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J&K Targets TB Elimination with 100-Day Drive Launched by LG Manoj Sinha

Mass campaign to boost testing, awareness and community participation across Union Territory

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 24: On World Tuberculosis Day, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday launched the 'TB Mukat Bharat Abhiyan - 100 Days Campaign' in Jammu, calling for a united effort to eliminate tuberculosis and transform the initiative into a people's movement across Jammu and Kashmir.

The campaign, part of a nationwide drive spearheaded by Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, aims to accelerate progress towards TB eradication through targeted interventions, advanced technology, and intensified outreach in vulnerable areas.

Addressing officials, healthcare workers, and community representatives at the Convention Centre, Sinha stressed that public health is a shared responsibility and urged stakeholders to ensure that no patient is left behind. He called for enhanced testing, identification of high-risk zones, and door-to-door awareness to inform families



that TB diagnosis and treatment are free and that full recovery is possible.

"Awareness will be our most powerful medicine. Detecting TB is only half the battle; ensuring patients complete treatment and recover fully is the real challenge," the Lieutenant Governor said, highlighting the role of the Ni-Kshay Mitra programme

in providing nutritional and social support to patients.

The initiative will see the deployment of AI-enabled portable X-ray machines and Ni-Kshay vans to deliver diagnostic and treatment services directly to remote areas, including tribal hamlets, migrant

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Govt Sets Up 7 Empowered Groups to Shield Economy from West Asia War Impact

PM Modi stresses diplomacy, supply security and 'Team India' approach to tackle looming crisis

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced the formation of seven empowered groups to devise strategies to counter the potential long-term impact of the ongoing West Asia conflict, warning of serious repercussions for India's economy, energy security and supply chains.

Addressing the Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister said the expert groups will focus on critical sectors such as petroleum, natural gas, fertilisers, logistics and inflation, and will formulate both immediate and long-term responses to the evolving situation. Drawing parallels with the coordinated response during the COVID-19 pandemic, he called for a unified 'Team India' effort, urging states to work in close coordination with the Centre.

Reiterating India's consistent position, Modi said dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable path to restoring peace, adding that New Delhi is in continuous engagement with key stakeholders, including Iran, Israel and



the United States, to push for de-escalation. He acknowledged that the conflict has triggered an unprecedented global energy crisis, impacting supplies of crude oil, gas and fertilisers, and underscored the need for greater self-reliance to withstand

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Chief Secretary Assesses Fuel Stock Position Across J&K

Assures of adequate availability, directs strict action against hoarders

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 24: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the availability and distribution of petroleum products across the districts of the Union of J&K.

The meeting was attended by the Commissioner Secretary, Food,

Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; Deputy Commissioners; senior officers of the Legal Metrology and Food Supply Departments along with the representatives of Oil Marketing Companies.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary was apprised about the present stock position of all major



petroleum products including Motor Spirit (MS), High Speed Diesel (HSD), aviation turbine fuel, and LPG available across the Union Territory.

Reiterating a zero-tolerance policy, the Chief Secretary directed strict legal action against any instances of hoarding, black marketing, overcharging, or diversion

of petroleum products. He emphasized the need for strict vigilance at all levels to safeguard consumer interests

While reviewing district-wise supply, he asked the Deputy Commissioners to furnish detailed reports on availability and distribution. He noted that no doubt

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J&K Leaves 87% Tribal Welfare Funds Unspent in FY26

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, MAR 24: Nearly 87 per cent of funds allocated for tribal welfare in Jammu and Kashmir during the 2025-26 financial year remain unutilised, officials in the Tribal Affairs Department said, pointing to serious shortcomings in the execution of welfare programmes.

Of the Rs. 135.33 crore released under various centrally sponsored and Union Territory sector schemes, only Rs. 17.63 crore has been spent so far, leaving Rs. 117.69 crore unutilised.

No expenditure has been recorded under various initiatives such as the Dharti Abha Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, which had an allocation of Rs. 39.21 crore, and the Post-Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Tribe Students, where Rs. 14.99 crore remains untouched.

Funds released for Tribal Research Institute support, amounting to Rs. 3.18 crore, have also not been utilised. Under the Tribal Sub Plan, spending has been minimal, with only about Rs. 35 lakh used out of Rs. 6.80 crore.

The UT sector scheme for infrastructure

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Vande Bharat Gets Faster Route to Amritsar via Border Belt

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, MAR 24: In a move aimed at improving connectivity and reducing travel time, Indian Railways has decided to reroute the Katra-Amritsar Vande Bharat Express via Gurdaspur and Batala, replacing the earlier alignment through Jalandhar, officials said on Tuesday.

The semi-high-speed train will depart from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra at 6:40 am and reach Amritsar at 11:40 am. On the return journey, it will leave Amritsar at 4:40 pm and arrive back at Katra at 9:45 pm the same evening.

Under the revised schedule, the train will halt

at Jammu, Pathankot Cantonment, Gurdaspur and Batala in both directions. Officials also confirmed that the stoppage has been shifted from Pathankot City to Pathankot Cantonment.

Railway authorities said the new alignment would provide a more direct route between Jammu and Amritsar, cutting down on distance and travel time. The change is also expected to extend premium rail services to the border districts of Gurdaspur and Batala, benefiting both residents and pilgrims.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Uchit Singhal said the decision was taken in response

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RATION SCAM UNEARTHED IN REASI, FORMER TSO AMONG ACCUSED

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau has registered a case against a former Tehsil Supply Officer and several officials for their alleged involvement in a large-scale ration scam in Reasi district, officials said on Tuesday.

An FIR has been lodged at ACB Police Station Udhampur under relevant provisions of the J&K Prevention of Corrup-

tion Act and the Ranbir Penal Code against Pranav Gandotra, the then TSO of Arnas/Dharmari, along with other officials of the Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Department.

According to the ACB, investigations revealed that during his tenure from April 2011 to January 2013, the accused officer allegedly procured 22,298.80 quintals of excess ration fraudulently and drew nearly Rs. 1.03 crore as

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J&K's Pharma Sector Picks Up Pace, But Lacks Big-Ticket Infrastructure Push

24 of 29 registered units operational; Rs. 31.76 crore incentives released, no drug or medical device parks yet

HT NEWS DESK / PIB

NEW DELHI, MAR 24: Jammu and Kashmir's pharmaceutical sector is witnessing steady growth under central incentive schemes, though the absence of large-scale infrastructure projects continues to limit its full

potential.

The Union Territory has so far registered 29 pharmaceutical units under the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) 2021, with 24 already operational, according to information shared by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.

The government has disbursed Rs. 31.76 crore in incentives during the financial year 2025-26 to support industrial development in the region.

Under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for bulk drugs, only one project has been approved in J&K. The project has attracted an invest-

ment of Rs. 162.01 crore till December 2025, but no financial incentive has been released so far. In another PLI scheme focused on pharmaceuticals, one unit has commenced manufacturing operations with an investment of Rs. 14.15 crore, as

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DIG Steps Up Border Vigil in Kathua, Orders Joint Nakas

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 24: The Deputy Inspector General of Police for the Jammu-Samba-Kathua (JSK) range, Shiv Kumar Sharma, on Tuesday conducted an extensive review of security arrangements in the border areas of Kathua, directing forces to enhance vigilance and operational readiness.

Accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police Mohita Sharma and other officers, the DIG visited sensitive locations across the border belt to assess preparedness on the ground, officials said.

Interacting with police personnel and Village Defence Guard (VDG) members

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Fair Prices Assured for Farmers: Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Lok Sabha

HT NEWS DESK / PIB

NEW DELHI, MAR 24: Union Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated in the Lok Sabha today that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Central Government is committed to ensuring that farmers receive a fair price for their produce in every situation, and no effort will be spared at any level to rescue the 'annadatta' (food providers) from crisis. He said that the NDA government has provided a strong security shield to farmers' income through record purchases at Minimum Support Price (MSP), PM-AASHA, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, price difference payment, and Market Intervention Scheme, and farmers' incomes have doubled. While answering various questions raised by MPs in the Lok Sabha, Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that to increase farmers' incomes and protect their interests, the Central Government led by Shri Narendra Modi has taken several historic steps in the past years. He informed that agricultural production has increased by nearly 44 per cent, and a comprehensive campaign has been launched to simultaneously enhance farmers' productivity and income. Shri Chouhan said that in the previous governments' time, excuses were made in the name of implementing the Swaminathan Com-

mission recommendations, even going to the extent of saying that giving MSP more than 50 per cent of the cost would distort the market. In contrast, the NDA government led by Shri Narendra Modi decided to determine the Minimum Support Price by taking into account 50 per cent profit on production cost and continuously implemented it, enabling farmers to get better returns for their hard work. Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh stated that merely announcing MSP is not enough; actually procuring at that price is more important, and in this direction, the government has provided direct benefits to farmers through record purchases at MSP not only for wheat, paddy, pulses, and oilseeds but also for various other crops. He said that this government has not remained limited to grains only but is also actively intervening for pulses, oilseeds, fruits, and vegetables so that farmers do not suffer losses if prices of any crop fall. Shri Chouhan informed that Pradhan Mantri Annadatta Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan - PM-AASHA scheme, a significant initiative launched during Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's tenure, provides security to those crops whose prices often fall below MSP. He said that under PM-AASHA, three types of arrangements have been made - direct purchase of pulses and oilseeds through Price Support Scheme, bridging the gap between MSP and market price through price difference payment



mechanism, and providing protection to farmers through other means if needed. On a question regarding Maharashtra, Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan informed that during the recent natural calamities, the state government made full use of the Centre's policy-supported digital system and transferred Rs. 14,000 crore directly to farmers' accounts within just five days through Farmer ID, providing swift relief. He said that on one hand, state governments compensate for crop losses through arrangements like SDRF, while on the other hand, the Central Government is leaving no stone unturned in providing insurance coverage and compensation to farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

While mentioning crops like soybean including pulses and oilseeds, Shri Chouhan said that in the event of price fall, the government does not rely only on purchase but also adopts the option of depositing the entire amount between MSP and market price directly into the farmer's account through price difference mechanism. Citing the example of Madhya Pradesh, he said that there, through the price difference payment scheme, farmers' income was protected without making them stand in queues, without additional logistics costs, and this model is inspirational for other states as well. Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh said that through the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS), a model rate has been set for perishable fruits and vegetables as well, either by arranging direct purchase

or by depositing the difference between model rate and market price into the farmer's account. In the context of products like grapes, chilli, potato, onion, tomato, he clarified that if prices are very low in farmers' areas and farmers want to take their produce to mandis in big cities, then in such cases, the Central Government is even bearing the transportation cost, so that farmers can get better prices in distant mandis. While replying in the Lok Sabha, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan reiterated that to ensure proper purchase of the entire produce of the farmer, FCI, NAFED, state government agencies, and other institutions are working in a coordinated manner, and purchase centers are being opened wherever and as many as required. Emphasising the transparency and accuracy in the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Shri Shivraj Singh informed that crop-cutting experiments are conducted at every panchayat level, and four such experiments are mandatorily carried out in each cluster/panchayat so that there is no doubt in the estimation of yield figures. He said that now, extensive use of technology has been adopted through satellite-based remote sensing method, which enables better assessment of actual yield and loss, and insurance claims can be paid on a more scientific and impartial basis; farmers are directly benefiting from this in the new crop insurance system.

Union Minister Shri Chouhan informed that during the NDA government's tenure, farmers have deposited a total of about Rs. 36,055 crore as premium under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, in return for which about Rs. 1,92,477 crore of insurance claim amount have been deposited into farmers' accounts; this is proof that the scheme has been extremely beneficial for farmers. He also clarified that earlier, local level disasters or crop loss of any single farmer was generally not considered covered, and assessment mainly happened at tehsil/block unit level, but now the provisions have been changed to ensure that if even a single farmer's crop is damaged and yield figures prove it, then compensation for his loss will also be provided through the crop insurance scheme; no farmer will be deprived of insurance security. He said that these are not just paper schemes but concrete steps implemented at the ground level, whose direct benefits are visible in farmers' income and security. Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that PM Modi's government is farmer-friendly, which stands firmly with the 'annadatta' and life-giver farmer in every crisis. He said that we will never back down from the resolve to give farmers the full price of their sweat in any situation; protecting the farmer's hard work and honour is our topmost priority.

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

J&K Targets TB.....

settlements, and urban slums. Ayushman health camps will offer a range of screenings such as chest X-rays, NAAT tests, blood sugar, haemoglobin, blood pressure, and BMI checks. Sinha urged the administration, educational institutions, industries, NGOs, and civil society groups to actively participate in the campaign, emphasizing that Jammu and Kashmir should emerge as a leader in the national effort against TB. He also directed authorities to review the availability of testing equipment and medicines and called for the creation of a dedicated grievance redressal portal for citizens. During the event, the Lieutenant Governor flagged off Ni-Kshay vehicles and distributed nutrition kits among beneficiaries. Districts Srinagar and Doda were recognised for achieving TB Mukta Panchayat status, while Ni-Kshay Mitras were felicitated for their contributions. Reaffirming the administration's commitment, Sinha said the goal is to ensure that no individual in Jammu and Kashmir loses their future to tuberculosis, adding that every life is valuable and every case must be detected and treated promptly.

Govt Sets Up.....

prolonged disruptions. The government, he said, is actively working to secure energy supplies from multiple sources to ensure that the burden on citizens is minimised. Warning against profiteering amid the crisis, the Prime Minister directed state governments to crack down on hoarding and black marketing, while ensuring uninterrupted availability of essential commodities. He added that an inter-ministerial mechanism is already in place to monitor import-export challenges and implement corrective measures. Modi also highlighted concerns over the safety of nearly one crore Indians residing in Gulf countries, stating that around 3.75 lakh citizens have returned safely so far, including about 1,000 from Iran. Assuring farmers of adequate fertiliser availability, he said the government is committed to ensuring that the impact of the war does not fall on the agricultural sector. He also urged states to maintain timely distribution under welfare schemes, particularly those aimed at supporting the poor and migrant workers. Describing the crisis as a major test for the nation, the Prime Minister emphasised the importance of cooperative federalism and swift decision-making to sustain economic stability. He cautioned that the adverse effects of the conflict could persist and stressed the need for preparedness at all levels. Modi further expressed concern over disruptions to global maritime routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, asserting that attacks on commercial shipping are unacceptable and that India is working diplomatically to ensure safe passage for its vessels.

