara

DIPK: 11797/25 | Dated: 11-03-2026

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# DDC Anantnag convenes Public Durbar at Shangus

Calls for time bound Grievance Redressal, takes stock of facilities at SDH Shangus

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG, MARCH 11:** To address the concerns and grievances of the local community and ensure efficient public service delivery, the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat today convened a Public Durbar and outreach cum grievance redressal camp, at Shangus.

The program was attended by ADC, CPO, ACD, CMO, CAO, CEO, AD FCS&CA, Principal PTC, FM DIC, BMO, Tehsildar & BDO Shangus, AEs PDD, PHE & R&B, CDPO, TSWO, TSO, officials from various other departments besides SHG, civil society & ex PRI members and the general public.

During the program, the DDC gave a patient hearing to the residents who raised issues pertaining to road connectivity, healthcare services, irrigation and borewell schemes, provision of electric poles, school upgradation, creation of new government institutions, land compensation, among others.

The demands included macadamisation of remaining 1 Km Nowgam-Tailwan road by R&B, pending land compensation for land donors on Nowgam Kullul and Nowgam Andoo roads, pending MGNREGA material component, upgradation of High School to Higher Secondary in ST area Andoora, pending rent from Army Depot Khundru, construction of Kullul Isus bridge,

developing waste dumping sites, specialist doctors & OT for SDH Shangus, adherence to power curtailment schedule, floor protection bands on Aripat Nallah, upgradation of Achabal Chattabal road, construction of Chattabal Wadwan & Nowgam to Bochan roads & remaining part of Bradiangan to Halan road, sustainable irrigation source & ITI for the area, provision of electric poles, creation of Panchayat Halqa Sheikhgund Wangam, clean water supply for Bradiangan, connectivity & teaching staff in upper areas, development & promotion of Daethnag, Kuthaerag & Andoo as tourist sites, Community Hall at Shangus, canteen for SDH Shangus, reconstruction of road at Bakwath Shangus Mattan bridge damaged by recent floods, operationalisation of Gujjar Hostel Shangus and preservation of Daethnag spring.

Addressing the gathering, the DDC re-iterated the district administration's commitment to the time-bound resolution of all genuine grievances, assuring that major issues would be taken up with the suitable authorities and minor be immediately resolved by concerned departments.

Dr. Bilal issued directions to Tehsildar and BDO Shangus to conduct field survey in consultation with the locals for identification of suitable land for dumping sites. ACD and BDO



were directed to visit the tribal habitations and critical areas for redressal of grievances regarding clean water supply for projection of works in Capex as immediate relief.

The DDC issued directions to PDD to strictly adhere to the curtailment schedule and immediately resolve the genuine concerns about electricity bills and electric poles. R&B, PMGSY

and Revenue authorities were directed to process the pending compensation claims under rules.

Concerned officers were further asked to project construction of necessary roads in relevant scheme as per guidelines along with the early restoration of damaged road patch at Balwath bridge. Also directions for exploring the possibilities of

developing sustainable irrigation source for the area and expediting work on alternate source of water supply at Bradiangan were issued to the concerned.

The DDC further directed the I&FC officials to project suitable flood mitigation works for Aripat Nallah in relevant scheme for effective flood protection. He instructed the RDD department to ensure advance publicity of Gram Sabhas so that all villagers participate in grassroot planning and governance.

Appreciating the public for raising citizen related issues, the DDC said it is heart warming to know the locals have positive ideas on development, education, health, drug de-addiction, sanitation, cleanliness and other important matters.

Earlier, the officials of various departments imparted awareness to the participants about respective beneficiary oriented schemes, online services and welfare initiatives.

Local public and civil society members hailed the initiative hoping such programs will continue for their overall welfare and community development.

Later, the DDC accompanied by ADC, CMO and BMO visited SDH Shangus and inspected various sections of the hospital. He also interacted with the medical staff, registration officials besides patients and attendants and took stock of healthcare facilities available.

