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Modi Urges 'Team India' Push to Tackle West Asia Fallout

States told to secure supplies, curb hoarding; CMs back Centre's fuel relief and LPG boost



HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday called for a united "Team India" approach to challenges arising from the ongoing crisis in West Asia, as he chaired a meeting with Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors to review preparedness and response measures.

The Prime Minister stressed vigilance, coordination and swift action to ensure that disruptions in global supply chains do not impact India's economy or daily life. Drawing parallels with the

Omar Abdullah Urges Modi to Use Diplomacy to End West Asia War

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 27: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi to leverage India's diplomatic clout with global and regional powers to help end the ongoing conflict in West Asia, terming it a grave humanitarian crisis with far-reaching consequences.



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Speaking during the Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdullah said the war has inflicted immense human suffering, particularly in

Border Students Get First Glimpse of India's Diversity on Army Tour

LG Manoj Sinha praises outreach programme for fostering confidence and national integration



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday interacted with a group of students from Army Goodwill School, Saurjyan in Poonch, who are visiting Jammu under the J&K Integration Tour organised as part of Operation Sadbhavana.

The tour, conducted by the White Knight Corps, aims to promote national integration and ensure holistic development of children from remote border areas by exposing them to diverse cultural and institutional environ-

ments. Praising the Indian Army's sustained outreach efforts, the Lieutenant Governor said such initiatives are instrumental in nurturing young minds and strengthening the spirit of unity and belonging among youth from far-flung regions.

The contingent, comprising 33 students accompanied by teachers and Army personnel, shared their experiences during the interaction, highlighting the impact of the exposure visit on their outlook and confidence.

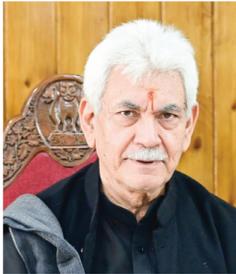
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Fuel Relief Shield: LG Applauds PM's 'Historic' Move Amid West Asia Crisis

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for what he described as a "historic decision" to insulate Indian households from supply disruptions triggered by the ongoing West Asia crisis.

In a post on X, Sinha said the measures underscore the Prime Minister's commitment to safe-



guarding the standard of living of ordinary citizens at a time of global uncertainty. He noted that the Centre has reduced central excise duty by Rs. 10 per litre on both petrol and diesel, a move aimed at shielding consumers from rising fuel costs.

Highlighting additional steps, the Lieutenant Governor said export duties have been imposed strategically—Rs. 21.5

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Runway Works to Curtail Srinagar Flights Till July

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAR 27: Flight operations at Srinagar International Airport will remain restricted between April and July owing to runway maintenance works, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said on Friday.

According to a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) issued by the Indian Air Force, the runway works are set to commence in the first week of April, following which operational hours for scheduled flights will be curtailed till 5 pm from

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Seven Killed as Avalanches Bury Vehicles on Srinagar-Leh Highway

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 27: At least seven people were killed and five others injured on Friday after multiple avalanches struck the Srinagar-Leh National Highway, trapping several vehicles under heavy snow near Zojila Pass, officials said.

The avalanches hit the stretch between Zero Point and Minimarg in the afternoon, an area prone to frequent snow slides due to its treacherous terrain and unpredictable weather. Several vehicles were caught in the sudden avalanche, leaving passengers buried under snow and debris.

Rescue teams were immediately rushed to the spot, with personnel from the Border Roads Organisation and the police

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NIA Gets 45-Day Extension in Red Fort Blast Probe

Court grants more time to unravel wider conspiracy, digital and financial links

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 27: A Delhi court on Friday granted the National Investigation Agency (NIA) an additional 45 days to complete its investigation into the November 10 blast near the Red Fort that claimed 15 lives and left several others injured.

Special Judge Prashant Sharma allowed the plea, noting the agency's submission that fresh arrests and emerging evidence required further probe. The court also extended the judicial custody of the accused persons.

The NIA had approached the court on March 23, seeking more time to piece together the larger conspiracy,

particularly after arrests made in February. Among those recently held are Zameer Ahmad Ahangar and Tufail Ahmad Bhat from Jammu and Kashmir, alleged to have played active roles in the plot.

The agency informed the court that it needs to confront the accused

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CS finalises arrangements for Jammu's first International Marathon

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 27: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today finalized arrangements for the first-ever international marathon event to be held in Jammu this Sunday by the Tourism Department.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism; Renowned Adventure Tourism Expert, Chewang Motup; Commissioner Secretary, Health; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services

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Don't panic, J&K has enough fuel stock: Minister Sharma to people

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

JAMMU, MAR 27: Urging people not to panic Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, on Friday assured the citizens that there is sufficient stock of petrol, diesel, kerosene and LPG across the Union Territory.

Talking to reporters outside the Assembly complex here, Sharma, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "Petrol stocks are currently sufficient for seven days in Jammu and 20 days in Kashmir. The higher stock in Kashmir is due to greater

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Govt Will Ensure Corrective Measures For Ethical News Dissemination: Dy CM

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 27: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary today said that the media, regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy, has historically played a significant role in the nation's freedom struggle and enjoyed the trust of the people.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to the issues raised by the Members during a Short Duration Discussion on tackling fake news and misinformation in the Legislative Assembly. He observed that times have changed and with the



advent of social media, which was initially expected to improve people's lives, has also brought new challenges.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that while the government will take necessary corrective measures, but the media must also introspect and work towards strengthening its credibility, reflecting on how it wishes to be remembered by the society.

He said that the media has important role to play for strengthening of J&K. "A strong J&K will lead to strong India. For this we all have to play the role," he said.

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LitStream SPECIAL ISSUE...

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Modi Urges.....

collective handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, he said close Centre-State cooperation remains the country's strongest asset in navigating external shocks.

Highlighting that the situation remains fluid, Modi said an inter-ministerial group has been monitoring developments on a daily basis and taking timely decisions. He outlined key priorities, including maintaining economic and trade stability, ensuring energy security, protecting citizens' interests and strengthening supply chains.

He urged States to ensure smooth functioning of supply systems and take strict action against hoarding and profiteering, while directing them to activate control rooms at State and district levels to maintain administrative alertness. He also called for advance planning in agriculture, particularly in fertiliser management, to prevent any hardship for farmers during the upcoming Kharif season.

Cautioning against misinformation, the Prime Minister emphasised the need for timely dissemination of accurate information to prevent panic, and advised vigilance against cyber frauds and fake agents. States with citizens in West Asia were asked to activate helplines and establish support mechanisms for affected families.

Modi also underscored the importance of long-term preparedness, urging States to accelerate efforts in alternative energy, including solar power, biofuels and electric mobility, alongside expanding piped natural gas infrastructure and domestic oil and gas exploration.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the Centre has taken proactive steps to shield citizens, including ensuring LPG availability and reducing excise duty on petrol and diesel. Cabinet Secretary T. V. Somanathan presented an overview of the situation and outlined measures for States.

Chief Ministers appreciated the Centre's response and expressed confidence that essential supplies remain stable. They welcomed the reduction in fuel excise duty and the increase in commercial LPG allocation, and reaffirmed their commitment to work in close coordination with the Centre to manage the evolving situation.

Omar Abdullah.....

Iran, while global discussions continue to revolve around strategic concerns such as oil routes and geopolitical interests.

He said the crisis has begun to impact India directly, with several Indian nationals, including those from Jammu and Kashmir, stranded in Iran. He also pointed to visible signs of distress at home, including long queues at petrol pumps and growing public anxiety.

"As representatives of the people, we have every right to raise our concerns in this House," he said, adding that while the Assembly may not be able to halt the war, India is well placed to play a constructive role in de-escalation.

Referring to India's relations with countries such as the United States, Israel and Iran, the Chief Minister expressed confidence in the Centre's ability to engage effectively and urged that these ties be used to push for an early resolution.

He condemned what he described as an "unjust and illegal war imposed on Iran" and expressed condolences for those who have lost their lives, including individuals close to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

Stressing the urgency of the situation, Abdullah said ending the conflict at the earliest would help reduce human suffering and restore stability. "It is not any one religion that is being killed — it is humanity that is being killed," he said, appealing for immediate action.

He also expressed confidence that the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly would support any effort by the Government of India aimed at contributing to peace and bringing the conflict to an end.

Border Students.....

Officials said the programme is designed to broaden the understanding of children from border villages by familiarising them with the country's social and cultural fabric, while instilling a sense of inclusion and aspiration.

The itinerary includes visits to Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu and Srinagar, where the students experienced urban settings, visited key institutions including the Air Force Station in Jammu, and gained insights into the Army's way of life. The tour also marked several first-time experiences for the students, including rail travel to Srinagar and exposure to modern urban infrastructure.

Fuel Relief.....

per litre on diesel and Rs. 29.5 per litre on aviation turbine fuel—to ensure adequate domestic availability and stabilize supplies within the country.

Describing the intervention as "visionary," Sinha said the decisions would help maintain affordability, curb price escalation, and place India's interests at the forefront. "While global markets remain in turmoil, our citizens are shielded and secure," he added, expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister for prioritizing public welfare.

Runway Works.....

April 6 to July 31.
At present, the airport handles around 60 flight movements daily, with operations run-

ning between 8 am and 10 pm. With the revised schedule, flights will be confined to a shorter window, requiring airlines to realign their operations accordingly.

The AAI said that despite the reduction in watch hours, flight movements are expected to increase in line with the summer schedule approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, with carriers likely to optimise their services within the available timeframe.

Reaffirming its commitment to safe and efficient operations, the AAI advised passengers to stay updated through official channels and avoid relying on unverified information while planning their travel.

Seven Killed.....

launching intensive operations to clear the debris and locate those feared trapped. Efforts were ongoing late into the evening amid challenging conditions.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh confirmed the deaths, expressing grief over the tragedy. He said all necessary assistance is being extended to the injured and affected families.

Authorities in Ladakh said senior officials had been directed to reach the site and oversee rescue and relief measures, while all concerned agencies were put on high alert. The situation is being closely monitored as concerns persist over further avalanches in the region.

NIA Gets 45.....

with "radical material" retrieved from their digital devices. An expert from Jamia Millia Islamia has been engaged to analyse the content, which reportedly includes material in Arabic suspected to promote extremist ideology and provide guidance on assembling explosives.

Investigators have also identified WhatsApp groups linked to the accused, including one associated with Ansar Gazwat ul Hind, and are working to trace its members and handlers. Technical surveillance and legal interception of communications are being used to establish links within the network.

According to the probe, the blast was carried out using an explosives-laden Hyundai i20 driven by Dr Umar-un-Nabi, who died in the explosion. The vehicle was allegedly procured by Amir Rashid Mir.

The NIA has named several others in the case, including Jasir Bilal Wani, accused of testing explosives; Mufti Irfan Ahmad Wagay, alleged to have radicalised youths; and Dr Muzamil Shakeel Ganie and Dr Adeel Ahmad Rather, accused of arranging logistics and materials used in the attack.

Another accused, Dr Shaheen Saeed, is alleged to have provided financial and logistical support to the group.

The agency said the investigation is ongoing, focusing on uncovering financial trails, digital footprints and the full extent of the conspiracy behind the attack.

CS finalises.....

& Sports; IGP Security; IG Traffic; Deputy Commissioner and SSP Jammu; Managing Director, JKTC; Director Tourism, Jammu, and other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary sensitized the officers about the importance of ensuring international-standard arrangements for the marathon, emphasizing that it is the first event of its kind in Jammu. He directed all departments to thoroughly review their preparations to eliminate any possible gaps on the day of the event.

Taking stock of departmental readiness, the Chief Secretary sought detailed inputs from each Administrative Secretary regarding their respective roles. He stressed the need to make the marathon a spectacular event in every sense and envisioned it as an annual feature for Jammu, on the lines of the Kashmir Marathon.

He also underscored the necessity of constituting a permanent Steering Committee under the chairmanship of the Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism. The committee will include Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports; Divisional Commissioners; IGP Traffic; Directors of Tourism, along with Chewang Motup, acknowledging his pivotal role in conceptualizing and organizing these international events here. The committee will be tasked with scheduling and promoting these events annually to facilitate greater participation from national and international runners.

The Chief Secretary further emphasized announcing event dates well in advance to enable international participants to plan their travel. He called for popularizing such events to maximize participation and position Jammu & Kashmir as a premier destination for marathon tourism.

He reviewed key aspects including route sanitization, traffic management, medical preparedness, and deployment of volunteers to ensure smooth conduct of the event. He directed that routes for different race categories should not overlap and must be fit and safe for runners.

Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, briefed the meeting on preparations and expected participation in the 'Jammu Marathon 2026'. He informed that around 4,000 runners are expected to participate, with on-spot registrations also being facilitated.

Director Tourism, Jammu, Vikas Gupta, gave a detailed presentation on the arrangements made by various departments. He informed that 3,663 participants, including 91 interna-

tional runners, have already registered for these events.

The marathon will be held on March 29, 2026, starting at sunrise from MA Stadium. The event will feature three race categories including Half Marathon (21 km), 10 km Fitness Run, and 5 km Fun Run.

It was revealed that separate prize categories have been earmarked for men and women, along with special prizes for local participants. A total prize pool of Rs. 1.33 Cr will be distributed among the winners.

In the Half Marathon (21 km), prize money includes Rs. 15 lakh for first place, Rs. 10 lakh for second, Rs. 7 lakh for third, Rs. 3 lakh for fourth, and Rs. 2 lakh for fifth position. In the 10 km Fitness Run, winners will receive Rs. 5 lakh, Rs. 4 lakh, Rs. 3 lakh, Rs. 2 lakh, and Rs. 1 lakh respectively. In the 5 km Fun Run, prizes range from Rs. 1 lakh for first place to Rs. 15,000 for the fifth position.

The meeting was also apprised of the detailed race routes, all starting and culminating at MA Stadium, with designated turnaround points for each category. Roles and responsibilities of departments were outlined, including support from volunteers drawn from Scouts & Guides and students of Higher and School Education institutions.

Don't panic.....

storage capacity in the Valley." "For diesel availability stands at 14 days in Jammu and 23 days in Kashmir. Kerosene stocks are the most stable, with availability for 37 days in Jammu and 38 days in Kashmir," he said.

On LPG, he said stocks are available for 10 days in Jammu and 18 days in Kashmir, adding that supply chains are active and replenishment is ongoing. He said supply of fuel is continuing smoothly across the Union Territory.

Reassuring the public, the minister said there is "no need to worry," as supplies are being maintained and monitored regularly.

"The stock position is adequate across Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

However, responding to questions on black marketing of LPG cylinders, Sharma said those involved would face strict consequences. "Such people will not be forgiven. They are acting against the public and should be ashamed," he said, adding that some individuals have already been identified.

Sharma said that two to three people may face termination, while the government is also considering cancellation of certain licenses, subject to completion of legal procedures. "We cannot disclose names at this stage as it may alert others," he added.

On supply augmentation, Sharma said the government has formally approached the Centre to increase fuel supply capacity. "We demanded a 50 percent increase for commercial supply; about 30 percent has been approved so far and we expect further enhancement," he said, adding that official communications were sent on priority.

The Minister also referred to recent discussions with central leadership, saying "positive developments" are expected following meetings in Delhi.