Chief Secretary.....

overall situation remains satisfactory but stressed that all eligible domestic and commercial consumers must receive LPG supplies without delay, with priority accorded to genuine beneficiaries. The Chief Secretary further underscored the importance of doorstep delivery of LPG and directed Oil Marketing Companies to maintain adequate stock levels at retail outlets, dealer points, and buffer depots to ensure uninterrupted supply. He also instructed the Commissioner Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, to conduct regular reviews with district administrations, maintain close coordination, and keep the higher authorities informed. He emphasized the need for officers to remain accessible to the public and ensure prompt redressal of grievances. On infrastructure development, the Chief Secretary directed the Divisional Commissioner and concerned Deputy Commissioners to resolve land acquisition and other bottlenecks to facilitate the early operationalisation of the under-construction gas pipeline. He also asked Urban Local Bodies to prioritise domestic connections once the trunk pipeline becomes operational in the districts of Kathua, Samba, Jammu, and Udhampur. A detailed presentation by Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA, Saurabh Bhaghat, highlighted that the overall stock position across the Union Territory remains stable. Petrol stocks are sufficient for approximately 9-10 days, diesel for 16-17 days, and LPG for around 12-13 days, including transit stock, ensuring uninterrupted availability. On LPG supply, it was informed that 100 percent domestic LPG demand is being met across J&K, with seamless distribution and no major complaints reported. Supply coverage stands at about 24 days in urban areas and 35 days in rural areas, with OTP-based delivery systems ensuring transparency. The Chief Secretary was also informed that a robust monitoring mechanism has been put in place, including real-time tracking and daily reporting of stock positions. District administrations have been directed to closely monitor supply and distribution, supported by district-level committees and task forces to ensure fair and transparent allocation. Highlighting enforcement efforts, it was reported that 1,418 inspections and raids were conducted across districts between March 17 and 23, resulting in action against violators and seizure of commodities in several cases. Additionally, over 1,000 public grievances were addressed promptly, reflecting an efficient grievance redressal mechanism. As part of alternate fuel arrangements, all Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families are being provided 2 litres of kerosene oil per month through Aadhaar-seeded ration cards under the RCMS system. The meeting also noted significant progress in streamlining LPG distribution through large-scale e-KYC verification, with nearly 20 lakh consumers already

verified. The process is continuing at a rapid pace to enhance transparency and prevent misuse. It was further informed that under the commercial category, the Government of India has enhanced allocation from 20 percent to 50 percent of assessed supply, including a general increase and a special incentive component. Regarding the pipeline project, it was apprised that the Union Territory is compliant with all incentive conditions. The pipeline is currently being laid in Kathua, Samba, and Jammu districts and is expected to become operational within the next two to three months. **J&K Leaves.....** for tribal welfare has also seen sluggish progress, with only Rs. 13.99 crore spent out of Rs. 65.36 crore received till mid-February. Officials said that although 15,371 students were expected to benefit under the Pre-Matric Scholarship scheme, with a projected outlay of Rs. 3.96 crore, no funds were released during the current financial year. Some headway has been made under the Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana, where Rs. 6 crore has been utilised out of an available Rs. 9.32 crore carried forward from previous years, with the remaining expected to be spent by March-end. The officials added that Rs. 78 crore has been earmarked in the Union Territory's budget for tribal welfare, including Rs. 70 crore for infrastructure development to improve access to education, healthcare, housing and other essential services. Despite the allocations, the low utilisation of funds has raised concerns over administrative delays and inefficiencies in delivering benefits to tribal communities. **Vande Bharat.....** to growing passenger demand and to enhance convenience and overall travel experience. Officials added that passengers should check updated timings and stoppages on the official Indian Railways website, the National Train Enquiry System, or by dialling 139 before travel. **Ration Scam.....** transportation and carriage charges in connivance with other officials. Officials said the excess ration was not supplied to designated depots but was instead diverted to the black market, causing substantial loss to the government exchequer. The ACB stated that the accused misused their official positions and acted in criminal conspiracy to misappropriate government resources for personal gain. Further investigation in the case is in progress. **J&K's Pharma.....** per the Department of Pharmaceuticals. Despite these gains, Jammu and Kashmir has not been included in key infrastructure initiatives such as Medical Devices Parks and Bulk Drug Parks, which are being developed in other parts of the country to

enhance competitiveness and reduce production costs. At present, such parks are being established in Greater Noida, Ujjain and Kanchipuram under the Medical Devices Parks scheme, while Bulk Drug Parks have been approved in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. Officials said these initiatives are aimed at strengthening domestic manufacturing of key pharmaceutical inputs and reducing dependence on imports through shared infrastructure and economies of scale—advantages that J&K currently lacks. The details were provided by Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers Anupriya Patel in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha. **DIG Steps Up.....** deployed in vulnerable pockets, Sharma emphasised the need for heightened alertness and professionalism, particularly at naka points and other strategic locations. He underlined the critical nature of duties in border areas and instructed personnel to remain extra vigilant against anti-social and anti-national elements. The DIG ordered strengthening of naka checks, especially during night hours, and called for intensified surveillance across the region. In a bid to improve coordination, Sharma also held discussions with senior officials of the Border Security Force and directed the establishment of joint nakas to enhance operational effectiveness. To boost morale, he distributed sweets among the deployed personnel in view of ongoing and forthcoming festivals, officials added.



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DC Srinagar inspects progress of works on new Revenue Complex of Tehsil Panthachowk, Migrant Transit Accommodation Zewan

Emphasizes timely completion of projects with quality & safety standards

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Tuesday undertook a visit to Zewan area of District to oversee the progress of ongoing works being executed on construction of Migrant Transit Accommodation for PM Package employees at Zewan, Srinagar. He also inspected construction works on the new Revenue Complex for housing Tehsil Office Panthachowk.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B, Tatheer Manzoor, SE PDD, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, SDPO Panthachowk, Executive Engineer R&B, Executive Engineer PDD, Executive Engineer PHE, Tehsildar Panthachowk, Chief Sanitation Officer and other concerned Officers.

While reviewing the progress of works at Migrant Transit Accommodation Zewan, the Deputy Commissioner took a round of the various under construction Blocks and completed Blocks of the project. He was

apprised that the work on the project for construction of 39 accommodation blocks comprising 936 flats is going on in full swing and as on date 26 Blocks comprising 624 flats stands ready.

He was further informed that out of the remaining 13 accommodation Blocks 6 blocks are also ready while remaining 7 accommodation blocks will be completed by April, 2026.

The Deputy Commissioner was further apprised that the boundary wall and approach road for the project are nearing completion, while macadamization works are set to commence in the first week of April. The DC was informed that the process of installation of electricity transformers (DTs) has been completed and power related setup will be in place within a week. While water supply facilities have already been made functional at the transit accommodation facility.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized timely completion of the prestigious project which is being monitored at the higher level. He directed the concerned Officers and executing agencies to expedite the pace of internal finishing and allied works while ensuring strict



adherence to quality and safety standards. He was informed that the installation of lifts has begun in the blocks of Transit Accom-

modation. The DC instructed that installation of lifts in accommodation blocks be completed swiftly in a

time bound manner. The DC directed concerned Departments and executing agencies to work in a coordinated approach to expedite the accommodation project in committed timelines.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner visited Panthachowk to inspect the ongoing construction of the new Tehsil Office complex being executed by the R&B Department. He was informed that approximately 80 percent of the work on new Tehsil Office building comprising Tehsildars Court Room, Naib Tehsildar Office, Establishment section, Record Room and Waiting area for visitors stands completed.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner directed the executing agency to further accelerate the pace of work to ensure completion of the project by April 2026. He stated that the new facility will significantly enhance the delivery of revenue services to the public and provide an improved working environment for the staff.

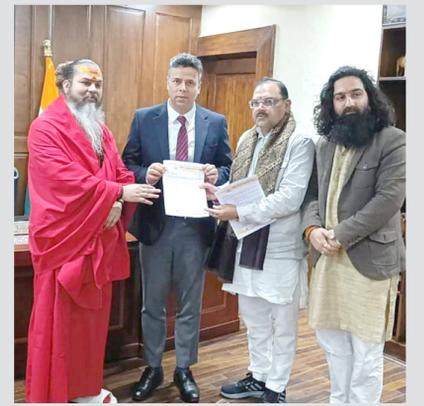
The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure that both projects are completed within the stipulated timelines.

Memorandum Submitted to DC Anantnag on Martand Temple Issues

Spiritual leader seeks better management, preservation, and facilities for devotees

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MAR 24: Renowned spiritual leader Sant Shri Rudranath Mahakal Vishal Ji Maharaj on Tuesday called on Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, and submitted a detailed memorandum highlighting key issues related to the preservation, management, and facilitation of religious activities at the historic Martand Sun Temple and other sacred sites in the district. He was accompanied by socio-political



activist Muktesh Yogi and social activist Dr. Shailendra Ramswaroop Gurjar from Bayana, Bharatpur (Rajasthan). The memorandum was submitted under the aegis of Raashtriya Anhad Mahayog Peeth, an organisation working for the conservation and revival of ancient spiritual heritage sites. The representation stressed the need for unhindered access for saints and devotees to perform religious practices, including pooja and chanting, while maintaining the sanctity of temple premises. It also called for the restoration and proper documentation of traditional pilgrimage routes linked to the Amarnath Yatra, including key stops such as Martand Teerth. The memorandum further emphasized the provision of basic facilities for pilgrims, such as drinking water, sanitation, and resting arrangements along pilgrimage routes. It also advocated greater participation of displaced Kashmiri Pandits and local Hindu communities to promote cultural and spiritual revival.

Highlighting the condition of religious sites in Anantnag, the delegation urged regular maintenance, cleanliness, and preservation of temples, along with the appointment of staff sensitive to religious sentiments. Special concern was raised over the upkeep of the Naagbal Temple, calling for immediate steps to improve sanitation and preserve its sanctity and historical importance. The memorandum also sought enhanced administrative support and coordination with religious organisations to ensure smooth conduct of religious activities, along with joint awareness and conservation initiatives.

The delegation expressed hope that the district administration would take necessary steps to safeguard the region's rich spiritual heritage while ensuring better facilities for devotees and promoting communal harmon.

Manager Seed farm Kreeri inaugurated Sale of hybrid seedlings at seed farm Kreeri

AASHIQ HUSSAIN

KREERI, MAR 24: Manager Seed multiplication farm Nayeem Ahmed in presence of local farmers inaugurated the sale of seedlings of hybrid Knol Khol produced purely on high-tech polygreen houses at seed farm Kreeri.

The sale witness tremendous enthusiasm of people with overwhelming participation not only from Kreeri town but also from various areas of Baramulla district.

While distributing the seedlings among the beneficiaries the manager said that the department is committed to promote kitchen garden and back-



yard vegetable culture in the rural areas of Kashmir. Manager SM farm Kreeri said that seedlings of different crops produced on scientific lines are more diseases resistant and productive which intimately makes the venture of vegetable production economically viable.

Speaking on the occasion farm manager encouraged farmers to take up the cultivation and promote agri business in the area.

KVIB Anantnag Organises Awareness Programme at Chittergul to Promote Self-Employment Schemes

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MAR 24:

The Jammu and Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) Anantnag today organized a one-day awareness programme in the far-flung area of Chittergul, Halkha Anantnag, with the aim of educating local residents, particularly the youth, about various self-employment schemes.

The programme witnessed active participation from local residents, aspiring entrepreneurs, and unemployed youth from the area. During the session, officials from KVIB provided detailed information about flagship schemes such as the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP), and other initiatives being implemented by the Board. The speakers empha-



sized the importance of self-reliance and entrepreneurship in today's economic landscape. They encouraged the youth to come forward, register under these schemes, and establish their own income-generating units. It was

highlighted that such initiatives not only help individuals achieve financial independence but also contribute to local economic development by creating employment opportunities for others. KVIB officials elaborated

on the application procedures, eligibility criteria, financial assistance, and subsidies available under various schemes. Participants were also informed about the support system provided by KVIB, including guidance in project formulation, financial linkages with banks, and handholding during the initial stages of business setup.

The programme also included an interactive session where participants raised queries regarding loan processes, project viability, and market opportunities. KVIB representatives addressed these concerns and assured full support to aspiring entrepreneurs.

Local participants appreciated the initiative and expressed gratitude to KVIB for organizing the programme in a remote area like Chittergul, which often lacks access to such awareness drives.

BUDGAM: TRIBAL FARMERS RECEIVE SUPPORT AS KVK HARRAN ORGANIZES OUTREACH PROGRAMME

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MAR 24: In a significant step towards strengthening the agricultural sector among tribal communities, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra Budgam organized a comprehensive outreach programme in Harran area of Budgam district. The initiative focused on providing essential agricultural inputs and technical guidance to local farmers.

Under the "Tribal Farmers Distribution-cum-Scientist Interaction Programme," farmers were distributed vermicompost, high-quality seeds, and necessary agro-chemicals aimed at improving crop productivity and sustainable farming practices. The programme witnessed active participation from a large number of tribal farmers, reflecting strong community engagement.

The event was conducted under the leadership of Dr. Rehana Habib Kant, Director Extension at Sher-



e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, along with Dr. Bilal Ahmad Lone. Several scientists and agricultural experts from the department were also present to guide and interact with the farmers.

During the programme, farmers were first provided with awareness sessions on the proper use of fertilizers, pesticides, and modern farming techniques. Experts emphasized the importance of balanced nutrient management and safe application of

chemicals to enhance yield while protecting soil health.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rehana Habib Kant highlighted that KVK regularly conducts such programmes to educate farmers on various aspects of agriculture. She stated that these initiatives

not only enhance farmers' knowledge but also open up opportunities for sustainable livelihood generation.

Dr. Bilal Ahmad Lone, Senior Scientist and Head of KVK Budgam, reiterated the centre's commitment to continuous farmer engagement. He noted that outreach programmes serve as a vital link between scientists and farmers, enabling real-time problem-solving. He added that farmers also benefit from online platforms where they can seek expert advice on agricultural challenges.

Local farmers expressed appreciation for the department's efforts, stating that such initiatives are highly beneficial in improving their farming practices and overall productivity.

The programme concluded with the distribution of inputs among the participants, marking another step towards empowering tribal farmers in the Budgam district.

DC Srinagar kicks off "TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan 2.0" with 100-Day Special Campaign

Flags off TB Testing Van from DC Office for specialised early detection

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR MARCH 24 : As a part of World Tuberculosis (TB) Day 2026 under the National TB Elimination Programme, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today kicked off the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan 2.0 programme with the 100 day intensified campaign here at DC Office Complex.