## Rana expresses gratitude to Chief Minister for sanctioning helipad, waiting lounge at Mendhar

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU, MARCH 11:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for sanctioning construction of a helipad along with a waiting lounge facility at Qasab in Mendhar, Poonch district. The project, sanctioned at an estimated cost of 3.35 crore, marks a significant step towards strengthening the critical infrastructure in the border area along LoC. Rana, representing Mendhar Assembly, stated that establishment of the helipad and accompanying waiting lounge will play a crucial role in enhancing emergency response capabilities, improving accessibility and facilitating swift movement during medical emergencies, disaster management operations and other urgent situations. The facility will also support administrative and relief operations in the area, which often face geographical and logistical challenges due to its remote and hilly terrain. Expressing appreciation, Rana said the timely sanction by the Chief Minister reflects his strong commitment to balanced regional development and the welfare of people living in far-flung and border areas. He noted that improved connectivity infrastructure such as helipads can be life-saving in emergencies, particularly in regions where road access can be limited or affected by weather conditions.

"The sanctioning of this project will significantly enhance the capacity of the administration to respond promptly to emergencies and ensure better connectivity for the people of Mendhar and surrounding areas. I sincerely thank Chief Minister for his continued support and vision for strengthening infrastructure in remote areas along LoC," the Minister said.

The Minister reiterated that the government remains dedicated towards strengthening the infrastructure, improving accessibility and ensuring that developmental initiatives reach every corner of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the underserved and border areas.

## Secretary RDD reviews SASCI implementation, calls for fast-tracking rural infrastructure projects

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR, MARCH 11:** Secretary, Rural Development (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of projects sanctioned under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investments (SASCI) in the Union Territory.



The meeting was informed that Rs 21.10 crore has been sanctioned for various Rural Development and Panchayati Raj infrastructure projects across Jammu and Kashmir. The Secretary emphasised that at least 75 percent utilisation of sanctioned funds is mandatory, failing which non-performing projects would be reallocated.

He directed officials to ensure timely completion of ongoing works and stated that funds from slow-moving projects would be re-appropriated to fast-moving schemes to ensure full utilisation before March 31, 2026.

The Secretary also cautioned implementing agencies against submitting inflated fund requests and directed that proposals for additional funds must be accompanied by written undertakings certifying full utilisation within the stipulated timeframe.

Senior officers from the Rural Development Department, including Directors, Finance officials and engineers from PWD (R&B) and REW, attended the meeting.

## Deputy Chief Minister acts tough against river bed mining violations

Deactivates e- challan portals of five crusher units in Rajouri

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**RAJOURI, MARCH 11:** Acting tough against violations related to river bed mining, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today deactivated the e-challan portals of five stone crusher units at Chityari and adjoining areas of District Rajouri.

To assess the mining activities in the area, the Deputy Chief Minister conducted a surprise inspection of stone crusher units to ensure that the operations are being carried out in compliance with the prescribed rules and regulations.

He was accompanied by the Joint Director, Geology and Mining Department, Jammu along with other concerned senior officers.

During the inspection, it was found that five stone crusher

units including Mir Stone Crusher Dogani, Mehta Stone Crusher Dogani, KGN Stone Crusher Dogani, Border Stone Crusher Dogani and Shakti Stone Crusher Saranoo had carried out excavation below the natural surface level of the river bed after exhausting their legally permitted stock, which is a clear violation of the prescribed mining norms.

Taking serious notice of the violations, the e-challan portals of all the five units were deactivated with immediate effect.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the portals will remain suspended until a detailed verification of their operations is completed and further action is taken by the department as per the rules.

He stated that the government will ensure strict enforcement of



mining regulations and protection of natural resources, cautioning

that illegal mining activities will be dealt with firmly in accordance with the law.

During the inspection, several heavy excavators (Poklain machines) were also found stationed at the premises of these units.

"All heavy machines which are not allowed to operate for mining activities shall be moved away immediately and handed over to the owners in presence of Chowki Officers," maintained the Deputy CM.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the Geology and Mining Department to initiate a detailed verification of functioning and compliance status of the concerned units. "Appropriate action will be taken against any violation found during the verification process," he said.

## World Plumbing Day celebrated at Government ITI Kishtwar under Jal Mahotsav Pakhwada 2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KISHTWAR, MARCH 11:** The Department of Jal Shakti Kishtwar, in collaboration with Government ITI, on Wednesday celebrated World Plumbing Day as part of the Jal Mahotsav Pakhwada.

The programme witnessed active participation from the plumber trade trainees. The trainees attended the event in proper uniform and showcased their technical skills related to plumbing, water conservation and maintenance of water supply systems. The event aimed to highlight the vital role played by plumbers in ensuring safe water supply and sanitation in society.