Sharma said that Akhnoor may become a new district soon—(KNO)

Govt Will.....

He added that Media, being called as the fourth pillar of democracy, has a great responsibility and urged the media professionals to follow their conscience and act responsibly, adding that no law can work effectively without self-discipline and ethical conduct.

The Deputy Chief Minister expressed gratitude to the members for participation in the debate and raising significant issues concerning ethical information dissemination by the media.

Minister for Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, while speaking during the discussion, emphasized that genuine and responsible media practitioners should be encouraged and promoted. He stressed that those involved in spreading fake news, misinformation and disinformation must face exemplary punishment in order to uphold credibility in the media space.

Earlier, the House witnessed a broad consensus across party lines on the need to curb fake news and misinformation, with members calling for stronger measures while safeguarding freedom of speech and expression.

MLA, Ranbir Singh Pathania, while initiating the discussion on tackling fake news and misinformation in Jammu & Kashmir, said that while freedom of speech is a fundamental right, it must be protected from being misinterpreted and misused. He called for a robust regulatory framework, proposing a 36-hour takedown mechanism, clear district-level definitions of fake news, and effective corrective measures.

Highlighting the rise of unregulated digital platforms, particularly on Facebook and Instagram, he stressed the need for mandatory registration and regulatory oversight.

Pathania also advocated for a UT-level Fact Check Unit (FCU) and grievance redressal systems on social media platforms. Citing global frameworks like the Online Safety Act and the Digital Services Act, along with measures in Singapore and Indian states like Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, he stressed on adopting the best practices in J&K.

He proposed a multi-pronged approach, including an FCU, stakeholder involvement,

citizen reporting mechanisms, coordination with national initiatives, timely clarifications and defined takedown timelines.

Pathania emphasized that the key challenge is ensuring accountability while addressing impunity, reiterating the need for a balanced framework to curb misinformation while safeguarding democratic values.

MLA, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeeri stated that in the present times, misinformation has taken deep roots and is impacting almost every aspect of public life. He cautioned that if not curbed in a timely manner, it could have serious consequences for society and governance.

He emphasized that all stakeholders must play a constructive role and urged that accountability must be clearly fixed, expressing hope that the government will take effective steps in this regard to ensure responsible communication and curb the spread of misinformation.

MLA, Ifitikhar Ahmad said that the media has an important role to play in society, and while many are doing commendable work, some elements are unfortunately indulging in the spread of fake news. He stressed the need for a clear policy framework, suggesting that minimum qualifications and standards be prescribed for individuals practicing journalism to uphold credibility and professionalism.

MLA, Sajjad Shaheen also stated that there should be minimum qualification criteria for individuals engaged in media and information dissemination and the space should not be a free-for-all. He emphasized that unverified and misleading content must be effectively restricted, calling for proper regulation to determine eligibility and accountability of those operating in the digital and media space.

MLA Khurshid Ahmed in his address said that the media forms the fourth pillar of democracy and lauded those who are performing their duties responsibly for the benefit of society.

He, however, noted that certain elements indulge in spreading fake news and stressed that strict provisions should be put in place to take such elements to task, including the imposition of appropriate penalties to ensure accountability and deter misinformation.

MLA Pawan Gupta, while speaking on the occasion, raised concerns over several media outlets and channels operating without proper authorization from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He noted that many platforms function without requisite licenses, underscoring the need for strict regulatory measures to tackle the spread of fake news.

MLA Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurez) stated that with the ease of creating channels and digital portals, individuals are increasingly entering the information space without adequate regulation. He cautioned that once a person's image is tarnished through false or misleading information, it becomes extremely difficult to restore, highlighting the serious consequences of fake news.

He pointed out that there is a lack of comprehensive legal provisions to regulate such channels and platforms, while strongly advocating for enacting a robust law to effectively tackle this growing menace.

MLA Rafiq Ahmad Naik suggested that there should be strict legal provisions to effectively curb the spread of fake news and misinformation. He observed that people today are well aware and informed and therefore emphasized the need for responsible dissemination of information, cautioning against the misuse of digital platforms for misleading narratives.

MLA Nizam-ud-din Bhat observed that

the media landscape has undergone a significant evolution, bringing both the opportunities and challenges in the dissemination of information.

He noted that the rise of provocative content and instances of defamation has become a matter of concern, stressing that if society is to be kept informed through accurate and factual information for the collective good, it is essential to ensure that this right is not infringed upon.

Bhat added that legal provisions already exist and emphasized the need for their effective implementation to safeguard truth and accountability in the media space.

He further remarked that the issue is fundamentally one of ethics, urging all stakeholders to adhere to responsible practices and uphold the integrity of information dissemination.

MLA Dr. Rameshwar Singh stated that while there are many responsible media professionals, there are also individuals without requisite qualifications who indulge in defamation and tarnishing of reputations. He stressed the need for regulatory oversight and accountability, suggesting that a proper system be put in place to verify credentials and curb such practices.

MLA, Dr. Sajjad Shafi, while speaking during the discussion, emphasized that there should be a minimum educational qualification for individuals entering journalism to ensure responsible reporting in the interest of society. He hailed the role of professional media persons but also stated that some fake media persons indulge in black mailing.

He noted that members across party lines are in agreement on the need for a law to regulate the sector and curb the spread of fake news, reflecting a shared commitment towards accountability and responsible media practices.

MLA Saif-ud-Din Bhat stated that while many journalists are doing commendable work, there are some who unfortunately indulge in the spread of fake news. He emphasized the need to distinguish responsible journalism from misinformation, and called for measures to uphold credibility and accountability in the media space.

MLA Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah stated that the media has a crucial role in holding the government accountable and strengthening democratic institutions.

He clarified that the intent is not to target genuine media houses but stressed the need for a proper regulatory mechanism to ensure accountability. He further suggested that District Development Commissioners be authorized to monitor and oversee media activities at the local level, so that responsibility can be clearly fixed on those misusing the platform.

MLA Sham Lal Sharma observed that professional ethics and values in the media space are witnessing a decline, stressing the need to uphold the rule of law.

He noted that while laws and monitoring mechanisms already exist, there is a need for the Government to be more proactive in their implementation. He urged to put in place suitable mechanism at District level to curb misuse of social media and to check fake news.

Sharma further suggested the formation of a House committee, in coordination with Accredited media representatives, to strengthen oversight and ensure adherence to ethical standards and accountability in the dissemination of information.

MLA Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi stated that the State must effectively perform its duties to ensure that laws are implemented in letter and spirit.

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Handicrafts & Handloom Dept Kmr to introduce SEM-based testing at Pashmina Lab

- Major step towards precise fibre analysis
- 03 addl HR Digital Microscopes procured to enhance testing rate

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MAR 27: In a major boost to position the Pashmina Testing and Quality Certification Centre (PTQCC) as a centre of excellence in fibre analysis, the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, has procured a high-end Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM).

This initiative aims to achieve global standards in GI testing and certification of Pashmina and other handwoven products.

Apart from this, the department has procured three High-Resolution Digital Microscopes for PTQCC, the Carpet Laboratory at IICT, and the newly established Quality Control Laboratory. These additions are expected to enhance testing capacity, reduce waiting times, and address long-standing demands of GI-authorized users, business stakeholders, and the artisan community.

According to the press state-



ment issued by a spokesman of the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir, SEM-based testing will further improve precise fibre analysis and facilitate accurate differentiation between genuine Pashmina and other fibres. "This advancement will help safeguard the authenticity

of pure Pashmina products and protect artisans and traders from misrepresentation and cheap counterfeit goods marketed under the guise of genuine hand-made products from Kashmir", he said, while thanking the Textiles Ministry for its whole-hearted support in strengthening

infrastructure at its testing labs. Procured under the 'Technology Support' component of the National Handicrafts Development Programme of the Ministry of Textiles, the introduction of SEM will further strengthen the authenticity, quality assurance and global credibility of Kashmir's

finest textile heritage, particularly Pashmina and Kani Shawls. "The new equipment would also allow testing of various organic and inorganic materials at the lab," he said. Similarly, the introduction of High-Resolution Digital Microscopes across PTQCC, IICT, and Quality Control Laboratories will significantly increase testing throughput and further reduce turnaround time, which has been a major demand of GI Authorized Users as well as the artisan community.

Kashmir currently has fifteen (15) GI-registered crafts, including high-value hand-knotted carpets, Pashmina, Kani, Tweed, Sozni embroidery, Chainstitch, Wagguv, Gabba, and Namda, along with non-textile crafts such as Walnut Wood Carving and Papier Mâché. "Documentation for six additional crafts has been prepared and is expected to be submitted to the GI Registry, Chennai, for registration in the near future," he added.

KU marks World Glacier, Water Days with conference on climate and cryosphere

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR MAR 27: The Centre of Excellence for Glacial Studies in the Western Himalaya, University of Kashmir (KU), organised a one-day conference to mark World Day for Glaciers 2026 and World Water Day 2026, along with a workshop on glacier and weather monitoring systems at the Main Campus.

Organised under the RUSA programme, in collaboration with the Department of Geoinformatics KU, Islamic University of Science and Technology



(IUST), Indian Society of Geomatics (Kashmir Chapter), Indian Meteorological Society (Srinagar Chapter) and Campbell Scientific India Pvt. Ltd., the event focused on glacier dynamics, water security and climate-related challenges in the Himalayan region.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, emphasised the need for interdisciplinary research in addressing emerging water challenges. "Understanding glacier systems and their response to climate variability is essential for informed decision-making on water resources. Collaborative research and sustained monitoring are key to addressing these concerns," she said.

Vice-Chancellor, IUST, Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, who is also the Principal Investigator of National Himalayan Cryospheric Research Lab KU, in his keynote address, highlighted the role of glaciers in sustaining regional water security and discussed the challenges associated with glacier mass balance, melt dynamics and cryosphere processes.

Advisor/Scientist 'G', Department of Science and Technology (GoI), Dr. Nisha Mendiratta, underscored the urgency of addressing global warming and stressed the need for strengthening glacier monitoring systems and advancing cryosphere research initiatives in the country.

Dean Research KU, Prof. Mohammad Sultan Bhat, and Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, in their remarks, highlighted the importance of such initiatives in enhancing scientific understanding of glacier-climate interactions and their implications for long-term water resource management in the region. Anuj Sharma, Managing Director, Campbell Scientific India, highlighted the importance of advanced glacier and weather monitoring technologies in generating reliable data for hydro-meteorological processes.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Dr. Khalid Omar Murtaza, Co-Principal Investigator of the Centre, outlined the objectives of the conference and the need for continued research and collaboration in glaciology and related fields.

The conference featured technical sessions, including demonstrations and hands-on exposure to glacier and weather monitoring systems. Experts also deliberated on issues related to climate change, hydro-meteorological processes and technological interventions for data generation. The event was attended by Deans, Heads of Departments, faculty members, researchers, technical experts from government agencies and students from KU and IUST.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Sarah Qazi, Co-Principal Investigator, Centre of Excellence for Glacial Studies KU.

PTM held in schools across Ganderbal district

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAR 27: In a resolute stride towards the "Year 2026: Academic Excellence", schools across "District Ganderbal" today witnessed an inspiring confluence of minds as "Parent-Teacher Meetings" (PTMs) were conducted with great enthusiasm and purpose. The occasion stood as a testament to the enduring belief that the "synergy between home and school" forms the cornerstone of true educational transformation.

Parents thronged institutions from far and wide, reflecting a collective commitment towards nurturing young minds. The gatherings transcended routine interaction, evolving into meaningful dia-



logues centered on academic growth, moral grounding, and the "holistic development of students."

Adding grace to the initiative, the "Director School Education Kashmir joined virtually" with a far-flung school of "Zone Kangan, reaffirming the department's unwavering focus on inclusivity and outreach to the remotest corners." His interaction with parents and teachers underscored the shared vision of fostering excellence through collaboration.

The "Chief Education Officer Ganderbal" actively participated in multiple PTMs across the district, engaging with stakeholders and emphasizing the vital role of parental involvement in shaping the educational journey of children.

These district-wide engagements echo a profound philosophy: education flourishes best when the warmth of home complements the discipline of school. The initiative marks a significant step in strengthening this partnership, ensuring that every child is guided with care, purpose, and opportunity.

Cultural Academy Playing Key Role in Connecting Youth with Theatre

Mehboob Cultural Society Baramulla stages impactful play "Miyoun Kyah Soncho" on World Theatre Day

JAMEEL ANSARI

BARAMULLA, MAR 27: On the occasion of World Theatre Day, the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages organised a special programme at the auditorium of St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School, Baramulla.

As part of the celebrations, Mehboob Cultural Society Baramulla staged the theatre play "Miyoun Kyah Soncho", written by noted playwright and President of Adbi Markaz Kamraz, Momammad Amin Bhat.

The play was widely appreciated by the audience for its powerful portrayal of the struggles faced by a common man in everyday life, highlighting social issues and exploring possible solutions. The performers brought the narrative to life through compelling and natural acting, effectively conveying the core message of the play.

The cast included Ghulam-ud-Din Bahar, Shabir Ahmad Hakak, Ashraf Nago, Jaffar Bin Bashir, Mohammad Muttqi, Mujeeb Javed, Faizan Hameed, Sahil Ahmad, Ms. Sanam, Zain Bin Riyaz, Mohammad Hamza, Uzair Javid, Mohammad Haziq, Rehan Khurshid, Mir Salik, G.A.Waza, G.M. Mahir, Muzaffar Ahmad Bhat, Bashir Ahmad Bhat and Hafeez Gul, whose performances were highly appreciated by the audience.

Among those present on the occasion were DySP Operations Baramulla Yaser Farooq, DySP Operations



Uri Syed Abid, Prof. Irshad Ahmad Wani, political leader Mohammad Rafiq Rather, Abdul Khaliq Shams, Rashid Roshan, Zamir Ansari, Aqeel Ashraf, General Secretary Baramulla Writers Forum Mushtaq Karmani, Ashfaq Ahmad Shah, Advocate Maroof, Chairman Human Aid Society Bashir Ahmad Mir, Majrooh Kashmiri, Dr. Manzoor Ahmad, representatives of Cultural Academy Jameel Ansari and Mohammad Ashraf Najjar, Majid Ganaie (Promote Kashmir), media persons including Sheikh Dawood (DDK), Anzar Mehjo (Voice TV), and a large number of local citizens.

Speaking on the occasion, playwright Mohammad Amin Bhat said that theatre is a powerful medium to reflect society, and through this play, an earnest effort has been made to highlight the issues and emotions of

the common people. He expressed gratitude to the Cultural Academy, the Principal of St. Joseph's School, the teaching staff, and all those who contributed to making the programme a success.

Principal of St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School, Suresh Britto, expressed his happiness over hosting such a programme for the first time in the institution. He appreciated the outstanding performances by the young artists and expressed hope that more such literary and cultural events would be organised in the future, with the school actively supporting such initiatives.

The proceedings of the event were conducted by former SSP and senior member of the society, Tameel Bashir.

A large number of students from the school attended the programme and appreciated the performance.

SKUAST-K Distributes Agri Inputs, Tribal Farmers Empowered with Eco-Friendly Farming Techniques

DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, MAR 27: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) organized an outreach programme on eco-friendly pest management at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kupwara on Thursday, aiming to promote sustainable agricultural practices among tribal farmers. The programme was conducted under the All India Coordinated Research Project on Biological Control of Crop Pests (AICRP-BC), Division of Entomology, Faculty of

Horticulture, SKUAST-K Shalimar, with support from ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (ICAR-NBAIR), Bengaluru.