The Deputy Commissioner also flagged off TB testing Van" which would tour different parts of the District during the next 100 days to create public awareness regarding the campaign. The Van, equipped with a pre-installed CBNAAT facility, is capable of providing results within two hours. The van proceeded directly to Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) Batamalloo area of the District for conducting screening, diagnosis and awareness generation.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner, interacted with the senior Health functionaries and was apprised about the ongoing campaign preparations and micro-plan. He lauded the dedicated efforts of the health department and appreciated their contributions towards TB control and elimination in the district.

Emphasizing the significance



of the initiative, the Deputy Commissioner stated that the primary objective of the 100-day campaign is to accelerate efforts towards tuberculosis elimination by ensuring outreach to every

section of society, focused testing and screening, increasing presumptive testing, enhancing awareness about the disease, and guaranteeing access to free and quality TB care services.

The DC called upon all stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure the success of the campaign. He further highlighted that Tuberculosis continues to remain a public health concern, particularly affecting vulnerable and high-risk populations.

During the 100-day intensified campaign period, health teams will undertake active case finding by reaching out to high-risk groups, vulnerable sections. The initiative aims at early detection of TB cases, spreading awareness about symptoms, prevention and treatment, and providing sustained medical and psychological support to patients for complete recovery.

Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Chief Medical Officer, Dr Tahir Sajad, District Tuberculosis Officer, Dr Raouf, Block Medical Officer Hazratbal, Dr Abdul Majeed, ZMO S.R. Gunj, Dr Shafaqat, ZMO Zaidibal, Dr Rubena, Medical Superintendent Government Gousia Hospital, Dr. Arshid, besides other officials of the Health Department were present on the occasion

District Administration Budgam Conducts Comprehensive Training for Census 2027 Phase-I

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 24: District Administration Budgam successfully organized a comprehensive three-day district-level training programme for Phase-I of Census 2027, focusing on the House-listing and Housing Census (HLO), at the Regional Extension Training Centre (RET) Budgam.

The training programme was held under the overall supervision and chairmanship of Principal Census Officer (Deputy Commissioner) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, and was attended by District Census Nodal



Officer (ADC) Budgam, Mehraj-ud-din Shah.

The programme aimed at strengthening the capacity of District, Municipal, and Charge Level Officers by equipping them with the necessary technical knowledge and field-level skills required for accurate and efficient data collection during the census exercise.

During the sessions, detailed deliberations were held on house-listing methodologies, enumeration procedures, and the use of digital tools and mobile-based applications for real-time data capture and integration. Special emphasis was laid on the roles and responsibilities of field functionaries, including Tehsildars and Executive Officers, in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data.

The training sessions were conducted by experienced resource persons and master trainers, including the District Statistics & Evaluation Officer, District Informatics Officer, and other subject experts with domain expertise in census operations, data management, and digital enumeration systems.

These trainers provided practical demonstrations, hands-on guidance, and interactive sessions to familiarize participants with the operational framework and technological aspects of Census 2027.

The programme witnessed active participation from senior officers and officials, including Tehsildars from various tehsils, Municipal representatives, and other concerned stakeholders, reflecting a strong institutional commitment towards the successful conduct of the census.

During the programme, the officials underscored that accurate house listing serves as the backbone of the entire census exercise and plays a crucial role in evidence-based planning and policy formulation.

The District Administration reiterated its commitment to ensuring transparency, efficiency, and precision in the conduct of Census 2027 and emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among all stakeholders.

The final phase of the training programme is scheduled to be held on April 2, 2026, as part of the district's continued efforts to ensure full preparedness for the upcoming census exercise.

SKUAST-K conducts outreach programme on Eco-friendly Pest Management in Budgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 24: All India Coordinated Research Project on Biological Control of Crop Pests (AICRP-BC), Division of Entomology, Faculty of Horticulture, SKUAST-K Shalimar, organized a material distribution-cum-scientist-farmer interaction programme at KVK Budgam today.

The programme was supported by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (ICAR-NBAIR), Bengaluru.

Prof. (Dr.) Rahaina Habib Kanth, Director Extension, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and highlighted the importance of eco-friendly and sustainable pest management practices for improving farm productivity while safeguarding the environment.

Dr. Bilal Ahmad Lone, Professor & Head, KVK Budgam, sensitized the participating farmers on the effective utilization of the distributed materials for better crop management and enhanced yields.

During the programme, Dr. Sajad Mohi-ud-Din, Principal Investigator and Dr. Mudasar Gani, Co-Principal Investigator delivered comprehensive presentations on integrated insect pest management in pulses, maize, apple, and other crops, with special emphasis on biological control strategies.

Dr. Sabia Akhter, SMS Agronomy emphasized the importance of rajmash seed, vermicompost, pheromone traps, neem oil in sustainable agriculture.

Under the Tribal Sub-Plan initiative of ICAR-NBAIR, essential inputs including rajmash seed, vermicompost, pheromone traps, and neem oil were distributed among 50 tribal farmers of the area.

The programme concluded with an interactive session, where farmers appreciated the initiative and acknowledged SKUAST-K's efforts towards promoting eco-friendly pest management and sustainable agriculture.

World TB Day 2026 observed in Anantnag

DDC launches Phase II of 100 Days TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MARCH 24: To observe World TB Day 2026, the District TB Control Society Anantnag organized a formal function under the theme "Yes! We Can End TB" today at Mattan.

The event was attended by District Development Commissioner (DDC), Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat as Chief Guest and also witnessed participation by senior officials from administration and health including ADC, CMOs and DTOs Anantnag/Kulgam, BMOs besides Medical Superintendents, Medical Officers and filed staff.

On the occasion, the DDC formally launched the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan Phase II, a 100-Day Intensified Campaign, which envisages community participation through Janbagidari. The phase focuses on intensified screening process, prioritizing high-load clusters and vulnerable populations across the district.



During the briefing, it was informed that the district will deploy AI-enabled handheld X-ray machines and upfront NAAT (Nucleic Acid Amplification Test) to ensure early and accurate diagnosis, even for asymptomatic cases.

Addressing the function, the DDC emphasized that TB elimination is a social responsibility and called for a Jan Andolan (People's Movement) by creating awareness and involving local stakeholders and community leaders

to destigmatize and eliminate the disease.

Dr. Bilal reaffirmed the district administration's commitment for supporting the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana, ensuring that every patient receives consistent nutritional support and clinical care to improve treatment adherence.

Lauding the efforts of the health department in achieving significant milestones in TB notification, the DDC urged the field staff, including ASHA workers and Mid-Level Health Providers (MLHPs), to ensure that no cases remain active or untraced. This is the key responsibility of the health professionals including field staff along with the general public to make collective efforts for sustaining TB free status for the district, he remarked.

The event concluded with a pledge by all stakeholders to work tirelessly and contribute positively towards the National TB Elimination Programme.

Refresher Training of Teachers under AEP Held at BHSS Kulgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM, MARCH 24: A Refresher Training Programme for lecturers, masters and teachers was successfully conducted today at BHSS Kulgam under the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) aimed at strengthening awareness and guidance related to adolescent health and education.

Programme was presided over by the Chief Education Officer

Kulgam, Abdul Gani Bhat and training session was organised by the Chief Education Office, Kulgam in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) and the Jammu & Kashmir AIDS Control Society (JKACS), Department of Health & Medical Education.

During the programme, extensive and focused deliberations were held to enhance participants' understanding of the framework



and objectives of the Adolescence Education Programme.

The sessions particularly emphasised the role of teachers in guiding adolescents through informed counselling, awareness about health issues, and promoting responsible behaviour among students.

Resource persons and subject experts shared valuable insights on various aspects of adolescent education, including life skills, health awareness,

and the importance of creating a supportive and informed school environment for young learners.

The programme witnessed active participation from lecturers, masters and teachers from different institutions of the district, who engaged in interactive discussions and knowledge-sharing sessions aimed at ensuring effective implementation of the programme at the school level.

Job Fair organised at Anantnag; DDC calls for effective implementation of Self Employment Schemes

Advises youth to avail benefits of Mission YUVA

HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MARCH 24: To provide a dynamic platform for job seekers and employers to connect and explore employment opportunities, the District Employment and Counselling Centre in collaboration with District Administration, Anantnag today organized a mega Job Fair at Govt. ITI Ashajipora.

The event was inaugurated by District Development Commissioner (DDC), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat and witnessed participation by ADC, Principal ITI, DDE Employment, Employment

Officer besides officials from concerned departments and a large number of aspiring youth and prospective entrepreneurs.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC highlighted the importance of such initiatives in addressing unemployment and making the youth self-reliant. He emphasized the need to explore self-employment opportunities by aspiring youth and job seekers.

Dr. Bilal called for effective implementation of self employment and livelihood generation schemes and asked the concerned departments to

ensure the job seekers are facilitated fully through awareness and IEC initiatives. He advised the youth to come forward and avail benefits of the flagship Mission YUVA programme adding the district has made appreciable progress on this initiative so far.

Asking the youth to aptly utilise the opportunity of Job Fairs, the DDC said such platforms are vital for on spot placement of eligible youth in suitable firms and agencies. The youth should acquire new skills and improve their employability by various companies, he further remarked.



Reteiring administration's support and commitment to facilitate the job seekers through multiple schemes, the DDC said that concerned departments and financial institutions are working in tandem to ensure the credit lending and loan disbursement are done in a smooth and time bound manner.

During the fair, the DDC inspected various stalls set up by line departments and reputed companies, interacting with both employers and participants. He also handed over keys in the automobile sector and distributed sanction letters among

beneficiaries of Mission YUVA, encouraging entrepreneurship in the district.

Notably, the Job Fair witnessed participation of around 800 candidates, with approximately 350 vacancies offered by participating employers. 18 candidates secured on-spot placements, and offer letters were handed over to them by the DDC.

The event reflects the district administration's commitment to enhancing employment opportunities and promoting sustainable livelihood avenues for the youth.

Science should empower people, not stay lab confined: Babila Rakwal

Inaugurates two day R&D workshop at IIT Jammu

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 24: Emphasising a decisive shift towards outcome-driven research and transparent scientific governance, Commissioner Secretary, Science and Technology Department, Babila Rakwal, on Tuesday said that science in Jammu and Kashmir is being consciously repositioned as a tool of public service delivery rather than remaining confined to academic institutions.

The Commissioner Secretary was speaking at the inauguration of a two day Workshop-cum-Interaction Programme on Research and Development (R&D) projects at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu. The initiative is an exercise that brings together nearly 187 Principal Investigators from across the universities, technical institutions and research bodies of the Union Territory for a structured review of public funded research.

The programme marks one of the most extensive institutional efforts undertaken by the Department to evaluate, streamline and reorient its research support framework, covering a wide spectrum of disciplines. These included agriculture, biotechnology, health

sciences, engineering, renewable energy, environmental sciences, climate change and emerging digital technologies.

The inaugural session was followed by a structured sequence, beginning with a documentary showcasing the Department's interventions in research promotion, scientific outreach, innovation and clean energy across urban, rural and remote regions of Jammu and Kashmir. The session also included release of the Mid-Term Appraisal Report of R&D Projects, launch of online R&D Management portal and distribution of certificates among the beneficiaries under the Science Talent Promotion Scholarship Programme.

Releasing the Mid-Term Appraisal Report, Babila Rakwal said that public funded research must be subject to periodic and rigorous evaluation to ensure that it remains aligned with its objectives and delivers tangible outcomes. She noted that the Department is moving towards a system where monitoring is not treated as a procedural requirement but as an integral component of research governance, ensuring accountability, quality and relevance.

Highlighting the launch of



the end-to-end online R&D Project Management Portal, the Commissioner Secretary described it as a major administrative reform that will transform the way research proposals are handled. The portal enables digital submission, structured evaluation, real-time tracking and continuous monitoring of projects, thereby reducing delays, minimising manual intervention and ensuring greater transparency in decision-making.

In her address, Babila Rakwal outlined a comprehensive vision for the future of science and technology in Jammu and Kashmir, stating that research must directly contribute towards improving the governance, strengthening public institutions and addressing the local challenges. She observed that science is increasingly becoming

embedded in everyday life, whether through reliable energy access, improved agricultural practices, efficient public infrastructure or enhanced service delivery.

The Commissioner Secretary stressed that the Department's approach is guided by the principle that research must be relevant, collaborative and outcome-oriented. "The value of research lies not in the number of projects sanctioned but in the impact they create on the ground," she said, calling upon the researchers to focus on practical applications, interdisciplinary collaboration and policy relevance.

Underscoring the importance of skill development, the Commissioner Secretary said that building a capable and future ready talent base is essential for sustaining innovation. She

emphasised that the Department is committed towards nurturing scientific aptitude at multiple levels, from school education to advanced research and to linking knowledge with employability, entrepreneurship and community engagement.

The Commissioner Secretary also reiterated the Department's commitment to sustainable and environmental responsibility. She noted that scientific interventions must contribute to cleaner energy systems, efficient resource utilisation and ecological balance, particularly in a region with fragile ecosystems and diverse geographical challenges.

Referring to the Department's renewable energy initiatives, she said that large-scale solarisation of Government buildings, promotion of solar agricultural pumps, expansion

of solar lighting in rural areas and development of Small Hydro Power projects are not only contributing to energy security but also reducing expenditure and supporting environmental conservation.

On the research and innovation front, she highlighted that institutional support is being strengthened through funding of R&D projects, development of scientific infrastructure and expansion of outreach activities. Facilities such as Regional Science Centres, Innovation and Dissemination Centres and Biotechnology Parks are being developed as platforms to support innovation, incubation and dissemination of knowledge.

Importantly, she emphasised the need for transparency and a structured roadmap in the selection and monitoring of research projects. She stated that objective criteria, peer review mechanisms and alignment with priority sectors will guide project approvals, ensuring that public funds are utilised efficiently and yield measurable outcomes. She added that this approach will strengthen confidence among researchers and institutions while enhancing the credibility of the system.

Describing the workshop as both an academic and administrative milestone, the Commissioner Secretary said that it provides a unique platform for direct interaction between researchers, experts and policymakers. Unlike conventional file-based reviews, the programme enables investigators to present their work, engage with expert panels and receive constructive feedback, thereby improving the quality of evaluation and strengthening accountability.

The workshop draws upon a large and diverse portfolio of Department-supported research projects, many of which address practical challenges in areas such as agriculture, health, environment, energy, water management, digital systems and climate resilience. These projects, officials said, are increasingly focused on generating solutions that can be translated into field-level applications and policy interventions.