The trainees were sensitized to the importance of water conservation and sustainable water management. Demonstrations and discussions were held on modern plumbing practices, leak prevention and efficient water distribution

systems.

The programme was attended by officers and officials from the Jal Shakti Department along with staff members and instructors of Government ITI Kishtwar.

During the event, speakers emphasized that skilled plumbers are essential guardians of water infrastructure and play a key role in maintaining public health and hygiene.

The celebration concluded with a pledge by trainees to work with dedication for water conservation and to utilize their technical skills for the betterment of society.

Meanwhile, the Water Quality Monitoring Team of District Kishtwar conducted a Field Testing Kit (FTK) demonstration and intensive water testing at Anganwadi Centre Gurian-B. The activity aimed to generate public awareness about safe drinking water practices and ensure regular monitoring of water quality at the community level.

## DC Kishtwar gives away Community Forest Rights Certificates to 86 Tribal Members

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**KISHTWAR, MARCH 11:** In a significant step towards empowering tribal communities and strengthening their rights over traditional forest lands, Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today handed over Community Forest Rights (CFR) certificates to members of 86 Scheduled Tribe households. Community Forest Rights (CFR) certificate is conferred under the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

The distribution of CFR certificates formally recognizes the long-standing relationship of tribal communities with forest resources. It acknowledged their collective rights over community forest lands for grazing purposes, as envisaged

under FRA 2006.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the initiative marks an important milestone in ensuring social justice, livelihood security and sustainable management of forest resources by tribal communities. He reiterated the administration's commitment to safeguarding the rights of indigenous groups and promoting their socio-economic development.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the district administration for recognizing their traditional rights and enabling them to manage and utilize forest resources responsibly.

The move is expected to strengthen community participation in forest conservation while simultaneously enhancing livelihood opportunities for tribal families in the district.

## Legal awareness camps held across Reasi District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

**REASI, MARCH 11:** Under the visionary leadership of Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Reasi Khalil Choudhary (also Pr. District and Sessions Judge) and the able guidance of Secretary Pooja Gupta, awareness programmes to promote NALSA Schemes 2024 and NALSA helpline Number 15100, besides generate

public awareness about "Prohibition of Child Marriage" was organised today by the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) at Mahore Court Complex and Dewal Mahore.

The participants were sensitized to the provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act and the importance of ensuring proper age and consent before marriage. The PLVs also informed the participants about

the government assistance schemes available for the welfare and protection of women, children and other vulnerable sections of society.

Further, the participants were made aware about the NALSA Helpline Numbers, through which citizens can seek legal advice and assistance in case of any legal issues or violations of their rights.

Another awareness programme

was organized by the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) of TLSC Katra at Panchayat Akhli to generate public awareness regarding the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1985.

The PLVs sensitized the residents about the legal consequences of demanding dowry as enshrined in Dowry Prohibition Act, 1985. "Demanding or giving dowry is a punishable offence and the public shall stand against this social evil,"

the speakers stressed. The participants were also informed about the free legal aid services provided by the Legal Services Authorities for the needy and marginalized sections of society. The PLVs further urged the community members to report cases of dowry harassment and seek assistance from the Legal Services Authority whenever required.

# Govt invokes Essential Commodities Act to secure domestic gas supply

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MAR 11** : Amid rising pressure on global fuel supplies due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, the union government has invoked the Essential Commodities Act (EC Act) to safeguard India's domestic energy market and ensure uninterrupted availability of cooking gas.

According to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the government has issued a control order directing refineries and petrochemical units to maximise the production of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and divert key hydrocarbon streams to the LPG pool.

The move aims to maintain a steady supply of cooking gas across the country. The ministry said the invocation of the EC Act establishes a clear priority framework for natural gas distribution in order to manage the current supply constraints.

Under the new mandate, domestic piped natural gas (PNG) for households and compressed natural gas (CNG) for vehicles will receive



100% assured supply.

Other sectors, however, will face calibrated supply limits based on their previous six-month average consumption. Industrial and commercial natural gas consumers will receive 80% of their six-month average supply, while fertilizer plants have been allocated 70% of their previous supply levels as part of the government's resource rebalancing strategy.

To facilitate the shift in supply priorities, the Petroleum Ministry confirmed a 35% reduction in natural

gas allocation to refineries and petrochemical plants. The measures come as India navigates supply challenges triggered by geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

The country typically sources around 30% of its natural gas through the Strait of Hormuz, making the route critical for energy imports. To offset the current shortfall, the ministry said India is actively procuring natural gas through alternative trade routes to maintain national energy security.