Prof. Rahiaina Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K, who attended the event as Chief Guest, emphasized the importance of environmentally safe and sustainable pest management practices in enhancing crop productivity and ensuring long-term soil health.

Dr. Akhtar Ali Khan, Professor & Head, Division of Entomology, and Dr. G. M. Bhat, Professor & Head, KVK



Kupwara, also addressed the gathering. They encouraged farmers to adopt integrated pest management (IPM) techniques, highlighting their effectiveness in reducing dependency on chemical pesticides while improving crop quality.

During the technical sessions, Dr. Sajad Mohi-ud-Din, Principal Investigator, and Dr. Mudasar Gani, Co-Principal Investigator, provided detailed insights into pest management strategies for key crops including pulses, maize, and apple. The experts laid special focus on biological control

methods as a sustainable alternative to conventional practices. As part of the Tribal Sub-Plan initiative of ICAR-NBAIR, essential agricultural inputs such as rajmash seeds, vermicompost, pheromone traps, and neem oil were distributed among participating tribal farmers to support eco-friendly farming. The programme concluded with an interactive session, where farmers shared their experiences and appreciated SKUAST-K's efforts in promoting sustainable and environmentally responsible agriculture in the area.

Div Com Kashmir reviews preparations for Chintan Shivir in Srinagar

Emphasizes on inter-departmental coordination for successful conduct of mega event

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, MARCH 27: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to review arrangements for the upcoming Chintan Shivir being organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, under the Poshan Abhiyaan Department.

The two-day event is expected to witness participation from Union Ministers, Ministers from various States and Union Territories, senior administrative officials including Secretaries and Directors, officers from the Jammu & Kashmir Administration, policymakers, domain experts, and representatives from key institutions.

The Chintan Shivir aims to serve as a collaborative platform for dialogue, innovation, and strategic planning in the Women and Child Development sector. The deliberations are expected to contribute significantly towards

strengthening governance frameworks and promoting sustainable development.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner conducted a comprehensive review of arrangements at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), the designated venue for the event. He assessed the roles and responsibilities of various departments and agencies, including Civil Aviation and Airport Authorities, CISF, Hospitality and Protocol, Information, Transport (RTO), State Motor Garages, Police (Security and Traffic), District Administrations of Srinagar and Budgam, Fire and Emergency Services, Health, Floriculture, Tourism, Cultural Organizations, and the Cable Car Corporation.

Emphasizing the importance of seamless coordination, the Divisional Commissioner directed all departments to designate nodal officers to ensure efficient



communication and adherence to protocol. He stressed the need for meticulous security arrangements for visiting dignitaries, proper

allocation of transport facilities, and the successful organization of a cultural program.

The Tourism Department was instructed to arrange cruise rides in Dal Lake and prepare a detailed itinerary for visits to prominent gardens. Directions were also issued for the deployment of magistrates at the airport and event venue to ensure smooth operations.

Highlighting the importance of coordinated efforts, the Divisional Commissioner underscored the need for close inter-departmental collaboration to ensure the smooth and hassle-free & successful conduct of the event. The Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic), Srinagar, was specifically directed to ensure effective traffic management during VIP movements.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar and Budgam, along with senior officials and Divisional Level heads of all concerned departments.

Digital push to Agriculture: DC Kishtwar gives away CSC IT material to 55 Krishi Udhymis

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, MARCH 27: Agriculture Department Kishtwar, in collaboration with the Common Service Centre (CSC), today organized a comprehensive training programme for Krishi Udhymis associated with Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs).

The participants were also provided - CSC IT material at the event held in the Conference Hall, DC Complex. Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma attended as the Chief Guest.

The programme was organized with the primary objective of strengthening the operational capacity, digital outreach and service delivery mechanism of Kisan Khidmat Ghars in the district. The training programme was conducted under the supervision of Chief Agriculture Officer Kushal Chandel and District Manager CSC Suman Kapoor.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of Krishi Udhymis, who are instrumental in providing modern agricultural services at the grassroots level.

During the programme, CSC IT materials were distributed among 55 Krishi Udhymis to equip them with the necessary infrastructure for delivering digital and advisory services efficiently. The initiative is expected to significantly enhance the functioning of KKGs and enable them to serve as effective hubs for farmer-centric services.

The training sessions covered a wide range of relevant and emerging topics aimed at empowering the participants with digital tools and knowledge. These included introduction to AI-based solutions for youth empowerment and service delivery, enabling Krishi Udhymis to adopt innovative approaches in agriculture and allied sectors and awareness regarding legal assistance services available through digital platforms, facilitating easy access to legal aid for rural communities.

Further, the sessions included detailed orientation on Government-to-Citizen, Government-to-Business and Business-to-Citizen services being delivered through CSCs, enhancing service accessibility at the village level and use of tele-consultation services for obtaining expert agricultural advice from Krishi Vigyan Kendras, thereby improving decision-making and productivity among farmers.

The programme emphasized the importance of leveraging digital platforms and modern technologies to improve transparency, efficiency and accessibility of services in the agriculture sector. The Krishi Udhymis were encouraged to actively utilize the provided tools and knowledge to benefit the farming community.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the urgency of strengthening Kisan Khidmat Ghars. "It is a key step towards ensuring last-mile delivery of services and empowering farmers through timely information, advisory support and access to government schemes," he added.

The event was attended by ADC Pawan Kotwal; DIO NIC Faizal Khan; Incharge KVK, besides other officers and concerned staff.

DC Ganderbal reviews preparations for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, MAR 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore today chaired a comprehensive review meeting here to assess the preparedness of line departments for the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed review of the departmental action plans. He emphasized early tendering of works by the departments to ensure their timely completion for smooth and hassle-free conduct of the Yatra.

Threadbare discussions were held on various works under the Works Plan 2026. The DC directed all executing agencies to strictly adhere to timelines and ensure quality standards in all developmental and maintenance works along the Yatra route.

The meeting reviewed arrangements related to drinking water supply, road connectivity, sanitation, power supply, healthcare facilities, telecommunication services, disaster management preparedness, and public convenience measures. All departments concerned were directed to prioritize and expedite works that directly enhance the safety and overall experience of Yatris during SANJY-2026.

Special emphasis was laid on ensuring sufficient number of booking counters for SRTC vehicles, macadamization of internal links & roads in Baltal Base camp, adequate medical facilities, deployment of emergency response teams, and strengthening communication networks in shadow areas.

The DC also directed the officers and representatives of various executing agencies to submit lists of workers well in time to ensure timely verification well before the commencement of the Yatra.

Labour Department and other agencies were directed to commence the registration process of service providers including Ponywalas, palkiwalas, shop and tent operators on priority.

The DC stressed inter-departmental coordination and real-time monitoring of works to address bottlenecks promptly.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chief Executive Officer Sonamarg Development Authority, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Divisional Forest Officer, Sindh Forest Division, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Executive Engineers of R&B, KPDC, I&FC, and Jal Shakti, Dy.SP DAR, representatives from Fire & Emergency Services, Labour, FCS&CA, Transport Department, and other concerned departments as well as representatives of BEACON, and telecom companies.

DLRC-DCC meeting reviews performance of banks, financial inclusion initiatives in Doda District

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, MARCH 27: A meeting of the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) and District Consultative Committee (DCC) was held today in the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex. District Development Commissioner Krishan Lal chaired the meeting, witnessing detailed deliberations on key banking and financial inclusion initiatives, including sector-wise credit achievements under the Annual Credit Plan 2025-26, Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio, flow of credit to priority sectors and progress under the Government-sponsored self-employment schemes.

The Lead District Manager (LDM) presented a detailed PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the performance of banks and achievements

under various credit-linked schemes, followed by in-depth discussions.

The Chair reviewed the performance of banks in deposits and advances, stressing the need to enhance the CD ratio of the district. Special emphasis was laid on increasing credit flow to priority sectors and weaker sections to ensure inclusive economic growth.

Progress under schemes such as Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Self Help Groups (SHGs), PMFME, Stand-Up India, Mudra and the social security initiatives was also reviewed.

Furthermore, special focus was laid on Mission YUVA, which aims to generate employment opportunities for youth in the Union Territory, along with strengthening credit support for agriculture and initiatives of KVIB.

Discussions were held on financial inclusion measures, including Aadhaar

seeding to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), financial literacy initiatives and the role of banks in expanding outreach.

The meeting also assessed promotion of education loan schemes, support to Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) and progress under PM Kisan, including Aadhaar seeding and recovery in ineligible accounts. Performance of SBI RSETI and implementation of financial inclusion and social security campaigns were also reviewed.

The DDC directed the officers and banking institutions to work in close coordination, ensure timely disposal of cases, improve credit flow and achieve targets under various schemes for the overall development of the district. He stressed proactive monitoring and effective implementation of government initiatives at the grassroots level.

DC Budgam chairs 45th NCORD meeting

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 27: The 45th District-Level NCORD (Narco Coordination) Committee meeting was today convened at the DC Office Budgam under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, along with SSP Budgam Nikhil Borkar, to review the progress of ongoing anti-drug initiatives and to strategize further measures for achieving a drug-free Budgam.

The meeting was attended by ADC Budgam, all SDMs, ACP, CMO, Principals of Government Degree Colleges, DIO, DSWO, Medical Superintendent DH Budgam, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, and other concerned officers.

At the outset, a comprehensive review of the action taken on decisions from the previous NCORD meeting was carried out.

Addressing the meeting, the

DC reiterated that drug abuse is not merely a law enforcement issue but a serious social challenge impacting families and communities. He stressed that strict and decisive action must continue against drug peddlers, traffickers, and illegal cultivators, while ensuring a compassionate and supportive approach towards individuals battling addiction.

He emphasized the need for a multi-pronged strategy encompassing enforcement, deterrence, treatment, and mass awareness. All departments were directed to intensify efforts to eliminate narcotics cultivation and dismantle supply networks.

The DC underscored that roadsides, embankments, and Panchayat areas must remain free from cannabis and poppy cultivation through coordinated and sustained drives.

Reviewing enforcement measures, the DC directed that all

chemist shops must ensure 100% CCTV coverage and adopt Computerized Billing Systems (CBS) to enhance transparency. He instructed the Drug Inspector to conduct regular inspections and ensure compliance, including availability of CCTV footage and billing records.

The Excise Department was directed to work in close coordination with Agriculture, Revenue, and Police departments for identification and destruction of illicit crops, along with registration of FIRs against violators.

To strengthen grassroots monitoring and awareness, the DC directed that monthly meetings be held in every Gram Panchayat to review the situation, spread awareness, and ensure community participation in the anti-drug campaign.

SDMs were asked to engage religious scholars and local stakeholders to promote awareness

against substance abuse and encourage the concept of "Nasha-Mukt Panchayats."

The Rural Development Department was tasked with organizing special Gram Sabhas focused on drug abuse awareness, while the DSWO was directed to launch extensive IEC campaigns across rural and urban areas, including educational institutions.

The DC further directed that the Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) at District Hospital Budgam must remain fully operational round-the-clock, and the Drug De-Addiction Centre be made fully functional for admitting and treating patients.

The DC directed the Employment Department to facilitate recovered victims of drug addiction in accessing self-employment opportunities under schemes such as Mission YUVA, PMEGP, and other livelihood programmes, enabling their reintegration into society with dignity.

He also instructed that all Government Degree Colleges in the district ensure installation of CCTV cameras within their campuses to strengthen monitoring and preventive measures.

The DC stated that strict action will continue against all those involved in drug-related activities, while full support will be extended to victims seeking rehabilitation. He emphasized that the success of this campaign depends on collective efforts of government agencies, civil society, community leaders, educators, parents, and religious institutions.

On the occasion, SSP Budgam highlighted the need for installation of CCTV cameras at identified hotspots across the district and stressed the importance of coordinated action among departments. He also emphasized focused counselling and rehabilitation of drug addiction victims through the Drug De-Addiction Centre Budgam.

DC Pulwama reviews banking performance at DLRC meeting

Stresses priority sector lending, saturation of flagship schemes; launches Potential Linked Credit Plan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom today chaired the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting for the third quarter of the financial year 2025-26 at Circuit House, Pulwama, to review the performance of banks and the implementation of various financial inclusion and employment generation schemes in the district. At the outset, the

Lead District Manager (LDM), Pulwama, presented a detailed overview of the district's banking performance. The Chair was apprised that Pulwama recorded a year-on-year growth of 9.03 percent in deposits and 12.19 percent in advances, while the Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio increased by 3 percent. The district's CD ratio at the end of the third quarter stood at 113.86 percent. During the meeting, the DC reviewed bank-wise and sector-wise performance under

the District Credit Plan (DCP). A detailed review of employment generation schemes, including Mission YUVA, PMEGP, PMFME, NRLM, HADP and PM Vishwakarma, was also conducted. The Chair stressed upon all banks and line departments to ensure timely sanctioning and disbursement of cases and to minimise pendency. He directed strengthening coordination among stakeholders to enhance credit linkage and maximise



beneficiary coverage. The DC laid special emphasis on the implementation of social security schemes, including PMJDY, PMJJBY, PMSBY and APY. He directed banks to intensify enrolment drives to achieve saturation in a time-bound manner and ensure wider financial inclusion across all sections of society. Emphasising accountability, the DC directed all banks to improve their performance in priority sector lending and devise concrete

strategies to meet the annual targets. He also instructed regular monitoring of bank-wise performance and improvement in credit flow to productive sectors. The DC further stressed enhancing financial literacy and awareness among the public and directed concerned institutions to conduct more outreach programmes, especially in rural and underserved areas.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also launched the Potential Linked Credit Plan for

District Pulwama for the financial year 2026-27, aimed at providing a roadmap for credit planning and facilitating sector-wise growth in alignment with the district's developmental priorities. Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Pulwama; Lead District Manager; representatives of RBI and NABARD; Cluster Head, J&K Bank; Director, RSETI; district officers of line departments; and representatives of various banks and other stakeholders.

MCC facility at SMGS Hospital boosts neonatal, perinatology services in Jammu region: Sakeena Itoo

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 27: The newly established 243-bedded Maternal and Child Care (MCC) facility at SMGS Hospital Jammu has significantly improved the neonatal and perinatology services in Jammu region.

The vital utility has enhanced new-born care facilities, maternal health services besides reducing the waiting period for planned surgeries.

This was stated by Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, in the Legislative Assembly today while replying to a question of Legislator, Yudhvir Sethi regarding SMGS Hospital Jammu during question hour.

The Minister said that the SMGS Hospital, Jammu is a tertiary care hospital providing medical services in the specialties of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Pediatrics, ENT, and Dermatology. She added that the hospital also caters to critically ill patients referred from peripheral hospitals of Jammu province for



specialized treatment not available at those institutions.

The Health Minister said that

the patients requiring MRI are referred to Government Medical College Hospital, Jammu, where

the facility exists. She informed that under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has agreed in principle to provide one MRI scanner, subject to completion of requisite formalities. She added that a Detailed Project Report shall be submitted shortly to IOCL for provision of the MRI scanner.