The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks after the felicitation of experts associated with third-party evaluation of R&D projects and distribution of scholarship certificates.

Baramulla joins Nationwide launch of 'TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan-100 Days Campaign 2.0'

DC calls for intensified awareness, community participation to eradicate TB from District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, MARCH 24: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, S.F. Hamid, along with the Chief Medical Officer and other senior officers, today virtually participated from Sherwani Hall, Baramulla, in the launch of the "TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan-100 Days Campaign 2.0".

The campaign launched on the occasion of the TB Day under the theme "Yes We Can End TB", aims to intensify efforts across the country towards elimination of tuberculosis through enhanced



awareness, early detection, and timely treatment.

On the occasion, the DC directed the CMO to organize intensive awareness camps across the district to ensure that people are well-informed about the causes, symptoms, prevention, and treatment of tuberculosis.

He emphasized the need for mass awareness to eliminate stigma and promote early testing and strict adherence to treatment protocols.

The DC further instructed all Block Medical Officers (BMOs) to focus on vulnerable and high-risk

sections of society during the period for the effectiveness of the campaign.

Highlighting the importance of collective responsibility, the DC stated that eradication of tuberculosis is not only the duty of the administration and urged people to come forward, get tested, and support efforts to make the district TB-free.

The virtual launch event was also attended by the Chief Medical Officer Baramulla, District Tuberculosis Officer, BMOs, Nikshay Mitras, and other health officers from Baramulla.

ADC Handwara chairs Grievance Redressal Camp on Digital Jamabandis at Ramhall

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, MARCH 24: Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi today chaired a Public Grievance Redressal Camp at Ramhall, to address issues related to digital Jamabandis and other revenue matters.

During the camp, a large number of residents from Ramhall and adjoining areas participated and raised their grievances regarding discrepancies in digital land records, corrections in Jamabandis, and related concerns.

The ADC patiently heard the issues put forth by the public and assured them of prompt and time-bound redressal.

The ADC emphasized the importance of digitization of land records for ensuring transparency, accountability, and ease of access for the public. He directed the concerned Tehsildar and officials to resolve genuine grievances on priority and ensure that necessary corrections in digital Jamabandis are carried out without delay.

On-the-spot instructions were issued to the field functionaries to verify records and expedite the process of rectification wherever required. The ADC also urged the people to come forward and avail the benefits of digital services being provided by the government.

Tehsildar Ramhall, Tehsildar Tarathpora and Tehsildar Vilgam, officials from the Revenue Department, and other field staff, were present on the occasion and assisted in addressing the grievances.

The camp concluded with a reaffirmation of the administration's commitment to public service delivery and strengthening of the grievance redressal mechanism at the grassroots level.

DC Bandipora chairs DRAC Meeting; Approves nine Rent Assessment Cases

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MARCH 24: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the District Rent Assessment Committee (DRAC) at Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

During the meeting, 15 rent assessment cases related to government offices functioning in rented buildings across the district were taken up. After detailed discussion, nine cases were approved and one case was sent for reassessment



while five cases were not taken up as representatives were absent.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of timely disposal of such cases as per norms and directed the concerned departments to ensure proper documentation and adherence to guidelines.

The meeting was attended by PO ICDS; SE PWD Bandipora, CMO Bandipora, representatives from Handicrafts & Handloom, Fire & Emergency Service, Animal Husbandry Bandipora, Sheep Husbandry Bandipora and other concerned officers.

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Pulwama observes World TB Day

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MARCH 24: A programme was today organised at Town Hall Pulwama under the theme "Yes! We Can End TB" to mark World Tuberculosis (TB) Day.

The event was attended by Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Pampore, Hasnain Masoodi. During the event, experts and medical professionals from the Health Department sensitised participants about tuberculosis, its symptoms, prevention, and the importance of timely diagnosis and complete treatment. Emphasis was laid on community awareness and collective efforts to eliminate TB.

Addressing the gathering, the MLA appreciated the sustained efforts of the Health Department and the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) in combating the disease. He highlighted the challenges posed by TB in earlier years and noted that the significant decline in mortality rates reflects the dedicated work of healthcare workers and stakeholders. He stressed the importance of early detection and urged frontline workers to remain vigilant and proactive to ensure timely identification and treatment of cases.

On the occasion, the MLA flagged off



the TB Mukht Abhiyaan-100 Days Campaign, aimed at accelerating case detection, improving treatment adherence, and strengthening last-mile delivery of TB services. The programme also featured felicitation of TB Mukht Panchayats and field functionaries who have played a pivotal role in spreading awareness and contributing to TB control efforts in the district.

Among others present were Chief Medical Officer Pulwama; Medical Superintendent, District Hospital Pulwama; District Health Officer Pulwama; District Tuberculosis Officer, Pulwama; Block Medical Officers, besides officials from the Rural Development Department and health staff associated with the National TB Elimination Programme.

DDC Anantnag inspects Key Infrastructure Projects

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG, MARCH 24: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat today conducted a comprehensive visit to several vital infrastructure sites at the district headquarters.

The DDC was accompanied by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Tehsildar Anantnag, and various other senior officers and officials from the concerned departments.

During the tour, the DDC visited the 4 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant at Mehndi Kadal to review its overall performance and technical functioning. He inspected the core components of the plant, including the inlet and outlet systems, to assess its operation and compliance with prescribed standards.

On the occasion, the DDC was provided a detailed briefing on the treatment processes and the current discharge levels by the concerned engineers.

Dr. Bilal also visited the Indoor Stadium at Bangidar, which is currently being



developed by the Municipal Council (MC) Anantnag through the R&B Department as the executing agency.

Notably, the stadium had sustained structural damage during the recent floods, hindering its completion and usage.

Taking immediate cognisance of the matter, the DDC directed the Secretary, MCA, to prepare a revised estimate for the necessary repairs and remaining construction work and submit the same on a priority basis.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC reiterated the administration's commitment to providing modernistic sports and civic infrastructure.

HT EDITORIAL

Kashmir braces up to welcome guests

With the world famous tulip garden in Srinagar being thrown open on March 16 by chief minister Omar Abdullah the tourist season for this year has kickstarted in the Kashmir valley. As on date there is a huge rush of both locals and tourists to this garden located on the banks of world famous Dal Lake in the lap of Zabarwan mountains.

Frequent and long traffic jams are being witnessed along the Boulevard Road these days and it takes a lot of time for the people to reach their respective destinations. Since the life of the tulips is short the tulip garden usually remains open for not more than one month. It is due to this reason that the people visit this garden in huge numbers every day once it is thrown open to the public. No one wants to miss out on the beauty and fragrance of tulips and as such there is a race to witness the same at an earlier date.

Operation of the tulip garden is the first major tourism activity in Kashmir in the year and there are people who exclusively come to visit this garden. Tulip garden is the significant activity in the spring tourism of Kashmir and this is followed by summer tourism, autumn tourism and winter tourism. Kashmir offers different facets of tourism to a person and people can enjoy their stint in the valley by admiring the beauty of the paradise on earth.

Given the fact that tourism activities have started in the Kashmir valley it is important that a safe and secure environment is provided to the tourists. In this regard the law enforcing agencies have an important role to play. It must be ensured that there is no compromise on the security of tourists and they don't feel threatened during their stay in the valley. Since most of the tourist destinations that were closed after the Baisaran-Pahalgam carnage have been reopened the onus is more on the security agencies.

It must be ensured that adequate security arrangements are put in place so that the tourists are free to move around without any fear at any tourist place. It must be kept in mind that people would come to Kashmir only when the situation is normal and there is no fear factor. Tourism is possible only during peace time and such activity is unthinkable during violence or war.

Charming Beauty of Spring



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATI

Some people like winter, some enjoy the flurry of snow, some love winter dishes like Kashmiri harissa, some prefer the soothing sound of rain, and some eagerly wait for the arrival of spring. Seasons reflect human choices, and every individual has a different preference when it comes to nature's changing moods.

With the bright and sunny day of 21st March, the beautiful season of spring gently steps into our lives. It brings with it warmth, freshness, and a sense of renewal after the long and harsh winter. Nature seems to awaken from its deep sleep, spreading colors, fragrance, and life everywhere.

The festival of Nowruz is celebrated every year on 21st March. This day holds great cultural and traditional importance and marks the beginning of a new phase of life. In the Kashmir Valley, this day is also associated with the beginning of plantation and agricultural activities. Farmers consider it a sign to start their work in the fields, making it a day full of hope and productivity.

There is also an old belief, which may sound like a myth to some, that people used to bathe in cold water on this day, even in rivers, to welcome the end of winter. Whether true or not, it strongly symbolizes that the harsh winter days are gone and the pleasant spring has arrived.

Spring is one of the most mesmerizing, delightful, and enchanting seasons in the Kashmir Valley. It attracts millions of tourists from all corners of the world who come to witness its breathtaking beauty. Not only spring, but all four seasons in Kashmir have their own charm and significance. However, spring stands out because of its freshness, greenery, and colorful blossoms.

The spring season generally begins on 21st March and lasts until 21st June. With its arrival, farmers across the valley start planting trees, preparing their lands, and engaging in agricultural activities. This season holds immense importance for them, as it sets the foundation for their livelihood.

Orchard owners begin spraying and taking care of their fruit trees to protect them from pests and diseases. Everywhere around, trees are covered with blossoms in shades of white, pink, red, and golden. The growth of plants resumes, and nature looks lively once again. From small plants to large trees, everything appears refreshed and vibrant.

Gardens during this season become a paradise on earth. Flowers bloom in full glory, spreading fragrance and beauty. The entire environment feels



fresh and pleasant, lifting the spirits of both locals and visitors. The charm of spring lies in its ability to transform the surroundings into a colorful and lively landscape.

One of the major attractions during spring is the famous Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, which is considered Asia's largest tulip garden. Situated at the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains, it attracts a large number of tourists every year. The garden opens during spring and remains accessible for about a month, depending on the blooming period of tulips.

The tulip garden is a symbol of natural beauty and human effort. Every year, new varieties of tulips are introduced, making it more attractive and diverse. The well-maintained paths, colorful flower beds, and scenic background create a magical atmosphere. Visitors often feel as if they are in a dreamland. It is a perfect place for photography, relaxation, and creating unforgettable memories.

Apart from the tulip garden, Kashmir is also home to several historic Mughal gardens built during the Mughal era. These include the famous Shalimar Bagh, Nishat Bagh, Chashme Shahi, Pari Mahal, and Verinag Spring, which is known as the origin of the Jhelum River. These gardens showcase beautiful architecture, flowing water channels, and terraced lawns, making them ideal places to visit during spring.

Kashmir is also rich in spiritual and historical sites. Tourists visit places like Hazratbal Shrine, Charar-e-Sharif, and Jamia Masjid. Another well-known site is the Shankaracharya Temple, which stands as a symbol of religious harmony and his-

torical importance.

Talking about the seasons in Kashmir, there are four main seasons: spring (21st March to 21st June), summer (21st June to 21st September), autumn (21st September to 21st December), and winter (21st December to 21st March). Each season has its own significance and contributes to the tourism industry.

Kashmir is unique in many ways. Its weather is pleasant, rivers are calm, waterfalls are majestic, mountains are snow-covered, forests are lush green, and meadows look like soft carpets spread across the land. Every part of the valley is blessed with natural beauty.

The culture of Kashmir is equally rich and attractive. People are known for their warm hospitality, kindness, and simplicity. Traditional items like carpets, paper-mâché products, and local cuisines reflect the artistic and cultural heritage of the region.

Spring, in particular, plays a vital role in enhancing this beauty. It brings life, color, and joy to the valley. It refreshes not only nature but also the minds and hearts of people. The pleasant weather, blooming flowers, and scenic landscapes create a perfect environment for peace and happiness.

In conclusion, the charming beauty of spring in the Kashmir Valley is truly unmatched. It is a season of hope, renewal, and natural elegance. I would like to invite people from all over the world to visit Kashmir during spring and experience its breathtaking beauty. It is a place where nature speaks, hearts feel peace, and memories are made forever.

sahilmanzoor0401@gmail.com

Losing education in the race for a job



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

Today's youth is experiencing a time when opportunities abound, but the path to access them has become more complex and competitive than ever before. The increasing number of competitive exams, their lengthy procedures, and uncertain results, particularly for government jobs, have left both students and parents deeply confused. The CET (Common Eligibility Test) was presented as a major hope in this context, but the experiences of the past years raise serious questions about this hope.

In Haryana, the examination process failed to gain the desired momentum during the five-year period between 2019 and 2024. As a result, only one examination was fully completed during this period, and some related recruitments are still entangled in judicial proceedings. Even in the 2024-25 cycle, only the preliminary examination has been conducted so far. Given the slow pace at which the entire process is progressing, it is not unfounded to fear that the final results may take a long time to be released.

But this problem isn't limited to Haryana. The situation with government recruitment processes is more or less similar in almost all states. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and even the northeastern states have consistently

faced problems such as delayed recruitment exams, paper leaks, judicial disputes, and delayed results. In many states, exams aren't held for years, and when they are, the process is so lengthy that it tests both the age and patience of candidates.

This has a profound impact on the mental, educational, and social lives of young people. Every year, millions of students graduate and seek employment, but the number of available government positions remains extremely limited. For example, if millions of candidates across the country appear for a single exam, the number of those selected is limited to thousands. In such a situation, considering government employment as the ultimate goal and relying solely on it becomes an extremely risky decision.

The most worrying aspect of this entire scenario is the rapid spread of a "non-attendance" culture. A trend is being observed in almost every state of the country, where students are avoiding regular college and university classes in the name of preparing for competitive exams. They assume that to achieve success, they must completely break away from the traditional education system. But this thinking is gradually proving detrimental to their future.

In fact, college life isn't just about earning a degree. It's a time when a student's intellectual, social, and emotional development takes place. Class participation, interaction with teachers, group discussions, presentations, and co-curricular activities—all of these contribute to the development of a person's personality. When students lose these opportunities, they lose out not only on subject knowledge but also on essential life skills.

Another serious side effect of the

non-attendance culture is that students' academic foundations weaken. They become focused solely on passing exams rather than delving deeply into the subject matter. Often, after failing competitive exams, they are left with neither a strong academic record nor any alternative career options. As a result, they lose confidence and suffer from mental stress.

It's also worth noting that today's world is extremely technologically advanced. Digital platforms have revolutionized education. Online coaching, video lectures, digital notes, test series, and virtual classrooms are available in every corner of the country. Therefore, the idea that it's necessary to drop out of college to prepare for competitive exams is completely misguided. Students can prepare effectively alongside their regular studies.