Meanwhile, the ministry has

also constituted a committee to assess LPG requirements for restaurants, automobiles and other sectors, and explore ways to provide limited volumes to them.

The government has prioritised domestic LPG supply to households to ensure energy security for citizens amid volatility in global oil and energy markets due to the West Asia crisis.

"In light of current geopolitical disruptions to fuel supply and constraints on LPG availability, the ministry has issued orders to oil refineries to increase LPG production and utilise the additional output for domestic consumption," the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said in a statement posted on X.

To manage the current supply situation and prevent hoarding or blackmarketing, the ministry has also introduced a 25-day inter-booking period for LPG consumers. The steps are part of the government's broader strategy to stabilise the domestic energy market while global supply chains remain under pressure. UNI

# India is 7th largest exporter of agri produce: Piyush Goyal

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 11**: India's exports of food and agricultural products, including farm produce and fisheries, have reached nearly Rs 5 lakh crore (over USD 55 billion) annually, making the country the seventh largest exporter of agricultural produce in the world, said union Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal on Tuesday.

While addressing a gathering at the inauguration of the 40th edition of AAHAR – The International Food & Hospitality Fair, the minister noted that over the past eleven years, from 2014 to 2025, India's agri and food exports have witnessed significant growth.

"Exports of processed foods have increased fourfold, fruit and pulses exports have tripled, processed vegetable exports have quadrupled, cocoa exports have tripled, and cereal exports have doubled. Rice exports alone have grown by 62% during this period," he said.

Goyal said these achievements should inspire India to aspire for the top position globally in agricultural and processed food exports, and emphasized that the goal is achievable and aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi that India should become the "food basket of the world."

He also encouraged farmers and entrepreneurs to take advantage of the Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and focus on food processing and value addition, which can enable farmers to access higher-value global markets.

The minister noted that an increasing number of small enterprises are entering the food processing sector, creating new avenues for growth and employment.

The Minister highlighted that the nine Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) concluded by India over the past three and a half years have opened access to 38 developed and prosperous countries, providing vast market opportunities for Indian exporters.

He added that India today has preferential market access covering nearly two-thirds



of global trade, which strengthens India's position as an attractive investment destination and enables Indian businesses to integrate into global value chains.

Further, Goyal emphasized that while negotiating FTAs, the Government has carefully safeguarded the interests of domestic stakeholders, particularly farmers, fishermen and MSMEs.

"India has protected sensitive sectors such as dairy, where no concessions have been given to foreign producers. Similarly, genetically modified (GM) products have not been granted duty concessions or market access," he said.

He further clarified that key agricultural commodities such as rice, wheat, maize, soy meal and several varieties of pulses have been protected in trade negotiations. In the sugar sector, concessions have generally not been extended to prevent imports that could adversely affect India's sugarcane farmers and domestic producers.

The Minister said these measures ensure that India's domestic strengths remain protected while new global opportunities are created for Indian products. He urged stakeholders connected with industry and the business community to spread awareness at the grassroots level about how India's FTAs safeguard national interests while expanding international trade opportunities. UNI

## Mercedes Benz adds new variant CLA 200 Standard Range to its CKA BEV launch in India

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**CHENNAI, MAR 11**: Luxury car maker Mercedes Benz today announced the addition of a new variant, the CLA 200 'Standard Range', for its upcoming launch of the CLA BEV in India.

The CLA 200 'Standard Range' will be in addition to the CLA 250 'Long Range' variant that will debut in the Indian market, a company release here said.

The CLA 200 'Standard Range' will offer distinctive cues catering to diverse requirements of customers in terms of both range and styling. It will have the



'Progressive Line' styling, featuring comfort seats, multifunction sports leather steering wheel and two trim options. The equipment level of both CLA 250 'Long Range' and CLA 200 'Standard Range' variants will, however, remain the same, continuing Mercedes-Benz India's commitment to offer high product substance and latest technology as 'standard', to its customers in India.

The company also announced the commencement of bookings for both the variants of the all-new CLA BEV, from today. Bookings can be made with a payment of Rs. 1.5 lakhs and customers pre-booking the CLA BEV will be eligible for a complimentary wall box charger installed.