Regarding manpower position, the Minister informed that against the sanctioned strength of 1070 posts, 682 posts are presently filled. She added that in order to supplement the existing staff strength in the Jammu East constituency, the faculty/Doctors/paramedics are being engaged under Academic Arrangement basis and rationalization to augment better healthcare facilities for general public.

The Minister further informed the House that the requirement for establishing a Multitier Car Parking facility at SMGS Hospital, Jammu has already been taken up with the Jammu Municipal

Corporation and the Jammu Smart City Project. She added that the proposal is presently under active consideration with the competent authorities and the department is pursuing the matter to ensure expeditious approval and implementation, keeping in view the pressing need for improved parking infrastructure at SMGS Hospital.

The Health Minister said that in line with the government's commitment to strengthening patient-care services at SMGS Hospital, Jammu, a new 243-bedded Maternal and Child Care facility, equipped with advanced machinery and equipment, was recently established to strengthen perinatology services and contribute significantly towards reduction of Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR).

She added that this initiative forms part of the broader measures being undertaken by the government to improve patient care services at SMGS Hospital, Jammu.

NABARD Committee reviews Cooperative Credit Institutions in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 27: Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative, Yasha Mudgal, today chaired a high level Committee meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, to review the performance and financial health of Cooperative Credit Institutions in the Union Territory for the quarter ended December 31, 2025.

The meeting was attended by Vikas Mittal, Office-in-Charge, NABARD; Manohar Lal, General Manager, NABARD; Mohammad Shafiq Chak Registrar of Cooperative Societies J&K; Representative of Reserve Bank of India; Additional Managing Director, J&K State Cooperative Bank; Managing Directors of Anantnag, Baramulla and Jammu Central Cooperative Banks and other senior officials from NABARD and Cooperative Banks.

Vikas Mittal presented a detailed overview of the financial performance of cooperative banks for the quarter ended December 31, 2025. He also highlighted the progress in implementation of turnaround plans aimed at improving the financial health and sustainability of these institutions.

The Commissioner Secretary underscored the essential role that rural cooperative banks play in ensuring credit reaches the last mile of the population. She briefed the Committee on several strategic initiatives led by the Union Government, UT Administration and NABARD such as e-PACS, M-PACS, Core Banking Solutions (CBS) and the "Cooperative Among Cooperatives" framework, all aimed at modernising the cooperative credit structure.

Yasha Mudgal further stressed the need for strengthening the cooperative credit structure to ensure financial stability, better governance and enhanced credit flow to the rural economy. She directed for timely implementation of turnaround plans, strict adherence to regulatory norms and improvement in operational efficiency across all cooperative institutions.

The Commissioner Secretary directed the Managing Director of Jammu Central Cooperative Bank (JCCB) to complete the migration audit at the earliest. She further emphasized the necessity of technology-driven reforms, calling for expedited computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), the enforcement of daily day-end operations and acceleration of digital tools like e-KYC, e-KCC and Sahakar Setu.

To ensure these reforms translate into ground-level results, Yasha Mudgal highlighted the importance of consistent monitoring through State Level (SLMIC) and District Level (DLMIC) Monitoring and Implementation Committee meetings. She noted that regular oversight is non-negotiable for successful delivery of these initiatives.

The review also touched upon critical supervisory concerns, statutory compliance and modernization of banking infrastructure. Significant deliberation was held regarding the e-PACS project, formation of new Multipurpose PACS (M-PACS) and the status of credit linkages.

The Commissioner Secretary placed heavy emphasis on building institutional capacity at the grassroots level, addressing cyber security and implementing necessary HR and governance reforms.

Tribal Affairs Department achieves 100% benchmark, refutes misleading claims on fund utilisation

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 27: The Department of Tribal Affairs (TAD) has issued a rigorous and comprehensive rebuttal to recent reports alleging that 87 per cent of funds allocated for tribal welfare schemes remain unutilised.

Terming such assertions as factually incorrect and grossly misleading, the Department clarified that these claims do not reflect the actual financial position or the nuanced nature of public fiscal cycles.

The Department, in its official communique issued in this regard, has clarified that the performance for the 2025-2026 financial year demonstrates a strategic and aggressive approach to tribal development, underpinned by the achievement of 100 per cent utilisation in several key flagship schemes.

To understand the Department's financial health, fund utilisation must be assessed scheme-wise rather than through a distorted aggregate lens. For instance, the Department has already recorded 100 per cent utilisation in critical human-capital initiatives, including the Post-Matric Scholarship for ST students and the Pradhan Mantri Adi Darsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY). These funds have been fully disbursed to eligible beneficiaries, ensuring that educational support and village transformation are delivered directly to the grassroots. Similarly, the Tribal Research Institute (TRI) has witnessed near-complete utilisation at an impressive 99.85 per cent, reflecting a high level of administrative efficiency and commitment to tribal heritage and research. The Department further addressed the progress of infrastructure and district-level projects, which operate on a phased expenditure model. Under the UT Capex Budget for Infrastructure for Tribal Welfare, over 59 per cent of expenditure has already been recorded as work progresses on the ground. While the Tribal Sub-Plan currently reflects a 23.52 per cent utilisation rate, this figure is a snapshot of payments currently under active process in district treasuries.

Addressing the specific future-oriented initiatives, the Department clarified the status of the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan. It is logically flawed to label these funds as "unutilised" when the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, has officially indicated that the allocation is scheduled for the first week of April 2026. Criticising the expenditure of funds that have not yet been released highlights the speculative nature of the misleading reports. The department remains steadfast in its commitment to the socio-economic upliftment of tribal communities, ensuring that every rupee is managed with transparency, efficiency, and a focus on improved service delivery for the welfare of tribal population.

CJI Surya Kant visits Ladakh to inaugurate Key Judicial Infrastructure

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

LEH, MARCH 27: Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice Surya Kant, arrived in Leh today on an official visit to the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Upon his arrival, His Lordship was accorded a warm reception by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, and Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Arun Palli, along with other Judges of the High Court. The reception was also attended by senior dignitaries, including the Chief Secretary of Ladakh, the Director General of Police, Ladakh, General Officer Commanding 14 Corps, Registrar General, and senior officers from the civil administration, judiciary, Army, and police. Chief Justice of India was presented with a ceremonial Guard of Honour, followed by a traditional welcome showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Ladakh. Thereafter, His Lordship interacted with the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, Hon'ble Judges, and senior district officials of Leh.

During the visit, Justice Surya Kant is scheduled to inaugurate the newly



constructed District Court Complexes at Leh and Kargil, along with the office of the Ladakh Legal Services Authority, which will ensure enhanced access to justice with state-of-the-art facilities. A Mega Legal Services Camp and Awareness Programme is also being organised as part of the visit, aimed at enhancing legal awareness and outreach among the local population.

This visit is also a sequel to the North Zone conference held in July, 2025 at SKICC, Srinagar, on the theme "Reaffirming the Constitutional Vision

of Justice for Defence Personnel & Tribals: Bridging the Gaps". In this regard, His Lordship shall be interacting with Army personnel to further strengthen institutional engagement and address their legal concerns.

The visit marks a significant step towards strengthening judicial infrastructure and promoting access to justice in the remote and challenging terrains of Ladakh. It underscores the continued commitment of the judiciary to ensure inclusive and effective justice delivery across all regions.

Phase-1 District Level training for district and charge level officers for Census -2027 commences at Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, MARCH 27: District Level phase-1 training for district and charge level officers for Census -2027 commences today here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian on House Listing and Housing Census.

The training programme aimed to equip the officers with necessary knowledge and technical skills required for the smooth conduct of upcoming census operations. The sessions focused on various modules ensuring hands-on experience for participants to enhance efficiency and accuracy in data collection.

The role of charge officers was

discussed in detail and step by step operation of Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) was demonstrated for the participants.

During the programme, ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone who presided over the training, emphasized the importance of Census-2027, describing it as a cornerstone for planning, development and policy formulation. He urged all officers to actively participate and perform their duties with dedication and accountability. On this occasion, Master trainers imparted detailed training on operational guidelines, digital tools, and field-level execution strategies, ensuring



hands-on learning and practical understanding. Special focus was laid on ensuring uniformity, accuracy and timely completion

of assigned tasks.

The training was organised by Directorate of Census Operations J&K with District Census Officer

Shopian, which will continue on 28 March and 4th April, 2026.

During the interactive session, the participants also raised queries and received clarifications from the resource persons.

The Census exercise will be done in a phased manner to ensure accurate data collection. The 1st phase is scheduled from 01 to 30th June, 2026 and 2nd phase from 09 to 28 February, 2027.

ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, ACR, Shakoor Ahmed Dar, DSEO, Bilkeesa Zahoor, SDM, Zainapora, Bilal Ahmed, CEO, DIO, Tehsildars, CEO, MC, other officers and officials attended the training programme.

JKAACL presents Dogri play "Jasma" on Eve of World Theatre Day

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 27: On the eve of World Theatre Day, the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) presented the Dogri play "Jasma" performed by the students of the Department of Performing Arts, Cluster University Jammu at Abhinav Theatre, Jammu.

On the occasion, renowned theatre personalities Balwant Thakur, Mohan Singh, Deepak Kumar, Ayash Arif and Kumar A. Bharti were felicitated by the Chief Guest, Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary Culture in recognition of their valuable contribution to the field of theatre. Ankur Mahajan, Registrar, Cluster University of Jammu, Dr.

Monika Sharma, Dean, School of Humanities and Liberal Arts, Kuldeep Raina, Coordinator Department of Performing Arts, Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL and Sonali Arun Gupta, Additional Secretary, JKAACL.

In his address, Brij Mohan Sharma appreciated the efforts of JKAACL and the Department of Performing Arts for promoting theatre and regional languages through meaningful productions. He said that theatre is a powerful medium of cultural expression and plays an important role in preserving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the region. Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL, in her welcome address spoke about the significance of World Theatre Day and highlighted

the role of theatre in society as a medium of social awareness, cultural preservation and creative expression. She appreciated the contribution of theatre artists and institutions working for promotion of theatre in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Jasma" is an adaptation of the renowned Gujarati play "Jasma Odan" written by eminent theatre personality Shanta Gandhi. The play was translated into Dogri by the legendary theatre figure of Jammu, Kavi Rattan Sharma, giving it a distinct regional flavour and linguistic identity. "Jasma Odan" is based on a popular Gujarati folk legend narrating the story of Jasma, a woman of unwavering commitment to marital fidelity and personal

dignity. In the present production, the narrative has been completely reimagined within the Dogra landscape. The folk tradition of Haran has been incorporated in place of Bhavai, along with rich cultural and religious symbols of the Jammu region thus transforming the play into a vibrant expression of Dogra ethos. The strength of the play lies in its profound thematic depth. Beyond being a folk tale or a tragedy, it offers a layered exploration of gender dynamics, social hierarchy, justice and cultural identity. The production is jointly directed by faculty members Dr. Abhishek Bharti and Aparna Kapoor, while the music has been composed by Vishal Pandita, faculty of the department.

Javid Dar meets delegations; assesses their issues, concerns

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MARCH 27: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today reiterated that the Omar Abdullah-led Government remains firmly committed to address the public issues in a timely and effective manner.

Emphasizing responsive governance, the Minister said that a robust mechanism is in place to ensure prompt redress of grievances and to accelerate developmental initiatives across the Union Territory.

During the interaction, deputations from Kishtwar, Marh and various parts of the



Kashmir division apprised the Minister of a range of developmental and service-related concerns.

Giving a patient hearing, he assured them that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound and phased manner.

HT EDITORIAL

Acts of negligence need to be stopped at health institutes

At a time when stress is laid on improvement of healthcare across the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir some incidents of absolute negligence occur every now and then. In a latest example a disturbing and negligent incident took place at Government Medical College, Anantnag on Thursday. Attendants of some patients carried out a protest against the hospital administration after it was found that expired bottles of glucose were administered to the patients.

It is not for the first time that such an irresponsible act was carried out by the administration of any health institute or facility in Jammu & Kashmir. In the past many such incidents took place with some casualties also taking place. Not to talk of the government hospitals, some of the private hospitals also reported incidents of negligence in the past. In some of the cases the attendants of the patients went berserk and broke furniture as well as articles at some of these hospitals.

In the latest case some of the patients at GMC Anantnag developed reactions after they were administered glucose by the hospital staff. An attendant of a patient checked the glucose bottle and found that the same had expired long back. The other attendants also became conscious after the incident and it was found out that many patients were administered expired glucose bottles. This act should not be seen as an aberration but wisdom demands that a thorough probe is carried out in the incident.

The hospital administration has put the blame on the nurse attending to the patients at the GMC Anantnag. Putting the blame on the nurse alone for this act of negligence is not the correct approach. Instead of this a probe should be carried out and action needs to be taken against the people who are involved in the procurement of drugs and surgical items at the hospital. Once drugs and surgical items are procured by a hospital it is imperative that necessary checking of the same is done by the concerned officials.

It is important that the system of checks and balances is introduced and implemented in both the government and private hospitals. The people associated with the procurement of drugs and surgical items need to check these items thoroughly. This is more than important since a small mistake can lead to death of a patient thus leading to widespread protests from attendants of such patients.

Charm of village



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Before ten years, we could clearly differentiate between a city and a village. In the past, electricity was so weak that bulbs only gave dim light on the walls. It was very difficult to get clear visibility on the floor surface. Electric poles were very rare; most households used temporary and risky wiring for electricity and felt immense pleasure even when they got a dim light occasionally.

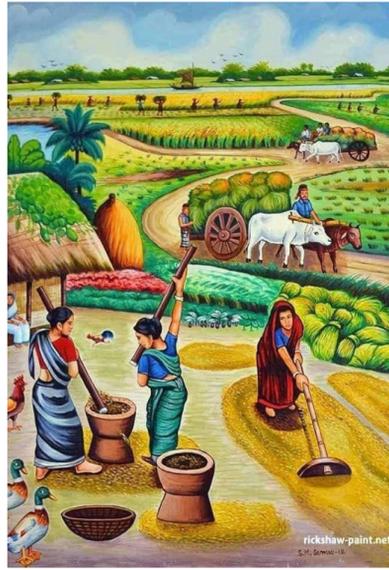
The roads were just sources of dust, and even a heavy bus would move on these roads with uneven jerks. Drivers kept the third and fourth gears at rest due to the dilapidated condition of the roads. The roads were risky and caused frequent accidents, especially when a driver made a wrong turn.

In the upper reaches, ten or more households would share a single water point. Womenfolk had to do labour work that was not exercise for them. During winters, when taps got frozen, our womenfolk rushed to nearby springs to bring drinking water and used it very carefully. That activity was so hectic that most households ended up in unhygienic conditions and severe health issues.

Alhamdulillah! Today every household in remote areas has sufficient water facilities. I salute those who sponsored schemes like the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and provided clean tap water to every home. This act definitely blessed the higher-ups. It is a great comfort to the underprivileged class, and people appreciate the scheme. But due to some selfish contractors and negligence of officials, this scheme faces issues in some areas where the public complains that the work was not done properly. Some contractors even engage household members for pipe digging without paying them labour charges.

Schemes like the Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) and other projects for better connectivity, protection bunds, and drainage systems have provided great relief to the population living in villages. Today, almost every village is connected to each other, roads are macadamized, and people feel great comfort and appreciate the government for these steps.