By adopting a balanced and practical strategy, students can make the best use of the three years of their undergraduate education. In the first year, they should focus on their studies and engage with general knowledge, newspapers, and current affairs. This strengthens their intellectual foundation. In the second year, they can strengthen their grasp of subjects like mathematics, reasoning, and language. They can also clarify their basic concepts through NCERT books. By the final year, they should make a clear decision whether they want to pursue higher education or pursue competitive exams.

Higher education and private sector opportunities are also rapidly expanding across various states in the country. New doors are opening for youth in fields such as IT, management, healthcare, startups, skill-based jobs, and freelancing. Therefore, it's essential that students don't limit their options to government jobs, but

instead explore various fields according to their skills and interests.

The role of parents becomes crucial in this entire scenario. It's often seen that children, under pressure from their friends or society, decide to remain absent, and parents, trusting them, allow this. However, it's essential that parents understand the long-term implications of this decision and encourage their children to adopt a balanced approach. It's not wise to rely solely on one exam or one career choice.

In today's competitive world, success comes only to those who embrace flexibility and keep a variety of options open. It's essential for students to strengthen their academic abilities while also focusing on skill development. Communication skills, technical proficiency, problem-solving abilities, and self-confidence—all these qualities help them advance in every aspect of life.

Ultimately, it's crucial to understand that the CET (Common Eligibility Test) or any competitive exam is merely an opportunity, not the ultimate goal. It should be considered a part of life, not the entire foundation. If students pay equal attention to their studies, skills, and personality development, they can not only succeed in competitive exams but also excel in other areas of life.

The need of the hour is to adopt a balanced approach—one that combines preparation and education, goals and choices. Only then will our youth not only succeed in the job race but also contribute significantly to the nation's development as strong, self-reliant, and informed citizens.

The author is a, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker

Zakat and the Rise of Institutional Dependence (Dar ul ulooms) Are the Poor Being Overlooked?

The more Dar ul ulooms the poor and underprivileged are suffering more in society



ER ISHFAQ KHALIQ

Zakat, one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, is not merely a charitable act—it is a divinely mandated right (HAQQ) of the poor upon the wealth of the affluent. The Qur'an clearly outlines its recipients in Surah At-Tawbah (9:60), placing the poor (FUQRA) and needy (MASAKIN) at the forefront. This emphasis reflects the primary objective of Zakat: to alleviate poverty and ensure social justice. However, in many regions today particularly in areas with a dense network of religious institutions such as Darul Uloom's a critical question arises Is Zakat still reaching the poor in society, or is it increasingly being absorbed by institutions. Over time, a strong culture has developed where people prefer to give their Zakat to religious institutions, especially Darul Uloom's. These institutions undoubtedly play a vital role in preserving Islamic knowledge, nurturing scholars, and maintaining religious identity. Yet, as their numbers increase, so does their financial dependence on Zakat. This creates a structural shift. Instead of Zakat flowing directly to the poor, it is increasingly being channeled into institutions. The Crucial Principle According to the Hanafi school of thought, Zakat must involve tam leek (transfer of ownership) to an eligible individual. This means Zakat must make a poor person the owner of the fund it cannot simply be used for general institutional expenses. While it is permissible to give Zakat to a poor student, the key condition remains the student must personally receive and own the Zakat. And spend it accordingly among his daily needs or institutionally or personally needs though what so ever the form may be. Directly funding



institutions without fulfilling this condition risks invalidating the spirit—and sometimes even the legality of Zakat.

As more Darul Uloom's emerge and expand, their financial needs grow. If a significant portion of Zakat is consistently directed toward sustaining these institutions, a serious concern arises are the poorest members of society being unintentionally sidelined in many communities:

- Widows struggle silently
- Daily wage earners barely meet their needs
- Orphans lack basic support

Yet, these individuals often remain outside organized Zakat networks, while institutions receive structured and continuous funding. This creates an imbalance. The most visible recipients become institutions. The most deserving recipients risk

becoming invisible as if they are not having any authorization to receive the zakat while giving zakat to an institute or a dar ul uloom one thinks it is his way to Jannah as it is the acceptance but rather ignoring what Islam has taught us.

Zakat is not just a financial transaction it is a moral and social system designed to:

- Redistribute wealth
- Reduce inequality
- Preserve human dignity

When its distribution becomes overly institutionalized, two risks emerge:

- Concentration of resources in organized bodies
- Marginalization of unorganized poverty

Even if institutions serve noble purposes, the primary (right) of the

poor must not be overshadowed, A Call for Balance, Not Rejection This is not an argument against Darul Uloom. Their role is essential and valuable. Rather, it is a call for balance and accountability:

- Zakat should prioritize direct support to the poor and needy
- Institutions should ensure strict compliance with tam leek
- Communities should develop systems to identify and support hidden poverty
- Zakat is not a donation it is a right that must reach its rightful owners, not remain confined within walls of institutions.

When institutions grow but the poor remain hungry, we must ask: Are we preserving religion, or neglecting its purpose?

- The growth of Darul Uloom's

should not result in the lack of justice for the poor

- If Zakat stops reaching the weakest, then the very of this pillar is at risk.
- A system where buildings are sustained but people are struggling is a system that needs reflection not celebration.
- The poor do not need our sympathy they need what Allah has already made obligatory for them in our wealth.
- Every rupee of Zakat diverted away from a deserving is not just a financial misplacement it is a moral responsibility left unfulfilled.
- Institutions are important, but they are not the primary recipient of Zakat the poor are.
- If we fail to see the hungry around us but continue funding structures, then our priorities demand serious correction.
- Zakat was meant to break cycles of poverty, not create cycles of dependency on institutional systems alone.
- The real test is not how many Darul Uloom we sustain, but how many lives we uplift from poverty.

A healthy model would be People-first distribution, with institutions acting as facilitators not primary recipients. The increase in Darul Uloom's has undoubtedly strengthened religious education. But it has also introduced a challenge: ensuring that Zakat does not drift away from its original purpose. If the current trend continues unchecked, there is a real risk that the most deserving may receive the least. Zakat must remain what it was meant to be a lifeline for the poor, not merely a funding stream for institutions. The responsibility lies with scholars, institutions, and the public alike to restore this balance so that the right of the poor is not only acknowledged, but truly fulfilled.

The author is a senior engineer at ANAF.Pvt.Ltd. also writer of book Silent Struggle

A Fading Light: The Story of Our Society



NAZIR AHMAD BHAT

In the modern age, society is progressing rapidly in terms of science, technology, and lifestyle. However, along with this progress, many serious problems are also rising that are slowly damaging the moral and social fabric of our communities. Issues such as drug abuse, increasing theft cases, eve teasing, and water pollution are becoming more common and dangerous. These challenges are not only affecting our present life but are also putting the future of our younger generation at great risk. It is the need of the hour to recognize these problems and take strong steps to enrich and protect our society.

One of the most alarming issues today is the growing use of drugs, especially among the youth. Drug addiction is a silent destroyer that ruins health, breaks families, and ends careers. Many young people fall into this trap due to peer pressure, stress, or lack of awareness. Once addicted, it becomes very difficult for them to return to a normal life. Therefore, it is extremely important to organize strong anti-drug campaigns at schools, colleges, and community levels. These campaigns should focus on educating people about the harmful effects of drugs on the body and mind. Seminars, awareness rallies, posters, and social media platforms can be used effectively to spread this message. Publicity about the dangers of drugs can save many lives and prevent youth from making wrong choices.

Another major concern is the increasing number of theft cases. Incidents of stealing and robbery are being reported more

frequently, creating fear and insecurity among the people. When crime increases, it weakens trust within society and disturbs peace. People begin to feel unsafe even in their own neighborhoods. To tackle this issue, there is a need for strict law enforcement and better policing. At the same time, society must focus on moral education and employment opportunities so that people do not turn towards crime due to poverty or frustration. Community vigilance and cooperation with law enforcement agencies can also play a vital role in reducing such crimes.

Eve teasing is another serious social problem that affects the dignity and safety of women. Many women and girls face harassment in public places, which makes them feel uncomfortable and fearful. This issue not only limits their freedom but also reflects poorly on the values of society. It is important to create awareness about respect, equality, and proper behavior from a young age. Schools and families must teach children to treat everyone with dignity. Strict laws and quick punishment for offenders are also necessary to discourage such acts. Society as a whole must stand united against eve teasing and support victims in raising their voices.

Water pollution is a growing environmental threat that is affecting both human life and nature. Rivers, lakes, and other water sources are being polluted due to the dumping of waste, chemicals, and sewage. Contaminated water leads to many diseases and harms aquatic life. If this continues, it can create a serious shortage of clean drinking water in the future. Therefore, it is important to take immediate steps to control water pollution. People should be educated about proper waste disposal and the importance of keeping water sources clean. Authorities must enforce strict rules against pollution, and industries should treat their waste before releasing it into water bodies. Community participation in cleaning drives and environmental awareness programs can also



make a big difference.

In addition to addressing these specific issues, there is a broader need to enrich society with strong moral values. Values such as honesty, kindness, respect, and

responsibility are the foundation of a healthy community. Unfortunately, these values are slowly declining in today's fast-paced world. People are becoming more self-centered and less concerned about the

well-being of others. This change in attitude is one of the root causes of many social problems. Therefore, parents and teachers must play an active role in shaping the character of the younger generation. Education should not only focus on academic success but also on building good character and social responsibility.

The role of media and technology is also very important in shaping society. While technology has many benefits, its misuse can spread negativity and misinformation. It is important for people to use social media responsibly and share only positive and useful content. Media should focus on highlighting social issues and promoting awareness rather than spreading fear or negativity.

Community participation is another key factor in building a strong and safe society. People should come together to address common problems and support each other. Activities such as awareness campaigns, cleanliness drives, and social service programs can strengthen unity and cooperation. When individuals work together for a common cause, it becomes easier to bring about positive change.

In conclusion, society is indeed facing many dangers, but these challenges can be overcome with collective effort and responsibility. By organizing anti-drug campaigns, spreading awareness about their harmful effects, controlling theft and crime, stopping eve teasing, and reducing water pollution, we can protect our society from further harm. At the same time, promoting moral values, responsible use of technology, and community participation can help enrich society. Every individual has an important role to play in this process. Small positive actions taken by each one of us can lead to a big transformation. Let us work together to build a safe, healthy, and respectful society for ourselves and future generations.

The author is a Teacher Zone Mawer

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Srinagar Sets National Benchmark: First District in J&K to Achieve "TB-Free Panchayat" Gold Status for Three Consecutive Years

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 24: In a remarkable public health achievement, Srinagar district has emerged as the first district in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to attain TB-Free Panchayat status for three consecutive years. Notably, Srinagar is also among the first districts in the entire country to accomplish this milestone, setting a powerful example in India's fight against tuberculosis.

The TB-Mukt Panchayat initiative is a cornerstone of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), designed as a decentralized, community-driven strategy to eliminate TB at the grassroots level. The initiative empowers local governance systems to take ownership of TB control, ensuring active community participation and sustained surveillance.

Under this program, a Panchayat is declared "TB-free" based on six key public health indicators. These include maintaining a TB Case Notification Rate of ≤ 1 case per 1000 population per year, achieving a TB Testing Rate of ≥ 30 tests per 1000 population, and ensuring a Treatment Success Rate of $\geq 85\%$, among other critical benchmarks.

Srinagar district comprises 21 Panchayats, all of which have consistently met these stringent criteria for three consecutive years. As per the grading system, a Panchayat earns Bronze status in the first year,



Silver status in the second, and Gold status upon maintaining the standards for the third consecutive year. With all its Panchayats now achieving Gold status, Srinagar stands as a national leader in grassroots TB elimination.

On the occasion of World TB Day, Dr Abdul Rouf, District Tuberculosis Officer Srinagar, expressed gratitude to Shri Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Dr Jahengir

Bakhshi; Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Tahir Sajad, Chief Medical Officer Srinagar and Dr Basra Mir, State TB Officer Kashmir for their continuous support, leadership, and guidance in achieving this historic feat.

Dr. Rouf also made a strong public appeal, urging individuals experiencing persistent cough for more than two weeks, prolonged fever, or unexplained weight loss to come

forward for testing and treatment. He emphasized that tuberculosis is a 100% curable disease and that early detection is key to preventing transmission within families and communities.

This achievement not only highlights the effectiveness of coordinated public health efforts but also reinforces Srinagar's commitment to achieving the larger national goal of TB elimination in a time-bound manner.

Dr. Itoo Elected to the Royal Society of Biology, London, UK

Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, a distinguished doctor from Jammu & Kashmir, public health expert, medical educator, and writer, has been elected to the prestigious Royal Society of Biology (RSB), London, United Kingdom.

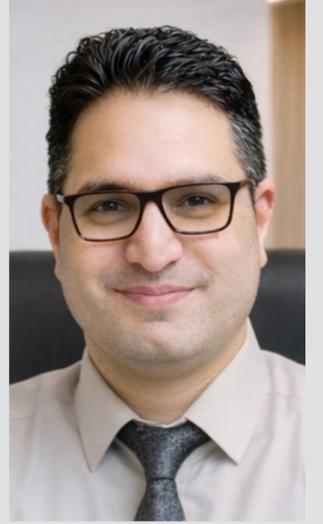
The election was conferred upon Dr. Itoo following the decision of the Society's Council on January 1, 2026.

This recognition reflects Dr. Itoo's sustained scholarly contributions in the fields of antimicrobial stewardship, vector-borne diseases, and academic writing in life sciences. With this honor, Dr. Itoo is now officially entitled to use the post-nominal letters MRSB (UK).

With a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Biology from University of Kashmir, MBBS from University of Jammu - Dr. Itoo holds several other notable international distinctions, including: Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health (FRSPH, UK); Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium); Member of the Academy of Medical Educators (MACadMED, UK); International Practitioner, Faculty of Public Health, Royal Colleges of Physicians (IPFP, UK).

He is also an active member of leading global medical organizations such as the American College of Physicians (ACP, USA) and Academic Life Member of the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI).

The Royal Society of Biology (RSB) is a leading professional body in the United Kingdom dedicated to advancing the biological sciences. It brings together researchers, clinicians, educators, and professionals from across all areas of biology.