Upon its India launch, the CLA 200 'Standard Range' will be complementing the CLA 250 'Long Range' version and it will be introduced in the market based on the customer feedback, who wanted an additional option for the CLA BEV in addition to the CLA 250 variant.

Deliveries for the 'CLA 250 Long Range' and the 'CLA 200 Standard Range' will begin from end April and June respectively. UNI

## Sensex gains over 400 points, Nifty above 24,150 in early opening trade

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 11**: Domestic equity benchmarks opened on a positive note on Tuesday, with the BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 trading higher in early morning deals amid buying across key sectors.

The 30-share Sensex was trading at 77,971.15, up 404.99 points or 0.52 per cent, around 10:28 am, compared to the previous

close of 77,566.16.

The index opened at 78,375.73 and touched an intraday high of 78,526.25, while the day's low stood at 77,745.47.

Similarly, the broader Nifty 50 advanced 137.95 points or 0.57 per cent to trade at 24,166.00.

The index opened at 24,280.80 and moved between a high of 24,303.80 and a low of 24,079.95 during early trade. UNI

# Embed showcases cashless, AI-Driven solutions for India's growing amusement industry

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 11**: Singapore-based technology provider Embed on Monday announced the rollout of its next-generation cashless and AI-enabled solutions for India's rapidly expanding amusement and attractions sector, which is projected to grow to over USD 11 billion by 2030. The company said it will showcase its latest integrated technology solutions for family entertainment centres (FECs), amusement parks and arcades at the 24th IAAPI Amusement Expo, scheduled to be held from March 10-12 at the Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai.

According to industry estimates, India's amusement and theme park

market is witnessing strong expansion, with revenues expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.9 per cent over the coming years, driven by new attractions and rising consumer demand for experiential entertainment. Speaking ahead of the expo, Embed Chief Executive Officer Renee Welsh said operators in India are rapidly scaling operations and increasingly looking for technologies that can simplify guest experiences while providing real-time operational insights.

She said the company's integrated ecosystem brings together booking systems, digital waivers, cashless payments, and performance reporting to create a seamless experience for visitors while enabling operators to manage

operations more efficiently.

A key highlight of the showcase will be Embed AI, a new suite of intelligent tools designed specifically for entertainment venues.

The platform offers real-time reporting, automated operational processes, demand and revenue prediction, workforce planning tools and personalised guest engagement capabilities.

The system aims to help operators optimise pricing and promotions, improve staffing decisions and enhance overall venue performance.

The company's Chief Technology Officer, Andy Welsh, said its partnerships with global technology leaders such as Google, Apple and Amazon Web Services allow it to

develop customised solutions for the entertainment industry by leveraging cutting-edge innovations. Shreya Malpani of Malpani Group, which operates Dave & Buster's India, said the shift to tap-and-play systems has simplified the guest experience while enabling operators to access real-time insights into game performance, downtime and customer preferences.

She noted that such systems help reduce manual monitoring and allow staff to focus more on improving customer experience rather than backend processes.

To support venue operators and staff, the company has also introduced Embed GoTrain, a gamified training programme

designed to help teams quickly learn and implement the system while adopting operational best practices. Abbas Jabalpuwaria, CEO of TEEG (Timezone), said his organisation has been using Embed's solutions for more than two decades and expressed confidence in the company's continued expansion in the Indian market.

The company said its focus at the IAAPI expo will be on demonstrating how cashless payment ecosystems, AI-driven analytics and integrated venue management systems can help amusement operators improve efficiency, increase guest spending and support long-term growth as India's entertainment industry expands. UNI

## Secy DFS chairs review meeting on expediting resolution of IBC cases at NCLT

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MAR 11**: M Nagaraju, secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS) on Monday chaired a review meeting to monitor the progress in top Insolvency and Bankruptcy (IBC)

cases pending for admission and resolution at NCLT, an official statement said here.

During this high-level meeting, a detailed review of the top twenty accounts pending for admission and ten accounts pending for resolution

was undertaken for early expedition of pending cases.

Banks were advised to take a collaborative approach in the resolution of pending cases for asset value maximisation, improving recoveries, and ensuring time-bound objectives.