Today, around 90 percent of villages are electrified, and only a few areas still lack electricity. But



one unfortunate thing is the hike in electricity charges. It is very difficult for the underprivileged class to pay electricity bills promptly; they should be given relaxation by the central government.

What came to my mind encouraged me to write this article for a renowned newspaper of the Kashmir Valley.

When I was in 7th class, I started bodybuilding. It was my passion to stay healthy and fit so that I would not feel exhausted and lethargic in school. My school witnessed how much I contributed to a number of activities like scouting, cricket, bodybuilding, etc.

In Srinagar at that time, we had very few gym centres, and they were not equipped with advanced machines. Most players were passionate and did their best, always staying away from drugs and keeping their health a priority. Now, after every two kilometres in Srinagar, we have a gym centre. Unfortunately, today we are facing a severe drug menace. Even the government is very concerned and is applying stringent acts against drug peddlers. Drug peddlers deserve capital punishment, and every corner should be checked so that this curse is eliminated. Youth need proper counselling, education, and sports activities.

Today's youth demand a free zone, which means we should counsel them properly. Tell them, "Give

your best, you are still in." Never discourage them when they fail to achieve their goals. Always encourage them and provide opportunities so that they get enough time to know themselves and overcome all odds in life.

I am residing in Bhatti Mohalla Raiyar-Ich, Khansahib, District Budgam, a beautiful and mesmerizing village in the Kashmir Valley. My village is known for noon chai and makkhi roti. Due to the famous tourist destination Doodhpathri, my village has gained identity as an emerging tourist village in Khansahib.

Just ten years ago, this village was backward in all respects road connectivity, electricity network, tap water facilities, and many more. Today, we have most facilities, but unfortunately, the road connectivity from my home to the main Doodhpathri Road has still not been taken up by the concerned authorities. Some miscreants are blocking the main entrance and keeping us deprived of this basic facility. Still, I am blessed and thankful for many things. I appeal to the government authorities to kindly intervene and take up our road from High School Raiyar-Ich to Bhatti Mohalla. We are losing our dignity without a road. How is it possible that due to some selfish brokers, they can block our road? We have MSc students and civil service aspirants, and the area is purely inhabited by the Gujjar community.

Alhamdulillah, I am passionate about bodybuilding. I have set up a mini gym in a single room at my home.

One of my friends, Mohammad Yousuf, suggested that there is a gym at Yarikah, just 2 kilometres from my home. A couple of days ago, I went there, got the key from the owner's family, opened the lock, and was surprised that we have such a great gym with imported machines near the shrine of Syed Yaqoob Balkhi. Alhamdulillah.

I talked to some people and the gym owner about their experience. They told me that people are not aware of such beneficial activities. I requested them to please spread the awareness among the general youth so that they visit the gym, get attracted, and explore the iron game world.

Suggestion: Our village is emerging in terms of development, education, business, and many more fields. So we have to keep in mind the mistakes we made while framing the master plan of cities like Srinagar, where we face flood threats and pollution issues. We must keep ample space for plantation, drainage, roads, and irrigation canals. We must stop illegal encroachment so that development becomes permanent, not temporary.

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Rediscovering Bihar's Buried Legacy: 186 Chapters of a Forgotten Past



PROF. DINESH CHANDRA RAI

History has a way of surfacing when we least expect it — and when it does, it forces us to rethink everything we thought we knew. The discovery of 186 new archaeological sites across Bihar's Samastipur and Lakhisarai districts is one such moment. Announced by the Culture Ministry in Parliament around Bihar Diwas, coinciding with the Chaiti Chhath observances, these findings, 144 sites in Samastipur and 42 in Lakhisarai are far more than numbers on a government report. They are a reminder that Bihar's identity runs deeper than its agrarian landscape; that beneath its fields lie the foundations of civilizations that once shaped the subcontinent's intellectual and spiritual life.

The Archaeological Survey of India's village-by-village surveys made these discoveries possible, and they deserve credit for the painstaking effort involved. What has emerged is a portrait of a region whose historical significance has long been underestimated. Bihar was once the heart of Aryavarta, a centre of philosophical debate, governance, and spiritual practice. These sites bring that reality back into sharp focus. The Ministry of Culture's broader heritage initiatives have also contributed meaningfully. The 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme has breathed new life into monuments like Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti and Golconda Fort, reportedly



boosting tourism by over 30% at adopted sites. The digitisation drive under Indian Heritage in Digital Space has archived more than 2,000 artefacts for global access. The Rs. 15 crore allocation for Bihar's monuments is a welcome step, though — as I will argue — it is not sufficient.

Mithila's Intellectual Roots and Krimila's Pala-Era Legacy

The Samastipur sites connect us directly to ancient Mithila, a region that produced figures like Udayanacharya, whose Nyaya-Vaisheshika philosophy left a lasting mark on Kashi's scholarly traditions, and Vidyapati, the poet who gave Maithili literature some of its most enduring verses. What these discoveries challenge is the assumption that learning and intellectual life in ancient India were confined to major urban centres like Pataliputra or Vaishali. The evidence suggests otherwise: ideas were being debated and developed in rural communities across the region.

Lakhisarai's 42 sites, meanwhile, strengthen the case for identifying it with Krimila, a significant hub during the Pal Vansh (8th–12th centuries). Excavations at Lali Hill have already

uncovered Shrimaddharm Vihar, a Buddhist monastery thought to have been dedicated to nuns — a rare and remarkable find that invites comparison with Nalanda and Vikramshila. The new discoveries hint at a much larger administrative and religious complex. Together, the Samastipur and Lakhisarai findings trace a cultural arc linking Mithila's philosophical tradition to Krimila's role as a centre of Buddhist governance and spirituality.

Finding these sites is only the beginning. Identifying them without protecting them would be a hollow achievement. Urban encroachment, natural decay, and simple neglect are real and present threats. The Rs. 15 crore allocation is a start, but these sites represent a heritage of incalculable value the funding must match that reality.

A comprehensive framework is needed, legal protections, community involvement, and the use of modern technology. Remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems could form the backbone of a "Digital Heritage Map of Bihar," giving researchers, policymakers, and edu-

cators a shared resource for understanding and managing these sites. Universities have a critical role to play here — not as passive observers, but as active partners in documentation, research, and public engagement. Institutions like BR Ambedkar Bihar University are well-positioned to lead this effort and we are willing to contribute through inter disciplinary research and training.

Heritage as Economic Opportunity

Samastipur and Lakhisarai have the potential to become genuine heritage destinations: sites where visitors engage with history through well-designed trails, interpretive museums, and, where appropriate, augmented reality experiences. Such development creates jobs, drives tourism, and builds cultural pride. It also connects naturally to living traditions like Chhath, whose rituals carry echoes of the very eras these sites represent.

Bihar is entering its 115th year as a modern administrative identity. This is a fitting moment to ask what kind of future it wants to build — and to recognise that its past is one of its most valuable resources. To let these 186 sites fade into obscurity would be a failure of stewardship and imagination. With serious investment, scholarly commitment, and political will, Bihar has the opportunity to reclaim its place as one of India's great centres of historical and cultural significance.

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Growing a Greener Future: Tree Plantation in the Age of Climate Crisis



■ **MOHAMMAD HANIEF**

The environmental challenges of the 21st century demand a fundamental rethinking of development and sustainability. The earlier Green Revolution transformed agriculture and ensured food security, but the present crisis is far more complex and urgent. Climate change, rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and widespread ecological degradation have placed humanity at a critical juncture. In this context, the plantation of trees must be recognized as the new Green Revolution—one that can restore ecological balance and secure the future of life on Earth.

The urgency of this transformation is evident in the rapidly changing weather patterns observed across the globe, particularly in India. The early months of 2026 have already demonstrated how fragile the climate system has become. Temperatures in several regions rose significantly above normal levels during March, with many areas experiencing extreme heat conditions much earlier than expected. The gradual disappearance of the spring season and the increasing intensity of heatwaves indicate a clear shift in climatic patterns. These developments are not isolated anomalies but part of a broader trend driven by deforestation, urbanization, and excessive carbon emissions.

Globally, forests continue to decline at an alarming pace. Despite covering a significant portion of the Earth's land area, forests are being cleared rapidly to accommodate agricultural expansion, infrastructure development, and industrial growth. The loss of millions of hectares of forest each year has weakened the planet's natural ability to regulate climate. Trees play a crucial role in absorbing carbon dioxide, and their removal not only reduces this capacity but also releases stored carbon back into the atmosphere. This process accelerates global warming and intensifies climatic instability.

India presents a mixed picture in this regard. While the country has made nota-



ble progress in increasing overall forest and tree cover, the quality of forests has declined in many regions. Large areas of dense and biodiverse forests have been lost or degraded, and these cannot be easily replaced through plantation alone. The loss of primary forests is particularly concerning, as they serve as vital ecosystems that support a wide range of plant and animal species. At the same time, the expansion of urban areas and infrastructure has put additional pressure on existing green cover.

The impact of deforestation is now clearly visible in the form of extreme weather events. Heatwaves have become more frequent and intense, affecting both urban and rural populations. Rising temperatures not only disrupt daily life but also pose serious health risks, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly. Agricultural productivity is also being affected, as crops are highly sensitive to temperature variations and water availability. The increasing unpredictability of monsoon patterns further complicates the situation, making it difficult for farmers to plan and sustain their livelihoods.

Water security has emerged as another major concern linked to declining forest

cover. Trees play a vital role in maintaining the water cycle by facilitating groundwater recharge, regulating rainfall, and preventing soil erosion. In the absence of adequate tree cover, rainwater tends to run off quickly, leading to floods during periods of heavy rainfall and drought during dry spells. This dual challenge is becoming increasingly common in many parts of India, highlighting the need for ecological restoration.

In this scenario, tree plantation offers a practical and effective solution. However, it must be understood that plantation is not merely about increasing the number of trees but about restoring ecological systems. The success of this new Green Revolution depends on the selection of appropriate species, protection of existing forests, and long-term maintenance of planted trees. Native species should be prioritized, as they are better suited to local conditions and support biodiversity more effectively than exotic varieties.

Urban areas, in particular, stand to benefit significantly from increased tree cover. The rapid expansion of cities has led to the creation of heat islands, where temperatures are significantly higher than surrounding rural areas. Trees help mitigate this effect by providing shade and cooling

the air through natural processes. Increasing urban green spaces can improve air quality, reduce energy consumption, and enhance the overall quality of life. In a country where air pollution has become a major public health issue, the role of trees as natural air purifiers cannot be overstated.

The ecological benefits of tree plantation are closely linked to biodiversity conservation. Forests provide habitat for a vast number of species, and their destruction leads to habitat loss and extinction. Restoring forest cover through plantation can help revive ecosystems and protect wildlife. However, this requires careful planning to ensure that plantations mimic natural forests rather than creating monocultures that offer limited ecological value.

The economic and social dimensions of tree plantation further strengthen its importance. Forest-based livelihoods support millions of people, particularly in rural and tribal communities. Integrating trees into agricultural systems through agroforestry can enhance productivity while conserving natural resources. Such approaches not only improve farmer incomes but also contribute to climate resilience by diversifying sources of income and reducing dependence on single crops. Despite the clear benefits, the scale of

current plantation efforts remains inadequate. There is often a gap between policy announcements and on-ground implementation, and many plantation drives fail due to lack of maintenance and monitoring. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach involving government agencies, local communities, and civil society organizations. Greater emphasis must be placed on accountability, transparency, and long-term planning.

Technology can play a supportive role in enhancing the effectiveness of plantation initiatives. Satellite monitoring and data analysis can help track changes in forest cover and identify areas that require immediate attention. However, technological solutions must be complemented by grassroots participation. The involvement of local communities is essential for ensuring that planted trees are protected and nurtured over time.

At the individual level, the responsibility of contributing to this Green Revolution cannot be ignored. Simple actions such as planting trees, protecting local green spaces, and adopting sustainable practices can collectively create a significant impact. Educational institutions and awareness campaigns have a crucial role to play in fostering environmental consciousness and encouraging active participation.

The current climatic conditions serve as a stark reminder of the consequences of environmental neglect. Rising temperatures, unpredictable weather, and increasing ecological stress are clear indicators that immediate action is required. Tree plantation, when undertaken with seriousness and commitment, offers a path toward restoring balance and building resilience against climate change.

In conclusion, the plantation of trees must be seen as the cornerstone of a new Green Revolution. It is a solution that addresses multiple challenges simultaneously, from climate change and biodiversity loss to water scarcity and public health. The success of this revolution depends on collective effort, sustained commitment, and a clear understanding of the ecological importance of trees. The future of humanity is closely tied to the health of its forests, and the time to act is now.

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Spring - Delightful And Enchanting Season In Kashmir



■ **MOOL RAJ**

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 tour-



ists 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 historical 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.

THE AUTHOR IS A REGULAR COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER

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TAUTOPATHY: HOPE OR HYPOTHESIS?



DR. SURINDERPAL SINGH

In the field of alternative medicine, various healing approaches have evolved over time, each rooted in its own philosophy and principles. One such lesser-known method is tautopathy, a concept often associated with homeopathy but distinct in its application. Advocates believe that tautopathy may help neutralize or eliminate the harmful effects of substances that have entered the body, offering a unique perspective on healing.

Tautopathy is defined as a method of treatment in which the same substance that caused a disease, toxicity, or adverse reaction is used in a highly diluted or potentized form to counteract its effects. The term itself is derived from two Greek words: "tauto," meaning the same, and "pathos," meaning suffering or disease. Thus, tautopathy literally refers to treating a condition with the very substance that caused it. In practice, this involves preparing the harmful agent—such as a chemical, toxin, drug, or vaccine—in a diluted form similar to homeopathic remedies and administering it to the patient.

The central principle of tautopathy is that the same substance responsible for a disturbance can assist the body in eliminating or neutralizing its effects when introduced in a potentized form. This idea differs slightly from the well-known homeopathic principle of "like cures like," based on the Law of Similars. While homeopathy uses substances that produce symptoms similar

to the disease, tautopathy employs the exact same substance that caused the problem. Practitioners suggest its application in cases such as side effects from medications, chemical exposure, vaccine reactions, environmental toxins, and even mild drug overdoses, where the suspected causative substance is converted into a homeopathic dilution and administered.

Tautopathy shares a close relationship with homeopathy, particularly in its method of remedy preparation, which often follows the same potentization techniques. Remedies may also be labeled similarly, such as 30C or 200C. However, classical homeopaths sometimes question the validity of tautopathy, as it does not strictly adhere to the traditional method of remedy selection based on a patient's total symptom profile.

The effectiveness of tautopathy remains a topic of debate and scientific uncertainty. Supporters claim that it can help remove residual toxins from the body, reduce adverse reactions to drugs or chemicals, stimulate the body's natural detoxification processes, and restore energetic balance. However, from a scientific standpoint, there is currently no strong evidence to substantiate these claims. Most available information is based on practitioner observations, case reports, and individual patient experiences, which limits its acceptance within conventional medicine.

Despite the lack of robust scientific backing, tautopathy is often regarded as a gentle and non-invasive therapy due to the highly diluted nature of its remedies, which generally results in minimal direct toxicity. Its holistic approach aligns with other alternative therapies that aim to support the body's natural healing mechanisms. Some practitioners also consider it a complementary method that can be used alongside other systems such as natural medicine or homeopathy.