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🕒 8:00PM On January 18th, Sunday

Handwara Police Achieve Major Breakthrough in POCSO Case

Accused Convicted, Sentenced to 20 Years in Kralgund POCSO Case

DR.AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, MAR 24: In a significant breakthrough, Handwara Police have successfully secured the conviction of an accused in a sensitive case registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act at Police Station Kralgund. The Hon'ble Principal District & Sessions Court, Kupwara, has sentenced the accused, Irshad Ahmad Mir, to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of



Rs. 50,000 under Section 4(2) of the POCSO Act. In addition, the court awarded three years of rigorous imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 10,000 under Section 363 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Both sentences will run concurrently. The case dates back to 2021 and pertains to the kidnapping

and sexual assault of a minor girl. Following a thorough and professional investigation, Handwara Police were able to present strong evidence before the court, leading to the conviction. Officials described the verdict as a testament to the dedication, meticulous investigation, and unwavering commitment of

Handwara Police in ensuring justice, particularly in cases involving crimes against children. Reaffirming its resolve, Handwara Police stated that it remains committed to safeguarding vulnerable sections of society and will continue to take strict action against offenders involved in such heinous crimes.

Public Notice

I, Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie, S/o Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie, R/o Udiporta, Langate, Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir, 193302, hereby declare that I am the Father of Hanan Ishfaq Ganie. This is to inform the general public and concerned authorities that I am applying for the issuance/registration of the Date of Birth certificate of my Son, Hanan Ishfaq Ganie, at the Block Office Kralgund. His actual and school Date of Birth is 10/10/2012 and as per our knowledge and records, he was born at home at Udiporta, Langate. If any person has any objection regarding the above mentioned particulars, he/she may submit the same before the concerned Block Office Kralgund within the stipulated period. Otherwise, no objection shall be entertained.

Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie
S/o Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie
R/o Udiporta Langate
Phone : 8825039345

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that I Ghulam Nabi Lone has applied for the birth certificate of my daughter namely Hadiya Nabi DOB 20/06/2011 D/O Ghulam Nabi Lone r/o Tirch Tehsil Handwara now I have applied for his Birth certificate. Bron at home if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection at Block Development office Nutnussa within a period of 07 day's after that no objection will be accepted.

Name: Hadiya Nabi DOB 20/06/2011
D/O Ghulam Nabi Lone
R/O : Tirch Tehsil Handwara District Kupwara

Public Notice

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer id no 0214010012256 From Mohd Yaseen Najar S/O Late Mohd Sultan Najar R/O Khandaji Satkoji Handwara District Kupwara to Mohd Amin Najar S/o Late Mohd Sultan Najar R/O Khandaji Satkoji Tehsil Handwara if anybody having any objection in this regards he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the P.D.D Department chotipora Handwara within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection will be entertained.

Mohd Amin Najar S/O Late Mohd Sultan Najar
R/O Khandaji Satkoji Tehsil Handwara
District Kupwara

Public Notice

I, Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie, S/o Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie, R/o Udiporta, Langate, Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir, 193302, hereby declare that I am the Father of Hanan Ishfaq Ganie.

This is to inform the general public and concerned authorities that I am applying for the issuance/registration of the Date of Birth certificate of my Son, Hanan Ishfaq Ganie, at the Block Office Kralgund.

His actual and school Date of Birth is 10/10/2012 and as per our knowledge and records, he was born at home at Udiporta, Langate.

If any person has any objection regarding the above mentioned particulars, he/she may submit the same before the concerned Block Office Kralgund within the stipulated period. Otherwise, no objection shall be entertained.

Ishfaq Ahmad Ganie
S/o Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie
R/o Udiporta Langate
Phone : 8825039345

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that I Ghulam Nabi Lone has applied for the birth certificate of my daughter namely Hadiya Nabi DOB 20/06/2011 D/O Ghulam Nabi Lone r/o Tirch Tehsil Handwara now I have applied for his Birth certificate. Bron at home if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection at Block Development office Nutnussa within a period of 07 day's after that no objection will be accepted.

Name: Hadiya Nabi DOB 20/06/2011
D/O Ghulam Nabi Lone
R/O : Tirch Tehsil Handwara District Kupwara

Public Notice

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer id no 0214010012256 From Mohd Yaseen Najar S/O Late Mohd Sultan Najar R/O Khandaji Satkoji Handwara District Kupwara to Mohd Amin Najar S/o Late Mohd Sultan Najar R/O Khandaji Satkoji Tehsil Handwara if anybody having any objection in this regards he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the P.D.D Department chotipora Handwara within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection will be entertained.

Mohd Amin Najar S/O Late Mohd Sultan Najar R/O
Khandaji Satkoji Tehsil Handwara District Kupwara

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that I Aadil Sultan Lone S/O Mohd Sultan Lone has applied for the birth certificate of my Daughter's namely Madiha Mehtab DOB 22/10/2022 D/O Aadil Sultan Lone r/o Check Sodal Tehsil Handwara now I have applied for his Birth certificate. Bron at sub district hospital Kreeri if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection at Block Development office Wagoora within a period of 07 day's after that no objection will be accepted.

Name: Madiha Mehtab DOB 22/10/2022
D/O Aadil Sultan Lone R/O : Check Sodal Tehsil Handwara, District Kupwara

Public Notice

I have lost my 8Th Pass certificate. Now I am applying for its Duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may contact Headmaster Govt Middle School Frasthar Zone Nehalpora within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

MOIEN ASHIQ DHOBI S/O S/O ASHIQ HUSSAIN
DHOBI. R/O FRASTHAR KREERI

Public Notice

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my Fathers name AB KHALIQ BHAT S/O ..MOHAMMAD RAMZAN BHAT R/O AUTHOORA PAYEEN Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0212040006544 wants to be registered on my SONAULLAH BHAT S/O AB KHALIQ BHAT R/O AUTHOORA .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name..SONAULLAH BHAT , S/O ..AB KHALIQ BHAT
R/O ..AUTHOORA PAYEEN

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 SANIA JAN S/O MANZOR AHMAD LONE R/O. THINDIMA KREERI Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 05/05/2006 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection .

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

Sd/- Executive Magistrate 1st Class Kreeri

Public Notice

I have lost my 10 pass marks card at some where bearing Registration No ..04NKM308988 Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in the office of JKBOSE Srinager /Govt Higher Secondary School KREERI within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....MOHD ASHRAF MIR
S/O ...GH MOHD MIR , R/ o..KREERI

Public Notice

I, Meema Begum, hereby inform the general public that I am applying for the issuance of a death certificate of my mother, whose details are as follows:

Name of Deceased: Khatooni Begum
Father's Name: Abdul Samad Shah
Address: Mirnag, Kupwara
Date of Death: 31-10-2022
Place of Death: Residence at Mirnag, Hyhama
Cause of Death: Natural

If any person has any objection regarding the issuance of the said death certificate, he/she may report to the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Applicant: Meema Begum
Address: Bubernagh, Kupwara (Married daughter of the deceased)

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (UT) DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FISHERIES DISTRICT BANDIPORA AUCTION NOTICE

The Department of Fisheries, District Bandipora is going to conduct auction of fish harvesting rights of the following Sars (Water Bodies) on 04-04-2026 Saturday at 11:30 A.M. at Carp Fish Farm, Trigam, Sumbal Sonawari.

Interested bidders shall deposit an amounting to ₹10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand only) for each Sar before the commencement of the auction process.

The base price (blossom price) for each Sar has been fixed as per the last year's bid realization.

Other terms and conditions shall be communicated at the commencement of the bidding process. The Auction Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any bid without assigning any reason thereof.

List of Water Bodies for auction of Fish:	
S.No	Name of Waterbody
1	Baadinumal
2	Illahegeer/ Muslatgeer
3	Khurwani Sar
4	Mal dub/ Mand dub
5	Shilvat Sar
6	Tilwani Sar
7	Udina Sar
8	Narie Sar
9	PEN at Trigam

For any query, interested persons may contact through the above email addresses or visit this office during working hours at Block 'C', 3rd Floor, Room No. 347/348, Mini Secretariat Complex Bandipora.

No: ADF/Bpr/2026/590
Dated: 24/03/2026

Sd/-
Assistant Director Fisheries
District Bandipora
DIPK: 12098/25 | Dated: 24-03-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI PHE DIVISION BIJBEHARA

E-NIT NO.53/PHE/BIJ OF 2025-26,
ISSUED UNDER NO.PHE/BIJ/ I DATED:

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-NIT (In Single Cover) on item rate basis of hire charges of Vehicle for supervision of Government works are invited from Registered Tour and Travels (w.e.f: 01.04.2025 to 31.03.2027).

S No.	Name of work	Quantity	T.D Cost (in Rs)	E/M
1	Hire charges excluding fuel charges of vehicle Scorpio / Inova / Bolero Fully loaded (Model 2023 to 2025) for supervision of government works in respect of Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara for the year 2026-27.	1 No.	300	5000

Rate per day excluding fuel charges: Rate to be Quoted

Class: Registered Tour and Travel Agencies

The e-NIT consisting of Qualifying information, eligibility criteria specifications, set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website:- www.jktenders.gov.in

01	Date of publishing	23 -03-2026 / 9:00 AM
02	Download start date	23 -03-2026 / 9:00 AM
03	Bid Submission Start Date	23 -03-2026 / 9:00 AM
04	Bid submission End Date	30 -03-2026 / 4:00 PM
05	Date and time of opening of Bids (Online)	31 -03-2026 / 11:00 AM

The Bidder shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website: www.jktenders.gov.in

Bids must be accompanied/uploaded with Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR (mentioned above), Treasury Receipt as cost of Tender Document under M-H-0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara (as specified in the table, besides below mentioned documents. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara on date given above. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

1. Besides above the bidder should also upload the following documents required under "Other Important Documents" (OID)

01	Earnest Money in shape of CDR / FDR for an amount of Rs.5000/- pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara	Scanned Copy
02	Treasury Receipt (T.R) deposited to MH: 0215 as cost of tender document for an amount of Rs.300/- pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara	Scanned Copy
03	Registered Tour and Travels -----Registration Certificate	Scanned Copy
04	Latest GST Clearance/Pan card/Bidders Address of the agency/driver	Scanned Copy
05	HMV/LMV License of the driver	Scanned Copy

1. All other terms, conditions are as per the PWD form 25 (Double agreement form) /Master NIT.

Sd/- Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Bijbehara
DIPK: 12065/25 | Dated: 24-03-2026

KU holds national conference on regenerative tourism development

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR MAR 24: The Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Studies (DTHLS), University of Kashmir (KU), organised a one-day national conference on "Beyond Sustainability: Advancing Regenerative Models in Tourism Development" at the Main Campus.

The conference aimed to bring together practitioners, scholars, policymakers and industry stakeholders to examine current trends in tourism development, address sustainability concerns, and explore regenerative approaches that focus on restoration, inclusivity and long-term resilience.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofar Khan, said, "Tourism development must move beyond conventional sustainability frameworks and adopt models that restore ecosystems, support local communities, and respond to emerging environmental and social challenges."

She also emphasized the role of academic institutions in generating research-driven insights to guide policy and practice in the tourism sector.

In his keynote address, former Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Jammu, Prof. Ashok Aima, spoke on the need to reimagine tourism through interdisciplinary approaches that integrate eco-



logical responsibility with economic development.

Dean Academic Affairs KU, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada, said that such platforms facilitate informed discussions on emerging issues in tourism and contribute to the development of practical and policy-oriented solutions. Dean, School of Business Studies KU, Prof. Mushtaq Ahmad Darzi, highlighted the importance of aligning tourism practices with changing market dynamics, technological advancements and sustainability imperatives.

Earlier, Head, DTHLS KU, Dr. Reyaz Ahmad Qureshi, in his welcome address, outlined the objectives of the conference and highlighted the need for collaborative engagement in advancing regenerative tourism models.

On the occasion, the maiden newsletter of the department, "The Chronicle," was also released.

The conference featured technical sessions and panel discussions on themes including regenerative tourism frameworks, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, community-led development, policy innovation, digital transformation, rural entrepreneurship, circular business models, and wellness and slow tourism approaches.

The vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Shahnawaz Ahmad, faculty at DTHLS KU.

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Development Momentum picks up in Nowshera as Deputy CM inaugurates projects

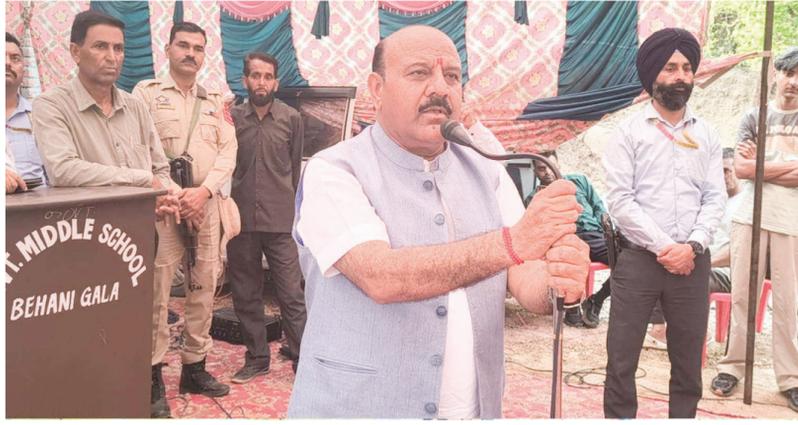
■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI, MAR 24: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today inaugurated a series of developmental projects in Nowshera, reaffirming the Government's commitment towards strengthening the infrastructure and ensuring holistic development of the region.

Upon his arrival in Nowshera, Deputy Chief Minister paid obeisance at Gari Mata Mandir and sought blessings for peace and prosperity of the Union Territory.

He, later, inaugurated a Mega Job Fair at Dak Bungalow Nowshera, providing a significant platform for local youth to explore employment opportunities and engage with potential employers. During his visit, the Deputy Chief Minister paid obeisance at Thakurdawara Mandir and prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being of the people.

Further strengthening infrastructure, the Deputy Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for



a Receiving Station at Hastanagurah, Gagrote. This was followed by a Public Outreach Programme where he listened to the grievances and demands of the local residents and assured their timely redressal.

Continuing the developmental push, he inaugurated the road

from Gagrote to Shamshan Ghat, which is expected to significantly improve connectivity and facilitate ease of movement for the local population.

A Public Outreach Programme was also held near Ram Mandir, where the people projected various issues pertaining to civic

amenities and development.

Later, Surinder Choudhary laid the foundation stone for a 3.15 MVA, 33/11 KV Receiving Station at Kuldabi, aimed at strengthening the power infrastructure and ensuring reliable electricity supply to the area. A Public Outreach Programme was also conducted

at Behanigala, Kuldabi, where the Deputy Chief Minister reiterated the Government's commitment towards inclusive development and responsive governance.