# FTAs opening new opportunities for pharma, healthcare and MedTech sectors: Piyush Goyal

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 11**: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday said that India's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are creating significant opportunities for the pharmaceutical, healthcare and medical technology sectors while expanding the country's footprint in global trade. Addressing a Post Budget Webinar on "Regulatory, Investment and Ease of Doing Business Reforms" here, the minister said that the government has signed nine FTAs over the past



three to three-and-a-half years, including five agreements concluded in the last one year. These agreements, he noted, have enabled

India to gain preferential access to a large share of global markets. Goyal said that nearly two-thirds of global trade is now

accessible to India through various trade agreements, which is expected to give a strong boost to exports from sectors such as pharmaceuticals, healthcare services and medical technology.

Highlighting the broader benefits of the agreements, the minister said FTAs are not only beneficial for large industries but also support farmers, fishermen, MSMEs, startups and small traders by providing them wider access to international markets.

He said the government is focusing on strengthening the domestic ecosystem for

pharmaceuticals and medical technology through policy support, regulatory reforms and improved ease of doing business.

According to him, the sector holds immense potential to contribute to India's economic growth and employment generation.

Goyal also underlined that India has already emerged as a major global supplier of affordable medicines and vaccines, and further expansion of the pharma and healthcare sectors will reinforce the country's reputation as the "pharmacy of the world". UNI

## IRDAI clears two new insurance players for begin operations

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 11**: The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has accorded approval for the grant of Certificate of Registration to two new entities at its 134th meeting, an IRDAI statement said.

One of them is reinsurer M/S Allianz Jio Reinsurance Limited and the other one is general insurer M/S Kiwi General Insurance Limited.

It will enable them to undertake business in accordance with the application regulatory framework. IRDAI also deliberated on the regulatory framework required pursuant to the enactment of Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha Act, 2025 (SBSR).

The SBSR Act was notified on December 21, 2025 and came into force with effect from February 5 this year.

The legislation amends the Insurance Act 1938 and the IRDA Act 1999, thereby necessitating the framing of new regulations and amendments to existing regulations to align the regulatory framework with the provisions of new law, the statement added.

The Authority also granted in-principle approval for drafting and publishing the draft regulations for stakeholder consultation with regard to the regulations which are required to be framed pursuant to SBSR Act. UNI



# Arshdeep Singh fined, handed demerit point for incident with Daryl Mitchell

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**AHMEDABAD:** India fast bowler Arshdeep Singh has been fined 15% of his match fee and handed one demerit point for breaching Level 1 of the ICC code of conduct during the 2026 T20 World Cup final against New Zealand in Ahmedabad.

He was found to have breached Article 2.9 of the code of conduct which relates to "throwing a ball (or any other item of cricket equipment) at or near a player in an inappropriate and/or dangerous manner during an international match."

The incident occurred in the 11th over of New Zealand's chase

of 256, when Arshdeep fielded the ball on his follow-through and threw it towards the stumps, striking Daryl Mitchell on the pads. Arshdeep walked back to his mark without immediately apologising, prompting Mitchell to approach him seemingly to confront him. India captain Suryakumar Yadav stepped in to speak with Mitchell, while umpire Richard Illingworth was also seen having a brief word with Arshdeep. Arshdeep eventually apologised to Mitchell after the over.

Speaking to Harsha Bhogle after India's 96-run win, Arshdeep explained the incident. "Just went to apologise to Mitchell," he said.

"My throw reverse-swing and hit him so just wanted to say sorry to him for that. It was not intentional." In a video shared on the BlackCaps Instagram account, Arshdeep was seen apologising again to Mitchell, following which the pair shook hands.

The charge was levelled by the on-field umpires Illingworth and Alex Wharf, third umpire Allahuddin Paleker and fourth umpire Adrian Holdstock.

It was Arshdeep's first offence in a 24-month period. Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, and a maximum penalty of 50% of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points.

## Suzie Bates eyes T20 World Cup after injury comeback

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**VISAKHAPATNAM:** New Zealand allrounder Suzie Bates felt like "a kid in a candy store" after being able to bat, bowl and field on Dunedin on Tuesday, having recovered from a quadriceps injury she sustained last November. Bates hasn't played an international game since the ODI World Cup in October last year and suffered the injury while fielding for Otago during the 50-over Hallyburton Johnstone Shield. Though it was only a tendon issue, she said that the team management wanted to be on the cautious side and give it full time to recover with the T20 World Cup coming up in England later this year - a tournament she admitted was a major motivation during her rehabilitation. She is now set to return to action in the five-match T20I against South Africa at home,



which begins on March 15.