At the same time, several limitations and concerns surround tautopathy. The absence of strong clinical evidence is a major criticism, along with inconsistent practices among practitioners and limited research studies. There is also widespread confusion between tautopathy and classical homeopathy, which can lead to misunderstanding among patients. More importantly, reliance solely on such alternative approaches may delay necessary medical treatment.

Potential risks, though indirect, should not be overlooked. Patients may delay seeking proper medical care, receive incorrect diagnoses, or develop a false sense of security regarding their condition. Additionally, in many regions, tautopathy is not strictly regulated, raising concerns about the quality and safety of its practice.

The future of tautopathy largely depends on scientific validation and clinical research. With more controlled studies, better regulation, and increased exploration in detoxification science, it may find a place within complementary healthcare systems. Until then, its role remains uncertain.

In conclusion, tautopathy represents an alternative therapeutic approach that uses the same substance responsible for harm in a diluted form to counteract its effects. While it shares similarities with homeopathy, it operates on a distinct principle. Although proponents highlight its potential benefits, the lack of scientific evidence means it cannot be considered a proven treatment. Therefore, tautopathy should be viewed as a complementary approach rather than a substitute for proper medical care. Responsible use, professional guidance, and further research are essential to fully understand its potential.

The author is a Faculty, Science Department Sri Amritsar Sahib, Punjab

IDF Fellow delivers scientific presentation on "Recent Advances in Diabetes Management"

Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation delivered an insightful presentation on the topic "Recent Advances in Pharmacological Management of Diabetes" during a Virtual Roundtable Session organized by International Diabetes Federation, Belgium.

The session highlighted the evolving paradigm in diabetes care, shifting from a conventional glucose-centric approach to a more comprehensive cardio-renal-metabolic model. Dr. Itoo discussed key concepts such as the Ominous Octet and the Egregious Eleven, emphasizing the complex pathophysiology underlying diabetes mellitus.

He further elaborated on recent advancements in pharmacological therapy, including the expanding role of GLP-1 receptor agonists and SGLT2 inhibitors, alongside established agents like DPP-4 inhibitors and novel insulin therapies. The importance of individualized, patient-centered treatment strategies was underscored, aligning therapeutic decisions with patient profiles and comorbidities.

A significant focus of the presentation was on modern diabetes monitoring tools, particularly Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) and the clinical relevance of Time in Range (TIR) in optimizing glycaemic outcomes.

The session was attended by Professor Peter Schwarz (President, International Diabetes Federation), including other diabetologists of international repute and it concluded with an interactive discussion highlighting the practical application of recent evidence in clinical practice.



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8:00PM On January 18th , Sunday

CS reviews education reforms, directs time-bound implementation of all action points



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, MAR 27: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, chaired a comprehensive review of the School Education Department (SED) to assess the status of implementation of actionable points arising out of the 5th Chief Secretary's Conference, directing officers to adhere to strict timelines with clearly defined milestones for each intervention.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, SED; Chairperson, JKBOSE; Project Director, Samagra Shiksha; Directors of School Education, Jammu/Kashmir, besides other senior officers and Heads of Departments.

Expressing concern over the progress, the Chief Secretary observed that implementation of several actionable points has taken longer than expected and stressed that all initiatives must now be executed in a mission-mode approach without further delay.

He reiterated that education sector reforms are foundational to overall development and emphasized that improving teaching-learning outcomes must remain the central focus, maintaining that while welfare measures like free textbooks, uniforms and mid-day meals are essential, quality of teaching alone can ensure meaningful engagement, improved enrolment and retention in government schools.

The Chief Secretary directed the department to take the VSK initiative to the next level by ensuring availability of rich, curriculum-aligned digital content across all subjects and promoting its effective and frequent usage among students. He further called for actively engaging students from Class 3 onwards in IT-enabled learning activities through VSKs, enabling them to acquire future-ready skills, including exposure to artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed

the status of ICT infrastructure and Atal Tinkering Labs and directed the constitution of district and zonal-level committees to physically verify the functionality of girls' toilets and other facilities in all schools. He instructed that the status be regularly updated on a dedicated online monitoring portal to ensure transparency, accountability and real-time tracking of progress.

Reviewing infrastructure, the Commissioner Secretary, SED, Ram Niwas Sharma informed that 92.29 per cent schools are equipped with functional separate girls' toilets, while construction of 2,575 additional units is underway, including 718 already completed, with full saturation targeted by April 10, 2026.

It was further informed that the department is working towards achieving universal basic infrastructure in all schools by March 2030. Progress in this regard includes establishment of 1,420 Computer-Aided Learning (CAL) Centres and 1,588 ICT Labs, while 4,272 smart classrooms and 2,036 additional ICT Labs are currently under procurement and installation.

On digital initiatives, the meeting was informed by Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Bhawani Rakwal that the department has successfully transitioned to Phase-II of Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK), with expansion in monitoring and learning systems.

On this occasion Anuj Chugh, Project Head, VSK J&K demonstrated the working of four AI-powered chatbots Shikshak Sahayak, JK Digilearn, JK Edu-Insights and JK Pariksha launched to strengthen academic support, governance and data-driven decision-making. He added that all government schools have adopted AI-enabled platforms for daily attendance reporting, significantly improving compliance and monitoring.

The meeting further reviewed the progress of JK e-Pathshala, a DTH-based educational initiative launched in January 2026, which is currently

operating five dedicated channels, with a proposal submitted for addition of 11 more channels to provide grade-specific content. The department also informed that two digital recording studios have been made functional and have produced 544 SCERT-vetted educational videos to enrich digital learning resources.

Highlighting academic reforms, the department informed that in alignment with NEP-2020, the NIPUN Bharat Mission is being extended up to Grade 5 by September 2026 to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy. In addition to that it was given out that the Vocational education has been expanded to 1,350 schools, covering around 1.41 lakh students across 15 trades. Holistic Progress Cards have been implemented up to the middle stage to ensure comprehensive assessment, while an Integrated Test Management System (ITMS) is under development to facilitate secure, competency-based digital examinations.

The meeting was also apprised that J&K is progressing towards achieving full literacy by March 2028, with 14 districts already recording over 95 per cent achievement in foundational literacy and numeracy assessments and being declared fully literate.

The meeting also encompassed reviewing of Student health with 773 lakh children having undergone health check-ups up to December 2025. It was further informed that APAAR ID generation has reached 56 per cent of the student population, supported by the ongoing Mega Aadhaar MBU Drive 2.0 by the department.

Reiterating the need for strict monitoring and accountability, the Chief Secretary called upon all officers to ensure timely implementation of all actionable points and emphasized that the impact of these reforms must be visible at the grassroots level, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes and a robust, inclusive and future-ready education system in Jammu and Kashmir.

Public Notice

My Daughter Name has been wrongly written in School records as Hurain Javeed D/O Javeed Ahmad Bhat R/O Khawajapora Nowgam Srinagar while her actual name is Hurain Javaid D/O Javaid Ahmad Bhat Now I want to correct it.
If any body have any objection regarding this He/She can contact Principal F E I School Naikbagh Nowgam Srinagar within a period of 7 days after that no objection will be entertained.
Name: Javaid Ahmad Bhat, F/O: Hurain Javaid R/O: Khawajapora Nowgam Srinagar

Public Notice

My father's actual name is "Mohammad Ali" R/O-Kargil. But my father's name has been wrongly spelled as "Mohmad Ali". Now its correction to be done as "Mohammad Ali". Also have I lost my ST certificate & now I want to apply for its duplicate .Anybody having any objection may contact Tehsildar Kargil within the period of 7 days.
Sakina Banoo, D/O- Mohammad Ali, R/O- Kargil

Government Of Jammu & Kashmir Office Of The Tehsildar Kreeri

Subject: Application UZMAT AHAD , BURHAN AHAD , NAZIMA AHAD , RUQAYA AHAD D/O ABDULAHAD NAJAR R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI for the issuance of OBC (Other Backward classes in his/her favor

PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the subject cited above the file in the office of the undersigned for the issuance of OBC in this connection a report of patwari halqa concerned has been sought which reveals that the applicant is currently residing in the village of DOLIPORA of Tehsil KREERI and belongs to the NAJAR community having annual income 104000 // (one lack four Thousand) the details of family of the applicant are as follows

- 1...ABDUL AHAD NAJAR Head of Family 60 years Labour
- 2.ATIQA BEGUM W/O Abdul Ahad 50 years H/W
- 3... UZMAT AHAD daughter 25 years student
- 4...BURHAN AHAD // 23 years //
- 5.NAZIMA AHAD sister 21 years ///
- 6...RUQAYA AHAD //19 years //
- 7...SEERAT AHAD //17 years //
- 8...SAIMA AHAD //25 years // married H/W

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

Public Notice

My actual name is "Tsewang Gyalson" S/O- Tsering Dorjay , R/O- Bodh Kharbu but it has been wrongly spelled as "Tsewang Gelson" in my school leaving certificate, class 8th pass; Govt. High School, Bodh Kharbu. Also, my actual DOB is - 15/11/1987 but it has been wrongly mentioned as 03/04/1986. No I want it's correction to be done. Anybody having any objection may contact Headmaster, Govt. High School, Bodh Kharbu within the 7 days of this notice.

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my Name spelling has been wrongly mentioned in service regards as Latief Ahmad War instead of Lateef Ahmad War S/O Gh Rasool War as for All regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office of the Government Police Development Office D P O Pulwama within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.
LATEEF AHMAD WAR, S/O GH RASOOL WAR R/O KARAGAMA TEHSIL HANDWARA DISTRICT KUPWARA

Public Notice

This is to notify the general public that the name recorded in the Aadhaar database is incorrect. Name shown in Aadhaar: Imhad Shabir, Correct name: Imad Shabir Bhat , Father's Shabir Ahmad Bhat, Address: Udiopora Kralgund Handwara Kupwara Jammu and Kashmir 193302. The above mentioned person (Imhad Shabir) hereby declares that the name printed on the Aadhaar is incorrect and that her correct and legal name is Imad Shabir Bhat. Any objection to this correction should be brought to the attention of the UIDAI Aadhaar Seva Kendra, Office Srinagar within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received within the stipulated period, the necessary correction procedures may be undertaken.

Public Notice

It is hereby informed for the general public that my correct name is "Sameena" as recorded in other official documents. However, in bank records my name is mentioned as "Samina Tariq." Both names refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, the name "Sameena" shall be used for all purposes. Note if anyone have any objection please contact within 3 days.
Phone numbers 6006176022, 8803053767

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 has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of HAZIM MAJEED S/O ABDUL MAJEED MIR R/O. KHISIPORA Tehsil KREERI Dist. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 16/08/2009 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

GOVT. OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, PULWAMA

AUCTION NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information of the public in general and dealers/contractors in particular that the auction of the following items existed in the premises of the Chief Medical Office, Pulwama will be held on 30-03-2026 (Monday) as per the following schedule.

| S. No. | Item/s | Lowest Rate (Rs.) | Venue | Date/Time |
|--------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Old Structure of Single storey building (Stone/Bricks) Plinth Area = 914 Sft Age of the building = 60 years | 91051/- | CMO's Office Pulwama | March 30th 2026 2:00 PM |
| 2 | Old/Used G.I. Sheets: 10 Feet (Length) = 105 sheets 06 Feet (Length) = 50 sheets | 330/- per sheet 230/- per sheet | | |

Terms and Conditions:

1. The successful bidders will have to pay all the bidding amount in cash on the same day by 4:00 p.m.
2. The undersign reserves the right to accept or reject of any/whole of the bids.

Sd/- Chief Medical Officer, Pulwama

DIPK: 12185/25 | Dated: 27-03-2026

Drug Peddler Arrested; 1.4 Kg Poppy Straw Seized in Kulgam

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, MAR 27: Kulgam Police achieved a major success in its ongoing drive against drug trafficking by arresting a drug peddler and recovering a significant quantity of contraband substance.

According to officials, the arrest was made on March 26 during routine naka checking at New Colony Sheikhpura in Kurigam. A suspicious individual carrying a polythene bag was intercepted by the police party. On noticing the presence of police, the suspect attempted to flee but was swiftly apprehended by the alert personnel.

During the search, police recovered approximately 1.4 kilograms of poppy straw from his possession. The accused has been identified as Rifaqat Ahmad Khan, son of Mohd Sadiq Khan, a resident of New Colony Sheikhpura, Kurigam. In this connection, a case under FIR No. 52/2026 has been registered under relevant sections of the NDPS Act at the concerned police station. The accused has been taken into custody and the contraband seized.

Police said further investigation is underway to ascertain the source and network involved in the trafficking. Kulgam Police reiterated its commitment to eradicating the menace of drugs from society and appealed to the public to cooperate by sharing any information related to drug peddling or substance abuse.



Zero Tolerance on Drugs: Handwara Police Arrest 5 in Day-Long Crackdown

■ DR. AB QAYOUM

HANDWARA, MAR 27: In a significant push against drug trafficking and substance abuse, Handwara Police has intensified its anti-drug operations across the PD Handwara, registering five FIRs and arresting five drug peddlers within a span of 24 hours. According to official sources, the cases were registered under relevant sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act at Police Stations Handwara, Vilgam, and Qalamabad. The swift action reflects a coordinated and determined effort by the police to curb the growing menace of drugs in the area. The arrests were carried out during a series of well-planned operations conducted at multiple locations, including Handwara, Vilgam, Qalamabad, and adjoining areas. During these raids, police teams recovered contraband substances, including heroin and charas-like



material, from the accused individuals. Officials stated that the crackdown is part of an ongoing campaign aimed at dismantling drug networks and ensuring a safer environment for the youth and general public. "We are committed to eliminating drug abuse from society through sustained enforcement and community cooperation," a police spokesperson said. Handwara Police has also appealed to the public to play an active role in the fight against drugs by sharing any information related to drug peddling or substance abuse. Authorities assured that the identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential. Reiterating its zero-tolerance policy, the police emphasized that strict and continuous action will be taken against all those involved in illegal drug activities. The recent developments highlight the administration's firm resolve to tackle drug-related issues and safeguard the future of the youth belongs to area.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CIVIL SECRETARIAT, J&K

Subject: Selection of candidates for the post of Assistant Professor, Physical Training Instructor (PTI) in the Higher Education Department-Verification thereof.