The Deputy Chief Minister also laid the foundation stone for upgradation of road from Main Road Sehla (Tutani Galla) to Guard Mohalla, Ward No. 4 Sehla, to be executed by PWD (R&B) at an estimated cost of Rs 228.00 lakh.

Surinder Choudhary emphasized that such initiatives reflect the Government's resolve to boost employment opportunities, improve basic infrastructure and maintain close engagement with the public to address their concerns effectively.

Among others present on the occasion included ADC Nowshera Pritam Lal Thapa, Joint Director Employment, Joint Director Mining Fareed Kohli, Deputy Director Employment Mohd Nawaz, DSWO Abdul Raheem, Tehsildar Nowshera, BDO Nowshera Gokul Kumar and other district and sectoral officers.

Bhalla hit out at Govt apathy towards border residents, visits blast-hit house of ex-Sarpanch

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SAMBA, MARCH 24: Former Minister and Working President of the Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee, Raman Bhalla, on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the administration, accusing it of failing to address the pressing day-to-day issues faced by border dwellers in Jammu and Kashmir.

Accompanied by former minister Yash Pal Kundal and several senior party leaders, Bhalla undertook an extensive tour of Chagwal, Sanoora and Rajpura areas in Samba district.

During the visit, he held detailed interactions with people from different walks of life, including farmers, traders, youth, and women, who apprised him of the hardships they continue to face.

Listening to their grievances, Bhalla expressed serious concern over what he described as the "widening gap" between government claims and ground realities. He remarked that despite tall promises and repeated assurances, the situation in rural and border areas remains largely unchanged.

"The government's claims of development and problem resolution are confined to official files and press statements. On the ground, people are struggling for basic amenities such as proper roads, drinking water, electricity, healthcare, and employment opportunities," Bhalla said.

He emphasized that border residents, who already live under constant stress due to proximity to the International Border, are being further neglected. "These people are the first line of defense for the nation, yet their genuine concerns are not being addressed with the urgency they deserve," he added.

Bhalla also highlighted the economic distress being faced by the common masses. Referring to the ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, he alleged that the BJP-led Central Government has failed to shield the public from its fallout.

"The continuous hike in petroleum prices has triggered inflation, making essential commodities costlier and putting an unbearable burden on poor and middle-class families," he said.

He further criticized the functioning of the administration, stating that officials sitting in comfortable offices often paint a rosy picture of normalcy. "The reality is starkly different. People are frustrated and disillusioned due to administrative indifference and lack of accountability," Bhalla asserted.

During his visit to Rajpura, Bhalla visited the residence of former Sarpanch Jai Ram, where a high-intensity blast had taken place recently. Expressing solidarity with the affected family, he raised serious questions over the security scenario in border areas. "The recurrence of such incidents at regular intervals is a clear indication that the situation in these belts is far from normal. It calls for immediate and effective intervention by the concerned agencies," he said.

Bhalla demanded that the government take concrete steps to ensure the safety and security of residents, along with providing adequate compensation and support to those affected by such incidents. He also called for strengthening infrastructure, improving surveillance, and enhancing coordination among security agencies to prevent future occurrences.

Reiterating the commitment of the Congress party towards the welfare of the people, Bhalla assured the residents that their issues would be strongly taken up at appropriate forums.

Prominent among those who accompanied Bhalla during the visit included former MLA Durga Dass, Vijay Choudhary (Bawa), Jatin Vashisht, Vinay Kumar (former Sarpanch), Block President Mahesh Sharma (Raipura), Ved Raj Sharma, and several other local leaders and party workers.

MC Reasi intensifies source segregation drive in Ward 10

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

REASI, MAR 24: In a significant step toward achieving the goals of the Swachhta Excellence Campaign 2026, the Municipal Council Reasi today organized a specialized awareness drive focused on source segregation in Ward No. 10.

The initiative led by newly trained Community Mobilizers in coordination with the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) team, marks a strategic effort to transform local neighbourhoods into models of urban sanitation.

The drive was a key part of the "Model Ward Colony Initiative," which seeks to institutionalize sustainable waste management practices at the household level.

During the day-long activity, the mobilization



teams conducted extensive door-to-door interactions with residents to explain the critical importance of separating waste at the point of origin. To ensure long-term compliance and clarity, the teams distributed informative segregation posters and detailed waste collection schedules to every household.

These materials are designed to serve as a daily guide for citizens, helping them distinguish between wet, dry and hazardous waste streams. By providing these tools directly to the public, the Council aims to streamline the collection process and ensure more efficient processing at waste management facilities.

The participation of Community Mobilizers and Self-Help Group (SHG) members was central to the success of today's drive. These women, acting as frontline ambassadors for the Swachhta Bharat Mission, used their local influence to encourage families to adopt cleaner habits. Their involvement highlights the growing role of community-led leadership in driving the region's environmental goals.

By focusing on direct engagement and education, the Municipal Council Reasi is moving closer to its vision of a cleaner and greener town where waste is treated as a manageable resource rather than a public burden.

100 new Sainik Schools to strengthen India's defense backbone: Balbir

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, 24 MAR: Establishment of 100 new Sainik Schools across the country is a visionary initiative that will significantly enhance India's defence preparedness while empowering the nation's youth.

Balbir Ram Rattan, BJP Spokesperson and former Vice Chairman, said this while pointing out that Sainik Schools have long served as the backbone of defence-oriented education in India, nurturing disciplined, confident, and motivated young individuals. He stated that the expansion of these institutions will create a larger and more capable pool of students aspiring to join the armed forces, thereby reinforcing the country's defence pipeline.

Highlighting the importance of such institutions, he noted that Sainik Schools play a pivotal role in preparing students for prestigious academies like the National Defence Academy and other military training establishments. "By increasing the number of Sainik Schools, Narendra Modi government is investing in a strong and steady supply of well-trained youth who are committed to serving the nation," he added.



Balbir Ram Rattan further emphasized that the move will ensure wider access to quality education, particularly benefiting students from rural and remote areas. He said that the establishment of these schools in partnership with private institutions, NGOs, and state governments, will open new avenues for thousands of young aspirants, who may have previously lacked access to such opportunities.

Describing the initiative as a step towards holistic development, he said that Sainik Schools not only focus on academics but also instill discipline, leadership, patriotism, and a strong sense of responsibility among students. These institutions shape character and prepare youth not only for defence services but also for leadership roles in various spheres of life.

Welcoming the inclusive approach, Rattan said that the expansion will also encourage greater participation of girls and students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, promoting equality and inclusivity in defence education. He also pointed out that the establishment of new schools will contribute to local development by generating employment opportunities and improving infrastructure in different regions.

Reiterating his appreciation for the government's forward-looking vision, Balbir Ram Rattan said that the initiative is a strategic investment in the future of the nation. The establishment of 100 new Sainik Schools will not only boost India's defence preparedness but also help in building a disciplined, patriotic, and capable generation.

Students of Cluster University of Jammu Bring Laurels to the Institution

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 24: Students of Cluster University of Jammu (CLUJ) have once again brought pride and recognition to the University by securing remarkable achievements at several prestigious national-level events, reflecting the institutions continued commitment to excellence in youth, cultural, and academic activities.

At the AIU 39th National Youth Festival held in Chennai, Jaspreet Singh and Manmeet Kaur represented Cluster University of Jammu with distinction and

clinched the Gold Medal in the Debate Competition, showcasing exceptional intellectual and communicative skills at the national platform. In the National Integration Camp (NIC) West Bengal, the University team comprising Nirdosh, Tanika, Divya, Sneha, Aryan, Aftab, Kunal, and Ashish delivered an outstanding performance, securing multiple top positions and emerging as the Overall Champions of the event. Similarly, at NIC Haryana, students Krishay and Nitasha demonstrated exemplary talent by securing various positions in different



competitive events.

In recognition of these outstanding accomplishments, the University organized a Felicitation Ceremony at the Conference Hall of the Vice-Chancellors Secretariat, Administrative Block. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. K.S.

Chandrashekar, in the presence of Dr. Twinkle Suri, Dean Academic Affairs, congratulated the students for their commendable achievements and encouraged them to continue striving for excellence in both academic and co-curricular domains, emphasizing the importance of holistic development.

The felicitation ceremony was conducted under the leadership of Dean Students Welfare, Prof. D.S. Manhas, along with the dedicated team of the Directorate of Students Welfare, including Dr. Ashaq Hussain, Associate Dean

DSW; Dr. Davinder Kour, Chairperson, Campus Cultural Committee; Amit Pal Kaur, NSS Coordinator, CLUJ; and Dr. Shubhra Jamwal, Assistant Dean DSW, supported by NSS Programme Officers from the constituent colleges.

The ceremony concluded on a note of pride and inspiration, celebrating the achievements of the students and reaffirming Cluster University of Jammu's commitment to nurturing talent, leadership, and national integration through meaningful student engagement.

World TB Day 2026: TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan Phase-II launched in Udhampur

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR, MAR 24: World TB Day 2026 was today observed with great enthusiasm and commitment at the District Tuberculosis Centre (DTC), Udhampur, under the inspiring theme "Yes, We Can End TB - Led by Bharat, Powered by People of Bharat." The occasion also marked the formal launch of TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan Phase-II, reinforcing the nation's unwavering pledge to eliminate tuberculosis.

The programme wit-

nessed active participation from paramedical staff, ASHAs, and other frontline health workers, whose tireless efforts form the backbone of tuberculosis control initiatives.

The event was graced by the District Development Commissioner (DDC), Udhampur Minga Sherpa as the chief guest. He was warmly received by Dr. Anil Manhas, Chief Medical Officer, Udhampur, along with the Dr. Anil Saloch, District Tuberculosis Officer (DTO), Udhampur. Addressing the gather-



ing, the DDC delivered an insightful awareness lecture, highlighting the causes, prevention, and treatment of tuberculosis. He emphasized the importance of collective responsibility and community participation in achieving the goal of a TB-free India.

Other dignitaries present on the occasion also shared their perspectives and encouraged sustained public involvement in TB elimination efforts.

A key highlight of the programme was the flagging off of an Aware-

ness Delivery Vehicle by the chief guest. The vehicle traversed key areas of the city, broadcasting a TB awareness song and spreading vital information to the masses.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by the District Tuberculosis Officer, who expressed gratitude to all participants and media personnel for their valuable support. Refreshments were distributed among ASHAs, paramedical staff and other health workers as a token of appreciation for their dedicated service.

Economic Survey presented in Assembly, points overall revival of Delhi's economy

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 24: Chief Minister Rekha Gupta presented the Economic Survey for the financial year 2025-26 in the Delhi Assembly on the first day of the budget session today, beginning with a Kheer Ceremony, with the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) expected to reach Rs 13,27,055 crore in 2025-26, marking a 9.42 per cent increase over the previous financial year that is 2024-2025, while highlighting development of the national capital on a growth trajectory.

Notably, the Survey report gives a signal of overall revival of the city's economy, headed by the growth in services sector, rise in per capita income and not to leave aside, the noteworthy increase in the tax collections in 2025-2026.

Tax collection for the past year 2025-26 is budgeted with a growth of 15.54 per cent over the previous year.

The report suggests the recovery of the economy, led by service sector, which is an indication of a rapidly growing capital.

Talking of the GSDP, it refers to the total monetary value of the goods and services produced within a state in a specific year's time, which is a primary indicator of



economic growth.

The government says that its aim is to transform Delhi into a world-class city, along with fulfilling aspirations of the people by overall improving the city at different fronts.

As per the Economic Survey, Delhi's per capita income at current prices during 2025-26 is estimated at Rs 5,31,610 as per 'Advance Estimate', registering a growth of 7.92 per cent as over the previous financial year, and estimated suggest that it is to be around two-

and-a-half times more, when compared to the national level during 2025-26.

The Survey has also suggested that the budgeted revenue surplus for 2025-26 is Rs 9,661.31 crore, which is 0.73 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

According to the government's statement, Delhi's economy has a predominant Service Sector with its share of contribution to Gross State Value Added (at current prices) at 86.32 per cent during the year

2025-26, followed by contribution of Secondary Sector (12.88 per cent) and the Primary Sector's being 0.80 per cent

As per the Survey, the 2025-26 budget, which was of Rs 1 lakh crore, out of which Rs 59,300 crore is allocated for schemes/ programme/ projects of the government which was more by Rs 20,300 crore, compared Rs 39,000 crore in 2024-25.

Key initiatives as per the report, include expansion of the EV buses, where the fleet increased from

2,150 in April 2025 to 4,338 till March 2026.

The city presently has the largest electric bus fleet in the entire country, while plans are to reach 14,000 buses by 2028-29.

According to the report, the expenditure budget of Delhi government is mainly funded from own tax revenue (68.7 per cent of expenditure budget in 2025-26), which includes revenue collection from GST, VAT, Excise, Stamp Duty and Motor Vehicle Tax.

During 2025-26, transport sector has been allocated the major share of about 20 per cent of total Budget allocation, followed by social security and welfare sector 17 per cent, water supply and sanitation 15 per cent, education 13 per cent and health sector 12 per cent.

Meanwhile, the report also says that with concerted efforts by state government towards air pollution control, the good air days in city increased from 159 in 2018 to 200 in 2025.

The economy of the national capital is diversifying, and with the manufacturing sub-sector contributing significantly to secondary sector, while city also remains a key tourist destination, securing 6th rank in total foreign tourist visits in 2024. UNI

Delhi CM unveils Bhagat Singh's statue at historical court trial room at Parliament Street

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 24: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday unveiled a grand statue of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh at the RCS office premises on Parliament Street here on the occasion of the martyrdom day, and also inaugurated the restored 'Historical Court Trial Room'.

Notably, the landmark site holds immense historical significance, being the venue where the trial of legendary freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev was conducted during the struggle for independence.

Delhi Ministers Parvesh Verma, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Ravinder Indraj Singh, and Kapil Mishra were also present on the occasion, along with Yadvinder Singh Sandhu, Bhagat Singh's grandson, and other dignitaries.



Speaking on the occasion, CM Gupta stated that March 23 is a day of immense pride and emotional remembrance for the entire nation. She said, "This day reminds everyone of the supreme sacrifice made by the brave freedom fighters who laid down their lives for the country's liberation. Seeing these memories revitalized within this historic complex is a moment of profound pride and emotion for every Indian," she added.

Gupta emphasized that the conservation and restoration of this historical site is more than just a construction project, but a vital effort to preserve the nation's heritage.