"I'm not going to lie," Bates said. "When I got the prognosis and was told it was 16 weeks and off the back of a disappointing 50-over World Cup, it crossed my mind. But I think that lasted about a day and I got back in the gym. And once I had that purpose of being available for selection for this massive series, it was pretty easy really."

"But yeah, those things cross your mind when you have major injuries and you've been in the game a long time. But I think knowing that the South African series and the potential of going on an England tour and a World Cup was really appealing and it didn't seem that far away once I got fit. So it was either be done or commit to that. And so I made the latter decision."

Having seen India win successive men's T20 World Cups, Bates said New Zealand - who "probably surprised a few people" at the previous women's T20 World Cup in 2024 - will leave "no questions to answer" if they go on to successfully defend their title in England. For now, though, her immediate focus is on "getting back on the park". "To be fair, it's just if I believe I can contribute to the group, that's what I've always kept playing for," Bates said. "If I can contribute with runs and wickets and in the field and just around the group and I'm fit enough to do it, then I've loved playing whether it's World Cup or whether it's home series. Yeah, there's just still that motivation to keep doing it because I know once I stop, that'll be it forever."

"It's probably been my longest break in 10 years not playing cricket. So there was a few nerves actually even coming to training just when you've been away from the group. So first and foremost, it's getting back on that park on Sunday, pending selection."

"And then around that, it's just making sure that I contribute whatever role that is with Melie [Melie Kerr] as captain, making sure I support her really well on and off the field."

## Hayden appointed as Gujarat Titans batting coach

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**DHARAMSALA:** Gujarat Titans have appointed Matthew Hayden, the former Australia opener, as their batting coach for IPL 2026.

Hayden, one of the most dominant opening batters of his era, will join a GT support staff that includes Ashish Nehra, Vikram Solanki and Parthiv Patel. He has previously been batting consultant with the Pakistan men's team. "Good batting applies pressure. Great batting owns



the game," Hayden said in a statement after his appointment. "That's the standard we want to set at Gujarat Titans."

Solanki, the director of cricket, said the appointment would help GT shape their batting identity: "His experience at the highest level, coupled with his ability to mentor emerging talent, will be instrumental in shaping our batting identity for the seasons ahead."

Hayden, the two-time ODI World Cup winner and ICC hall-

of-famer, has also played 32 matches for Chennai Super Kings, winning the title in 2010 and finishing as the tournament's highest run-scorer in 2009.

IPL 2026 will begin on March 28, although the schedule of matches is not yet out. GT are captained by Shubman Gill and finished third in 2025, bouncing back from their eighth-placed finish in 2024. They won their inaugural season in 2022 and finished runners-up in 2023.

## LPG shortage effect: Closely monitoring the situation, says IPL GC Chair Arun Dhumal

■ AGENCIES

**CHENNAI:** A day after the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas issued a statement on social media saying that LPG supply to domestic and essential non-domestic sectors is being

prioritised due to fuel supply constraints, Indian Premier League Governing Council Chairperson Arun Dhumal said the league is monitoring the evolving situation closely.

With the US-Israel-Iran war in West Asia continuing to escalate, the supply of petroleum and LPG products has taken a hit. Over the last couple of days, hotel owner associations in both Bengaluru and Chennai have said they have LPG supply for a day or two. Several hotels have already started to restrict the menu to optimise the usage of LPG. While there is no sense of panic at the moment, IPL GC Chairperson Dhumal said that the

league is keeping a close eye on the developing situation. "We are reviewing the development. Since this is an evolving situation, nothing can be said as of now. But given the requirement of the situation, we will take a call accordingly," Dhumal told The New Indian Express.

Though the schedule is yet to be announced, the board is working out the nitty-gritty details to avoid clashing with the election in several states, and the tournament is set to start on March 28. However, if this ongoing situation persists, the BCCI and IPL may have to make a call as it will affect not just the league but people from

all walks of life, including industries, hospitals and educational institutions.

Meanwhile, several franchises have already started their camps in their respective cities. Chennai Super Kings camp has been going on for a few days with around 10 players training every day in their high performance centre. Punjab Kings have been camping in Dharamsala for the last few days with around 10 players taking part.

Apart from the LPG supply, logistics will also be a challenge as it was seen during the recently concluded T20 World Cup, which India won. Several teams, including Zimbabwe,

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