NOTICE

The J&K Public Service Commission vide Letter No. PSC/DR/PTI/GCET/Hr. Edu /2023 (7720603) Dated 09.01.2026, furnished the select list/recommendations for the post of Assistant Professor, Physical Training Instructor (PTI) advertised vide Notifications No.08-PSC (DR-P) of 2023 Dated 01.03.2023 and vide Notification No. 11-PSC(DR-P) of 2023 dated 05-04-2023. Accordingly the following candidates are hereby directed to submit their E- mail IDs and Contact Number details as per Annexure-A in the Higher Education Department, Civil Secretariat Jammu/Srinagar in person or on E-mail-id: hedjk.dispatch@jk.gov.in within a period of seven (7) days positively for uploading the same on the Employee Verification System (EVS), failing which it shall be presumed that he/she is not willing to take up his/her appointment as Assistant Professor, Physical Training Instructor (PTI) in the Higher Education Department and he/she shall forfeit the right of appointment without any further notice:

| S.No | Name Mr. / Mrs. | Parentage | Address | Selection Category |
|------|----------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Mr. Sahil Sharma | Shakti Sharma | 115 Moh. Suthra Bawli Ward No: Fifteen Haveli | OM/PSP |
| 2 | Ms. Mansi Vaid | Sham Lal Vaid | H.No 3 Ward No 13 Mohalla Sandigate Tehsil Haveli | OM |
| 3 | Mr. Sunjay Verma | Mohan Lal | Smailpur Marh | SLC |
| 4 | Mr. Ajay Kumar Billa | Madan lal Billa | Vill Garan Jagir PO Dadoo Pouni | OM/SC |
| 5 | Mr. Pankaj Manhas | Romesh Kumar Manhas | Sharote Thatthri | OM/RBA |

No: HED-GAZ/22/2026-04(7720603) | Dated: 27-03-2026

DIPK: 12193/25 | Dated: 27-03-2026

**Sd/- (Sanjay Kumar Tickoo) JKAS
Deputy Secretary to the Government**

Satish Sharma attends annual mela at Chib Dev Sthan, emphasises preservation of cultural heritage, traditional values

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

AKHNOOR, MARCH 27: Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, IT, Science and Technology, Satish Sharma, today attended the annual mela/congregation at the revered Chib Dev Sthan at Nud, Akhnoor, where he joined thousands of devotees in celebrating the rich cultural and spiritual traditions of the region.

The Minister was accorded a warm welcome by local residents, members of the mela organizing committee, religious heads, and prominent citizens. The annual congregation witnessed a large turnout of devotees from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir, reflecting the deep-rooted faith and enduring legacy associated with the historic shrine.

On the occasion, Satish Sharma paid obeisance at the sacred site and prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being of the people. He also took part in the traditional rituals and interacted with the devotees, gaining firsthand insight into the customs and practices that have been preserved and passed down through generations. Speaking on the occasion, the



Minister underscored the importance of safeguarding Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage, stating that such melas and congregations are living embodiments of the region's age-old traditions, beliefs and collective identity. He said that these events not only hold religious significance but also serve as vital platforms for preserving the indigenous

customs, rituals and folklore that define the unique cultural fabric of the region.

"Events like the Chib Dev Sthan Mela are a reflection of our deep cultural roots and shared heritage. They play a crucial role in preserving the traditional values, strengthening community bonds and passing on our rich legacy to future generations," the Minister said.

Satish Sharma further emphasized that in an era of rapid modernization, it becomes imperative to protect and promote such traditional gatherings, ensuring that the essence of local culture, rituals and community practices remains intact. He highlighted the need for collective efforts involving the government, local communities and cultural

organizations to document, preserve, and promote these traditions in a sustainable manner.

The Minister reiterated the government's commitment towards preservation and promotion of cultural and religious heritage sites across Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that focused initiatives are being undertaken to enhance the infrastructure, improve accessibility and provide better facilities for the pilgrims and tourists visiting such important sites while ensuring that the sanctity and authenticity of these places are maintained.

The Minister directed the concerned authorities to continue extending all necessary support for the smooth and organized conduct of such events in the future, with special attention to maintaining cleanliness, safety and basic amenities for the visiting devotees. The event concluded with traditional ceremonies, devotional performances and cultural activities, showcasing the vibrant heritage and enduring traditions of the region, while reinforcing the importance of preserving Jammu and Kashmir's unique cultural identity for generations to come.

District Admin Bandipora conducts IEC Awareness Programmes under Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MARCH 27: Continuing its sustained outreach efforts, the District Administration Bandipora on Friday organized a series of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) awareness programmes under the Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan across Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and educational institutions of the district.



The programmes were conducted at ULB Hajin (Wahab Parray Mohalla), ULB Sumbal (Rakhi-Asham) and ULB Bandipora (Ward No. 9, Papchan). In addition, awareness sessions were also held in various educational institutions including HS Zalpora, GHS Naidkhai, HS Kudara, HS Panar, HS Kehnusa and HSS Izmarig.

A multi-departmental team comprising officials and resource persons from Health, Police, Education, Social Welfare, Excise & Taxation, Youth Services & Sports and JKNRLM participated in the programmes.

During the sessions, the resource persons delivered awareness lectures on drug abuse prevention, its ill effects on individuals and society, and the importance of adopting a healthy and responsible lifestyle. The speakers emphasized coordinated inter-departmental efforts and active community participation to ensure effective outreach and impact at the grassroots level.

The programmes witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, local residents and other stakeholders, who actively interacted with the officials and expressed their willingness to support the Nasha Mukht initiative.

DC Kupwara flags off 'Poshan on Wheels' Campaign, distributes Vidyarambh Certificates

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today flagged off the "Poshan on Wheels" campaign at the DC Office Kupwara aimed at strengthening grassroots nutrition outreach and early childhood development.

The campaign is designed to enhance awareness about nutrition, health, and well-being, particularly among women and children in far-flung and underserved areas of the district. Through mobile outreach, the initiative seeks to ensure last-mile delivery of key services under various nutrition and child welfare schemes, aligning with ongoing efforts to combat malnutrition and promote holistic development. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of sustained community engagement and inter-departmental coordination in achieving the objectives of the Poshan Abhiyaan. He emphasized that innovative outreach



mechanisms such as "Poshan on Wheels" will play a vital role in reaching vulnerable populations and ensuring inclusive growth.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also distributed Vidyarambh Certificates among children graduating from Anganwadi Centres after attaining six years of age. The Deputy Commissioner congratulated the children and their parents, reiterating the administration's commitment to strengthening foundational learning and ensuring a smooth transition to the school education system.

Programme Officer, ICDS Kupwara, Yaar Ali Khan, District Planning & Education Officer, CDPO Kupwara, ZEO Kupwara, besides, ICDS Supervisors, Anganwari Workers and large number of children were present on the occasion.

DC Bandipora inaugurates Training Programme for Census 2027

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today inaugurated a district-level training programme for officers and officials associated with Census 2027 (Phase-I: Houselisting & Housing Census) at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Bandipora. The training programme was organized to familiarize charge officers, nodal officers, and other field functionaries with the methodology, processes, and operational aspects of the upcoming census exercise, including the use of the Census Management & Monitoring System

(CMMS). Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the critical importance of data accuracy, stating that the census is a highly sensitive and foundational exercise on which government policies, budgeting, and developmental planning are based. She urged all officers to carry out their duties with utmost diligence, responsibility, and integrity.

Highlighting the need for effective coordination, the DC directed the District Nodal Officer to remain in close liaison with the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Bandipora and Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Bandipora to ensure seamless execution

of the exercise across the district.

It was informed that the census process involves multiple layers of checks and balances aimed at ensuring the reliability and credibility of data.

During the session, participants were briefed on key components of the houselisting phase, registration of enumerators and supervisors, formation of blocks, and monitoring mechanisms through CMMS dashboards. The training witnessed active participation from district and sub-divisional level officers, who engaged in detailed discussions and sought clarifications on various operational aspects of the census.

DC Pulwama reviews status of stock position of fuel, LPG in district

Directs regular monitoring; calls for strict action against overcharging, hoarding and black marketing

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom today chaired a comprehensive meeting at the Administrative Complex here to review the status of stock, supply and distribution of essential commodities, particularly Petrol, Diesel and LPG, across the district.

At the outset, the Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama briefed the chair on the current stock position, supply mechanisms and on-ground scenario. It was informed that adequate stock of Petrol, Diesel and LPG is available in the district and the supply is functioning normally, with no exigency reported.

The meeting was further apprised that District Level and Tehsil Level Committees have been constituted to ensure smooth distribution, effective grievance redressal and strict compliance

with the provisions of law.

The DC undertook a detailed review of the tehsil-wise supply position and directed all Tehsildars to ensure close supervision and effective monitoring so as to maintain uninterrupted and hassle-free availability and distribution of LPG and other products to the consumers.

Emphasising strict enforcement, the DC directed the concerned officers to keep a close vigil to prevent overcharging, hoarding, black marketing and dispensing of fuel in loose containers in violation of established norms.

The DC also sought feedback from the Sales Officers and District Nodal Officers of various oil companies, who expressed satisfaction over the existing stock levels and supply chain management.

They informed that fuel is being dispensed strictly as per norms and there are no issues of shortage



or panic buying currently in the district.

The DC further directed the officers to maintain close coordination with oil marketing companies to ensure timely replenishment of stocks and avoid any supply gaps. He instructed for daily monitoring of stock positions at all retail outlets and LPG distribution points, besides maintaining a buffer stock to meet the demand. The DC also emphasised the need for public awareness to discourage panic buying and urged stakeholders to ensure orderly distribution.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioners of Pulwama and Awantipora; General Manager, District Industries Centre Pulwama; all Tehsildars; Assistant Director, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; Assistant Controller, Legal Metrology; Managers (Operations) of oil companies; besides sales officers and distributors.

DC Budgam reviews Fuel Stock & Supply Position in the District, stresses LPG Home Delivery

Warns of strict action against hoarding & black marketing

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, today chaired a meeting to review the availability and supply position of essential fuels, including petrol, diesel, and LPG, across the district.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Mehrajud-din Shah, Assistant Director, Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), all Tehsildar's, representatives of oil companies, and owners of all petrol and diesel pumps.

During the meeting, a comprehensive

assessment of the stock position and supply scenario was carried out. It was informed that adequate stocks of all essential fuels are available and supply remains normal across the district. The DC emphasised the need for maintaining uninterrupted and hassle-free availability of fuel to the public. He directed all stakeholders to ensure timely replenishment of stocks at all fuel outlets and to avoid any disruption in supply. The DC stressed on ensuring home delivery of LPG, so as to facilitate convenience to the public and prevent unnecessary rush at distribution points. He further directed

Tehsil and Sub-Division level monitoring committees to intensify market checks and keep strict vigil against any instances of hoarding, black marketing, or overcharging of any fuel. The DC also issued strict instructions against unauthorized sale of fuel in loose containers and warned that any attempt to create artificial shortage, indulge in profiteering, or spread rumours will invite strict action under law.

The Deputy Commissioner urged all stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure transparency, accountability, and public convenience across District.

Adequate stocks of essential commodities available in Kishtwar: DC

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Pankaj Kumar Sharma today said that there is no shortage of fuel and food grains in the district and appealed to the public not to panic.

Clarifying the stock position, the DC informed that the current LPG stock in the district exceeds 1,000 cylinders, which is sufficient for four to five days.

"This stock level is part of the normal routine and aligns with the standard storage capacity maintained across the six LPG agencies operating

in the district," he said.

The DC further stated that LPG distribution is OTP-based, ensuring that no cylinder is issued without proper OTP verification. Additionally, all agencies have been instructed to provide home delivery services to facilitate smooth distribution.

He emphasized that the concerns regarding the exhaustion of LPG cylinders is unfounded. In fact, the current stock position is better than routine supply levels.

Regarding commercial cylinders, the DC assured that even in cases of earlier shortages, adequate supply has been ensured to hydroelectric power

projects as required.

On fuel availability, the DC confirmed that sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are available for the next four to five days. "Given the limited number of fuel outlets in the district, such stocking levels are standard practice and do not indicate any disruption in supply," he informed.

The public is advised not to engage in panic buying or hoarding and to purchase only as per their genuine requirements. Since the distribution system is OTP-based, supplies will continue to be provided smoothly as consumers complete their e-KYC formalities.

Allianz Jio Re starts India operations after IRDAI nod

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, MARCH 27: Allianz Jio Reinsurance Limited on Thursday said it has commenced operations to underwrite reinsurance contracts in India.

The company is a 50:50 joint venture between Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL) and Allianz Group (Allianz), through its wholly-owned subsidiary Allianz Europe B.V.

Allianz Jio Re received final regulatory approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) on March 12, 2026.

Headquartered in Mumbai, Allianz Jio Re aims to become a strategic long-term partner for the Indian market with a mission to fortify the resilience of the country's insurance ecosystem.

At a time when structural tailwinds are powering the sustainable growth of the sector — in line with the national mission



of 'Insurance for All' by 2047 — the combination of JFSL's local reach and digital infrastructure with Allianz's robust underwriting and global reinsurance scale will empower insurers with the capacity and expertise needed to manage risk effectively.

Hitesh Sethia, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Jio Financial Services said, "The launch

of Allianz Jio Re is a pivotal milestone, marking the first operational step in our broader insurance partnership with Allianz. We are delighted with the receipt of regulatory approval to commence reinsurance operations in India, and remain deeply committed to strengthening the nation's resilience by providing insurers with greater risk-absorption capacity, supporting the overall

growth of our insurance ecosystem."

Chris Townsend, Member of the Board of Management at Allianz SE, said: "Allianz Jio Re is well positioned to provide insurers with innovative and robust risk solutions. The joint venture will support India's insurance sector by combining global technical expertise with a deep understanding of the country's digital and financial ecosystem. The start of operations now is the first step in building a long-term, sustainable reinsurance franchise in India."

The reinsurance JV will be led by Sonia Rawal as Chief Executive Officer of Allianz Jio Re.

Rawal brings 17 years of experience in risk management and reinsurance across Asia Pacific to her new role. Since 2016, she has been working for Allianz Reinsurance in Singapore, responsible for India and ASEAN markets.

The two entities have also signed a non-binding agreement to explore opportunities in general and life insurance. UNI

Adhira & Appa Coffee onboards Shruti Haasan, Murali Sharma as brand ambassadors; Eyes nationwide expansion

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAR 27: Adhira & Appa Coffee, part of the EBG Group, on Thursday announced the onboarding of actors Shruti Haasan and Murali Sharma as brand ambassadors as it plans a major national expansion.

Built on the philosophy of sustainability and authenticity, the café chain aims to take South Indian filter coffee to cities across India while aligning with the evolving quick service restaurant (QSR) and beverage landscape, the company said in a release here.

The company said its coffee is crafted from premium beans using processes designed to significantly reduce carbon output compared to conventional methods, with in-house sourcing forming a key part of its sustainability-driven identity.

Riding on strong early momentum, Adhira & Appa plans to scale up to 400 outlets across major metropolitan and Tier-2 cities by next year.

Currently operational in cities including Kochi, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Pune, Dehradun, Indore, Chandigarh, Nashik and Bengaluru, the chain is also preparing to expand into Mumbai, Lucknow, Prayagraj, Raipur and Ludhiana, among others.

The company stated that its association with Haasan and Sharma reflects its vision of blending tradition with modern appeal, targeting both younger, urban consumers and audiences seeking authentic experiences.

Speaking on the partnership, Sharma



said he was "happy to collaborate with a brand that celebrates rich coffee heritage while prioritizing sustainability," adding that the café would appeal to those seeking authentic South Indian filter coffee.

Haasan said the brand "captures the soul of South Indian filter coffee with a modern twist," and expressed excitement about being part of a journey that promotes authentic flavours and eco-conscious practices.

Dr. Irfan Khan, Chairman of EBG Group, said the collaboration aligns with the group's vision of combining cultural roots with quality and sustainability while scaling the brand nationwide.

Karan Mendon, COO of Adhira & Appa, said the café offers a curated menu including dosa, tacos, medu vada waffles and filter coffee tiramisu, catering to evolving consumer preferences.