She noted that it would allow future generations to connect with the history of the freedom struggle, and urged every citizen to visit the site to experience firsthand the struggles and sacrifices of the freedom fighters.

"Bhagat Singh's statue will continue to inspire the youth to fight against injustice and dedicate themselves to the nation," Gupta said.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ravinder Indraj Singh said, "We have made a concerted effort to preserve the facts and essence of the place where cries of 'Inquilab' once echoed and where Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh appeared for trial."

He further said that the installation of the statue is not just paying a tribute, but also providing a source of inspiration for countrymen, especially the youth, to learn closely about his life, ideologies, and martyrdom.

Earlier in the day, CM Gupta also visited the Vidhan Sabha to pay floral tributes at the statues of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru. UNI

Air Canada Express aircraft hits fire truck at New York's LaGuardia; several injured, pilot, co-pilot feared dead

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 24: An Air Canada Express aircraft collided with a fire truck at New York's LaGuardia Airport on Monday (India time), leaving several people injured. The pilot and co-pilot are feared to have died in the incident.

Arriving from Montreal, the CRJ-900 aircraft collided with a fire truck at a speed of around 24 miles per hour (39 km/h), according to Flightradar24.

Following the incident, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) halted all flight operations at the airport, according to a notice issued by the regulator.

While the notice did not specify details, it suggested the directive was issued in response to an emergency, with the possibility of the suspension being prolonged.

Several people have been reported injured in the accident, while casualties are also feared.

Preliminary social media reports indicate that close to 100 people were injured, with a few said to be in critical condition, including occupants of the fire truck.

According to US media reports, the pilot and co-pilot are feared to have died in the accident. The accident reportedly happened on the Runway 4 of the LaGuardia airport. One of the visuals circulating online reportedly shows the aircraft's nose lifting after passengers had exited, while the cockpit section appears to have suffered damage.

Visuals and audio shared on social media reportedly capture scenes of panic inside the air traffic control tower.

In the audio, authorities are heard directing the plane to land before informing the pilot that the runway is closed and asking for a go-around. However, the instructions appear to have failed to prevent the incident.

Air Canada, in a statement, said it was "aware of an incident" involving Air Canada Express flight 8646, operated by Jazz Aviation LP (Jazz), from Montreal to New York's LaGuardia Airport on March 22.

In a separate statement, Jazz Aviation, operating as Air Canada Express, confirmed an incident involving flight AC8646 (CRJ900) at LaGuardia (LGA).

"Flight 8646 was en route to LaGuardia (LGA) from Montréal (YUL). The preliminary passenger list indicates the aircraft was carrying 72 passengers and four crew members, though this remains subject to confirmation. The incident occurred at approximately 11:47 pm on March 22," Jazz said in a statement. UNI

Economic development's pace in Delhi high under BJP govt: Ashish Sood

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 24: Delhi's Education Minister Ashish Sood on Monday stated that the latest Economic Survey of Delhi 2025-26 clearly reflects that the national capital's economy is now moving towards a more robust, dynamic and high-growth trajectory.

The minister said that during 2025-26, Delhi's economic growth rate (GDP Growth Rate) has been recorded at 8.53 per cent, as compared to 7.4 per cent in 2023-24 and 6.21 per cent in 2024-25, during the previous government.

He said this simply demonstrates a significant acceleration in the pace of development under the current leadership.



Sood added that this growth rate of 8.53 per cent is higher than the national average of 7.4 per cent and in contrast, during 2023-24 and 2024-25, national capital's growth rates of 7.4 per cent and 6.21 per cent were lower than the national growth rates of 9.2 per cent and 6.5 per cent, respectively.

He also highlighted that per capita income has increased by 7.09 per cent

in 2025-26, indicating an improvement in the standard of living of citizens.

The minister added that the rise in tax collection by 15.5 per cent, reflected strong economic activity.

Additionally, he said that the capital expenditure has also seen an increase, which showcases government's intent and also its commitment towards development.

According to Sood, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leadership of CM Rekha Gupta, the Delhi government is working in line with the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas."

He affirmed that the CM Gupta led Delhi government remains fully committed to further accelerating this momentum of economic growth. UNI

Delhi Police bust terror module, arrest key aide of Pakistan-based handler

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 24: The Special Cell of Delhi Police has arrested an 18-year-old alleged operative of Pakistan-based gangster-turned-terrorist Shahzad Bhatti, an officer said on Monday, claiming to have busted a foreign-controlled terror module targeting youth through social media.

The accused, identified as Harmandeep Singh alias Harman, a resident of Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, was apprehended by a team of the Special Cell's Eastern Range.

Police said his arrest led to

the dismantling of a syndicate being remotely operated by Bhatti and his foreign-based associates.

According to the investigators in this case, Harman was in regular contact with Bhatti and other handlers through social media platforms.

"His mobile phone, seized at the time of arrest, contains incriminating chats as well as photos and videos linked to activities allegedly carried out at the behest of the handlers," said Narra Chaitanya, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell).

Officer Chaitanya added in his statement further that Harman



had painted "TTH" graffiti at three locations in Talwara in Punjab's Hoshiarpur district on instructions from his handlers and shared visual proof with them. "He was

also attempting to recruit others to carry out similar acts in Uttar Pradesh," he mentioned.

The police further revealed that the module followed a structured pattern of radicalisation and recruitment.

"Young individuals were initially assigned low-risk tasks such as reconnaissance, logistical support and graffiti writing before being entrusted with more serious assignments like firing or grenade attacks," they said.

While being interrogated by the police, Harman disclosed that Bhatti's associates had discussed plans for attacks in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, including a

proposed grenade attack at a police post in Rampur.

The officer said that the plan was thwarted following his arrest.

Investigations have also linked Harman to individuals involved in previous violent incidents, including a grenade attack at a women's police station in Haryana's Sirsa in November last year.

The DCP said that further efforts are underway to identify and apprehend other members of the network. "Appropriate legal action has been initiated, and the role of absconding associates is being actively probed," he added. UNI

Madhya Pradesh to host Army Day parade as Bhopal named next venue

■ PARWINDER SANDHU

NEW DELHI, MAR 24 (UNI): Bhopal will host the next edition of the Army Day parade on January 15, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced on Monday, following a meeting with General Upendra Dwivedi at his residence.

As part of the ongoing decentralisation of national military events, the parade has previously been held in Bengaluru (2013), Lucknow (2024), Pune (2025), and Jaipur (2026).

In a post on X, Yadav, while announcing the same, wrote, "Today, General Upendra Dwivedi, the Chief of the Indian Army, visited the Bhopal residence. During this time, discussions took place on the topic of inspiring the youth to join the army. In the coming year, a grand



'Army Day' parade will be organized in Bhopal on January 15."

Stating that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will also participate in the event, the Bhopal Chief Minister said that the parade will strengthen the nation's rich military heritage and the sentiment of respect towards our brave soldiers.

Programs will begin in Bhopal from January 9, which will include important events such as Shaurya Sandhya, a military exhibition, and

military exercises.

These initiatives aim to familiarise citizens, especially the youth, with the legacy and functioning of the Indian Army.

Observed annually on January 15, Army Day marks a defining moment in India's military history, when K. M. Cariappa took over command of the Indian Army from F. R. R. Bucher in 1949, becoming the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of an independent nation.

The day symbolises the transition of military leadership into Indian hands following independence.

The annual parade, a key highlight of the celebrations, reflects the Army's operational readiness, discipline, and technological advancement. It features marching contingents, mechanised columns,

advanced weaponry, and combat demonstrations that showcase the force's preparedness across diverse terrains and challenges.

The 2026 edition held in Jaipur stood out for its grand scale and public engagement. The parade displayed indigenous defence platforms, cutting-edge surveillance systems, and specialised units, including desert warfare formations suited to the region.

Cultural tableaux and military bands added to the spectacle, while live combat drills and aerial displays demonstrated precision and coordination.

The event also emphasised the 'Make in India' push in defence production and highlighted the Army's growing focus on technology-driven warfare and joint operations. UNI

Railways Deploy Kavach on High-Density Route, Paving Way for 160 kmph Operations

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAR 24: Indian Railways successfully commissioned the Kavach Automatic Train Protection (ATP) System on the Prayagraj (Excluding) - Kanpur (Excluding) section (190 Route Kilometres) of Delhi-Howrah high-density corridor.

In a statement issued here on Monday, the Railway Ministry said that the Kavach system was implemented through Train No. 14163. The General Manager also conducted a footplate inspection onboard Train No. 14163 from Subedarganj to Manauri station to assess the performance of the Kavach system. Senior officers, including PHODs, DRM/Prayagraj, Headquarters officers, and Divisional officers, were present on the occasion.

In the first phase, Kavach will be enabled on eight pairs of trains. Additional trains and Vande Bharat will be progressively

included, the ministry stated.

This commissioning marks a significant milestone in running trains at 160 KMPH and enhancing railway safety and improving operational efficiency on one of the most vital sections of the Indian Railway.

Before commissioning, extensive and rigorous trials were successfully conducted. Trial runs included WAP-7 locomotives with 8, 16, and 22 LHB coach configurations, as well as a 20-coach Vande Bharat rake, ensuring system reliability under varied operational conditions.

The WAP-7 is a high-performance electric locomotive used by Indian Railways for hauling passenger trains, including premium services like Rajdhani, Shatabdi, and Duronto Express.

Passenger trials were also conducted using Chauri Chaura Express, which demonstrated consistent and reliable performance during regular service. UNI

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: An all-rounder himself, Axar Patel on Monday became the latest Indian cricketer to criticise the Impact Player rule in the IPL with a blunt "I don't like it" response before insisting that it hurts the growth of his tribe.

Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya had earlier spoken against the Impact Player rule, which allows teams to substitute anyone in the playing XI with one of the five listed substitutes at any point of the match.

It was introduced in 2023 and will stay until at least 2027.

In 2024, Rohit had said that he was not a fan of the strategic rule saying it hampered the development of all-rounders in Indian cricket while the following season, Hardik said it had become to difficult pick an all-rounder in the side unless he was equally good with both bat and ball.

Responding to a query seeking his views on the rule, the Indian T20 vice-captain too weighed in on the subject ahead of his second season as Delhi Capitals captain.

"I don't like this rule as I am an all-rounder myself (laughs). Earlier we used to pick all-rounder for this role (batting and bowling). Now team management goes with a particular batter or bowler, they say why do we need an all-rounder? Being an all-rounder myself I don't like it but at the same time rules are rules. We have to follow them. But personally I don't like it," said Axar.

Axar bowled only 204 balls in the last IPL season compared to 264 balls a season earlier.

He said it was not because of the Impact Player rule, but a finger injury that had bothered him leading up to the IPL.

"I did not bowl a lot. It wasn't because of Impact Player. After the Champions Trophy, my spinning finger got cut. After that it got worse because of the seam of the ball. Later, it developed into a deep cut, I was not able to apply pressure and rotation on the ball. That is why I was bowling only when required and nursing my finger. After seven games, it became better and I bowled frequently," said Axar who has been tasked to take Delhi Capitals to their maiden IPL title.

Don't believe in the 'greatest Indian team' tag

In a matter of 18 months, Axar has become a two-time world champion in the shortest format.

An unprecedented title defence earlier this month has fuelled comparisons with the invincible Australian team of 2000s though its roaring success came in the ODI format.

Some have dubbed the current Indian side as the greatest T20 unit ever.

However, Axar said he doesn't believe in comparing teams from different eras.

"It all started post 2022, we started playing this brand of cricket and took some tough calls. If this Indian team wants to dominate, we have to continue playing a fearless brand of cricket, change as per the requirement of the game at that time. I don't believe in the tag of the greatest T20 team ever. It is all about time and era. If a team's combination is set, they can do wonders," he added.



Axar Patel slams IPL Impact Player rule, calls himself an all-rounder

India anchor market but ship is sailing far beyond now: ICC CEO on cricket's globalisation

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: India remains the "anchor market" but cricket is becoming "incontrovertibly" globalised, said ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta as he applauded the "fearless" performance of Associate countries during the recent T20 World Cup, describing their growth as the "signal of a maturing" global sport.

India won the tournament, that featured 20 teams and was dotted with some gutsy show by lesser-fancied sides like tournament debutant Italy, USA, Nepal and Zimbabwe.

"India is indeed the anchor market of world cricket. Its enormous fan base, financial strength, and time-tested affinity for the sport provide a platform that benefits the entire ecosystem. What is incontrovertibly



evident at ICC events, however, is that the ship is sailing far beyond any single location," he wrote in a column for 'WPP Media Sporting Nation XIII Edition'.

"The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 saw spirited performances from Associate Nations...Countries such as Nepal, Italy and the USA captured global attention by playing fearless cricket.

"At the same time, traditional competitors like Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe demonstrated their too often-overlooked pedigree by storming into the Super 8s. Such moments are more than just upsets on the field; they are signals of a maturing global game," he added. During the tournament, Zimbabwe ousted former champions Australia, Nepal gave another former champion England a massive scare and Italy too made an impression with some resolute performances even in lost causes.

Gupta said with India's triumph in the women's ODI World Cup last year, the game can expect to grow rapidly going forward as it has fully unlocked an influential market. "...India's triumph at the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025, in the 50-over format and secured on home soil, carried with it enormous value. When a market of India's scale and influence embraces women's cricket with such passion, the ripple effects are felt far and wide," he observed. "For the ICC, this growth is not merely a parallel track to the men's game; it is central to the sport's future and part of a much bigger picture," he added.

Kulgam Police Organises T-20 Cricket Tournament Under Civic Action Programme

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, MAR 24: Kulgam Police on Tuesday organised a T-20 Cricket Tournament under the Civic Action Programme (CAP) 2025-26 at the Mini Sports Stadium Kulgam, aimed at promoting sportsmanship, discipline, and positive engagement among youth.

The tournament was inaugurated by DySP DAR Mohammad Ayoub Rather, who appreciated the initiative and encouraged young players to actively participate in sports and adopt constructive activities.

The tournament has witnessed participation from twelve teams across the

district, reflecting strong enthusiasm and community involvement. The inaugural match was played between LCC Kulgam and Chancer CC, drawing a large number of spectators.

Chancer CC secured a convincing victory over LCC Kulgam by six wickets in the opening match.

The initiative highlights Kulgam Police's commitment to promoting youth engagement, strengthening police-public relations, and fostering a spirit of teamwork and sportsmanship.

Officials reiterated that such youth-centric and community-oriented programmes will continue under the Civic Action Programme to encourage positive avenues for the younger generation.



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