He added that the brand's sustainable practices and "heritage-first" approach position it as an alternative to global chains such as Starbucks and Third Wave Coffee Roasters, amid growing competition in India's specialty coffee market. UNI

Middle East conflict to reduce India's fertilisers production by 10-15pc: Crisil

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 27: The supply chain disruptions due to the ongoing Middle East conflict could reduce India's annual domestic production of urea and complex fertilisers by 10–15 per cent. The disruption in availability of key raw materials is also expected to weigh on capacity utilisation and dent profitability across fertiliser manufacturers, said Crisil Ratings in a report.

The constrained supplies of critical inputs such as natural gas, ammonia and phosphoric acid—most of which are imported—could lead to lower plant utilisation levels. This, in turn, may impact operating efficiencies, particularly for urea producers, where profitability is closely linked to energy consumption norms. Rising input costs are likely to further strain the sector. Prices of ammonia have already surged about 24 per cent since the onset of the conflict, while higher import costs for fertilisers could push up working capital requirements for companies. This is also expected to increase the government's fertiliser subsidy burden by Rs 20,000–25,000 crore, Crisil Ratings said. Despite these pressures, the report highlighted that the sector's credit profile will remain supported by strong liquidity among large fertiliser companies and the government's consistent track record of timely subsidy disbursements.

India's fertiliser consumption remains heavily skewed towards urea, which accounts for around 45 per cent of total usage. Complex fertilisers such as diammonium phosphate (DAP) and NPK make up about one-third, while single super phosphate (SSP) and muriate of potash (MOP) constitute the remainder. Import dependence continues to be significant. Around 20 per cent of urea and nearly one-third of complex fertilisers are imported, with the Middle East accounting for nearly 40 per cent of these imports in the first nine months of FY26. The region's importance is even more pronounced for raw materials, supplying about 60–65 per cent of India's LNG needs and 75–80 per cent of ammonia imports.

Lower capacity utilisation is expected to disproportionately affect urea manufacturers, as suboptimal plant operations reduce energy efficiency. Typically, efficient players consume about 5 per cent less energy than prescribed norms, which boosts margins. However, reduced utilisation could erode this advantage, impacting operating profits. Companies with multiple plants may partially offset this by optimising gas allocation.

West Asia accounts for 26.2 per cent of India's fertiliser imports, followed by Jordan at 19.2 per cent and Russia at 15.5 per cent. Further, Morocco accounts for 10.4 per cent, China at 5.7 per cent, Egypt at 5.6 per cent, Canada at 3.8 per cent and Togo at 3.6 per cent, while others account for 10 per cent. UNI

Godrej unveils 2026 AC Range, targets 30–40 pc growth this summer

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAR 27: Godrej Enterprises Group on Wednesday unveiled its 2026 air conditioner portfolio, featuring a range of smart and energy-efficient models, and said it is targeting

30–40 per cent growth during the summer season.

The new lineup spans split, cassette, tower and window ACs across capacities from 1 to 4 tonnes, with a focus on higher-tonnage models and smart cooling solutions, the company said in a release. UNI

ASMS Partners US Firms to Develop Tech-Driven Aquaculture Ecosystem

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAR 27: Avio Smart Market Stack Limited (ASMS), formerly Bartronics India Limited, on Wednesday said it has entered into a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with US-based Aquasafra Holdings Inc. and Waterfield Farms Inc. to develop technology-driven aquaculture and fisheries ecosystems.

The collaboration aims to build scalable and commercially viable aquaculture models by integrating advanced tilapia genetics, sustainable farming practices and efficient supply chain linkages, the company said in a release.

Aquasafra brings expertise in high-performance tilapia genetics, including hybrid seed stock designed for faster growth, higher survival rates and adaptability across farming conditions, along with capabilities in hatchery systems, feed optimisation and farm design.

ASMS will leverage its rural distribution network spanning over 5,000 villages and its digital ecosystem to deploy these technologies and expand aquaculture opportunities in rural and peri-urban areas.

The partnership will explore setting up region-specific hatcheries, modern aquaculture systems and aquaponics-based



models aimed at climate-resilient agriculture.

It will also focus on feed optimisation, lake and reservoir stocking programmes and capacity-

building initiatives for farmers, cooperatives and agri-entrepreneurs.

ASMS said the initiative aligns with its broader strategy under

Project AVIO Agritech to expand into high-value sectors such as fisheries and water resource management.

Commenting on the development, Dr Raja Krishnamurthy M, Head – Agri Tech Business at ASMS, said the collaboration would help enhance rural incomes and diversify agricultural value chains by combining local reach with global aquaculture expertise.

The companies also plan to explore joint research in areas such as disease resistance, climate-resilient production and efficient water management to support long-term growth in the fisheries sector. UNI

KKL Group Launches First EV Dealership in Hyderabad, Plans Rapid Expansion

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAR 27: KKL Group on Wednesday launched its first electric vehicle (EV) dealership, "DANDU'S Electrical Vehicles", in Hyderabad, marking its entry into the Telangana market.

The dealership was inaugurated by former DGP C N Gopinath Reddy, Chairman of KKL Hitech EV India Pvt Ltd, in the presence of industry and government representatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Reddy said the move aligns with India's push towards clean mobility and aims to strengthen its presence in the fast-growing EV segment, particularly in the two-wheeler category.

KKL plans to expand its dealership network in Telangana by adding around



five dealerships per month from FY 2026–27, targeting key cities including Hyderabad, Warangal, Karimnagar, Nizamabad and Khammam, he said. The company is also planning to open around 10 dealerships by May 2026, with a target of selling about 200 units per month per dealer, he informed.

He said the EV market in Telangana remains underpenetrated, with electric vehicles accounting for around 1 per

cent of total vehicle sales, presenting significant growth opportunities.

KKL offers a range of electric models including scooters, bikes, auto-loaders and minicars, priced between 50,000 and 1.5 lakh, equipped with lithium-ion batteries, he said.

The company said it will focus on strengthening after-sales service, spare parts availability and customer support to drive adoption.

In addition to dealership expansion, KKL is targeting institutional and corporate sales and is exploring plans to set up lithium-ion battery manufacturing and EV charging infrastructure in India.

The company aims to establish over 100 dealerships across South India in FY 2026–27 as part of its growth strategy. UNI

Seasonal demand, high airfares to boost bus travel growth: AbhiBus

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

HYDERABAD, MAR 27 : AbhiBus, the online bus-ticketing platform owned by ixigo (Le Travenues Technology Limited), on Wednesday said the upcoming summer season, weddings, festivals and elections in states such as Tamil Nadu and Puducherry are expected to drive strong growth in bus travel demand.

Rohit Sharma, COO, AbhiBus, said rising airfares due to higher crude oil prices and congestion in railways are likely to push more passengers towards buses.

The company is offering discounts of up to 25 per cent to attract travellers during the peak season.

"Bus travel competes with air, rail and personal vehicles. When

airfares rise or railway waiting lists increase, buses see a direct uptick in demand," he said.

He added that the bus segment remains resilient even during economic slowdowns and geopolitical uncertainties, with consistent demand across seasons.

AbhiBus aggregates services from over 6,200 operators across more than 6.5 lakh routes and holds a mid-to-late teens market share, with strong traction in South India.

The company said online bus ticketing remains underpenetrated, offering significant growth potential.

Routes such as Hyderabad–Vijayawada have recorded strong growth, while solo women travellers increased 47 per cent year-on-year, supported by safety



features like the 'Pink Seat' option. Women travellers overall account for around 40 per cent of bookings, with nearly 80 per cent year-on-year growth.

AbhiBus has partnered with Uber to enable intercity bus bookings within its app.

The company's 'Assured' programme offers 100 per cent

refunds for delays beyond two hours, 150 per cent compensation for cancellations and full refunds for customer-initiated cancellations, with around 360 operators onboard.

It currently partners with 17 State Road Transport Corporations (SRTCs), including OSRTC, TSRTC and KSRTC, to enhance connectivity.

AbhiBus said its gross transaction value (GTV) has crossed Rs 2,400 crore in the last 12 months and is growing at 40–50 per cent year-on-year.

In Q3 FY26, it reported a GTV of 670.9 crore, up 36 per cent year-on-year, while revenue rose 47 per cent to 75.5 crore, with passenger volumes increasing 33 per cent to 6.73 million. UNI

Credit flows accelerated sharply in FY26 rising 61pc to Rs 25.1tn: Report

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 27: Credit flows accelerated sharply in FY26, rising 61pc Year-to-Date (YTD) to Rs 25.1 tn and coming close to deposit mobilisation of Rs 26.1tn, which grew 21pc YTD, said YES Bank report released here on Thursday.

The report 'MSME and Retail-led Credit Pull in FY26' noted that fresh deposit mobilisation has witnessed a slow pace since 2024, while credit demand across sectors like retail, infrastructure, and MSME are stable.

Highlighting the rationale behind slow banking sector deposit growth, the report pointed out lower net financial savings of the housing sector. The Cash-to-Deposit (C/D) ratio is at 82.4pc, which is the highest since FY15, which shows tighter liquidity.

"With buffers thinning and the funding gap narrowing, banks have also been relying more on CDs, pushing up funding costs and partially negating the easier monetary policy stance," it said.

The bank's report noted that sectoral deployment data for the current fiscal shows that credit momentum is led by personal loans, followed by the services sector, with industry credit.

The share of personal loans has increased from 29 to 33pc in recent years, which is supported by GST rationalisation and tax reliefs boosting household income. Coming to the personal loan segment, vehicle loans have overtaken housing loans as the main growth driver since Q3FY26.

"Micro and small industries added Rs 2.38tn while medium enterprises added Rs 630bn supported by union budget push towards credit guarantee for the segment and new enhanced definition of MSMEs."

The report warned that if the West Asia crisis continues and energy prices remain elevated, then it may hamper sustainability.

"Domestic growth can weaken due to West Asia conflict, higher oil prices, and lower exports to the region."

"There can be upside pull for working capital loan from higher inventory costs on account of higher input prices, while a downward pull from working capital may come from lower domestic economic activity." UNI

Pat Cummins Warns of Money Drift in Aussie Cricket

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MELBOURNE: An Australia captain stating there is a "tension point" for players around forgoing the Hundred this August to play in two home Tests against Bangladesh is prescient and should set off alarm bells during Cricket Australia's BBL privatisation debate.

That Pat Cummins did so on the Business in Sport podcast, his second appearance in three years, is an irony that also should not be lost on anyone at Jolimont or among the states debating whether to allow private investment into the BBL.

"The interesting point is, obviously a big Ashes series, all the main guys want to play that series," Cummins said. "For example, during the Hundred this season we've got two Test matches against Bangladesh. All our guys that will play in that Test match have opted out of going to the Hundred auction but that's not going to be the case forever."

"Some of our guys are saying no to half-a-million pounds for 20 days' work to go and play those two Test matches against Bangladesh. I think it is a tension point. At the moment our guys are so keen

to play for Australia that they're happy to forgo that, but I don't think we can accept that that is going to be the case forever."

Suggesting that players are forgoing £500,000, which equates to roughly AU\$960,000, is not quite accurate. Tim David was the highest Australian male earner at the recent Hundred auction with a deal worth £350,000 (AU\$673,000). Harry Brook is the Hundred's highest earner at £465,000 and only three players, all Englishmen, are earning over £400,000.

But the general point is worth delving into. Five Test players - Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc, Cameron Green and Travis Head - all currently earn significantly more than David in the IPL. There is no reason why those five couldn't earn a similar number in the Hundred auction based on their IPL market value. The key difference is that David is a freelancer. He is not contracted to CA year-to-year, albeit he has consistently been upgraded to a central contract after qualifying through playing the minimum number of white-ball internationals (six). A CA upgraded contract is worth AU\$353,574. Cum-

mins revealed in the conversation that his national deal was worth close to AU\$3 million.

"Yeah, roughly," Cummins said. "And that's a 10-month, basically a year contract. And that's quite a high Aussie contract. There's some that might be on less than a fifth of that, who are also locked into play for Australia for 10 months."

It's actually for 12 months. It's technically written into the Australian players' MOU that their rest period is April and May - the same period where Cummins and those other five forgo their rest to essentially double their income in the IPL. Cummins, and a number of those others, get rested from Australian duty at other times during the year as a result.

They are contracted to be available for the Tests against Bangladesh. They aren't playing for free. They are also paid a AU\$16,318 squad fee per Test on top of their CA contract and \$3,264 team fee if they play in the XI. There is also a \$11,255 winning bonus for each individual player. Two wins against Bangladesh would net \$61,674 on top of their contract, even if they are "forgoing" upwards of \$670,000.



ASP Baramulla Inaugurates Girls Sports Meet in Kreeri Village

■ AASHIQ HUSSAIN

KREERI, MAR 27: ASP Baramulla Neha Jain (IPS) in presence of SDPO Kreeri Aeshal Nissar Inaugurated Girls Cricket and Kho Kho Championship under civics action plan at Wagila Village of police Sub Division Kreeri.

Around 400 Girls of different Schools and clubs are participating in the championship. The tournament is scheduled to continue for at least three days, providing a platform for local youth to showcase their talent and engage in positive pursuits. The inaugural match was played between Al Murad club Kreeri and Immamia Public school Watergam. ASP Baramulla Neha Jain (IPS) While addressing the participants said that such types of Sporting event's to connect with the Youths



under the banner of Various Ongoing welfare Programmes of Police Department will be continued. The budding sportspersons will be given a level playing field to display their talent & to ensure their career progressions under these flagship programs.

He said It's the collective responsibility of Parents & Civil Society members & Police to organize such types of Platforms to keep the Younger generation away from the scourge of Drugs Addiction, antisocial /anti national acts. This type of sporting activity is a constructive engagements with the Youths to make society a better place for the Younger generation & to explore their hidden talents. Among others SDPO Kreeri Aeshal Nissar, SHO Kreeri Gowhar Hussain and other officers of police Sub Division Kreeri, respectable citizens of Wagoora and Kreeri, Students and Sports lovers were present on the occasion.

Affarwat-XI Beats Royal CC Magraypora, Storms into Final of Ramzan T10 Tournament Andergam

■ HT SPORTS DESK

BARAMULLA, MAR 27: Affarwat-XI Sports Club delivered a Splendid all-round performance to defeat Royal Cricket Club Magraypora and qualify for the grand final of the Ramzan T10 Cricket Tournament at Andergam.

After winning the toss, skipper Shahid Mir opted to bat first a decision that proved spot on. Affarwat-XI posted a strong



total of 95 runs for the loss of 2 wickets in 10 overs.

Leading from the front, Skipper Shahid Mir played a brilliant knock of 43 runs off 30 balls, smashing five boundaries and a towering six. He was well supported by Mujeeb ur Rehman, who contributed a quick fire 21 runs off 14 balls, helping the team build a commanding total.

In response, Royal CC Magraypora struggled under pressure and were bowled out

for just 45 runs in 9 overs. Mudasir was the only batter to reach double figures, scoring 11 runs.

Affarwat-XI bowlers dominated the game Shahid Bashir and Aqib Lefty Scalped 2 wickets each while Shakir Lefty, Dar Tawseef, Shahid Mir, and Kaiser took 1 wicket each for Affarwat-XI Sports Club. Shahid Mir was adjudged Player of the match for his outstanding all-round performance.

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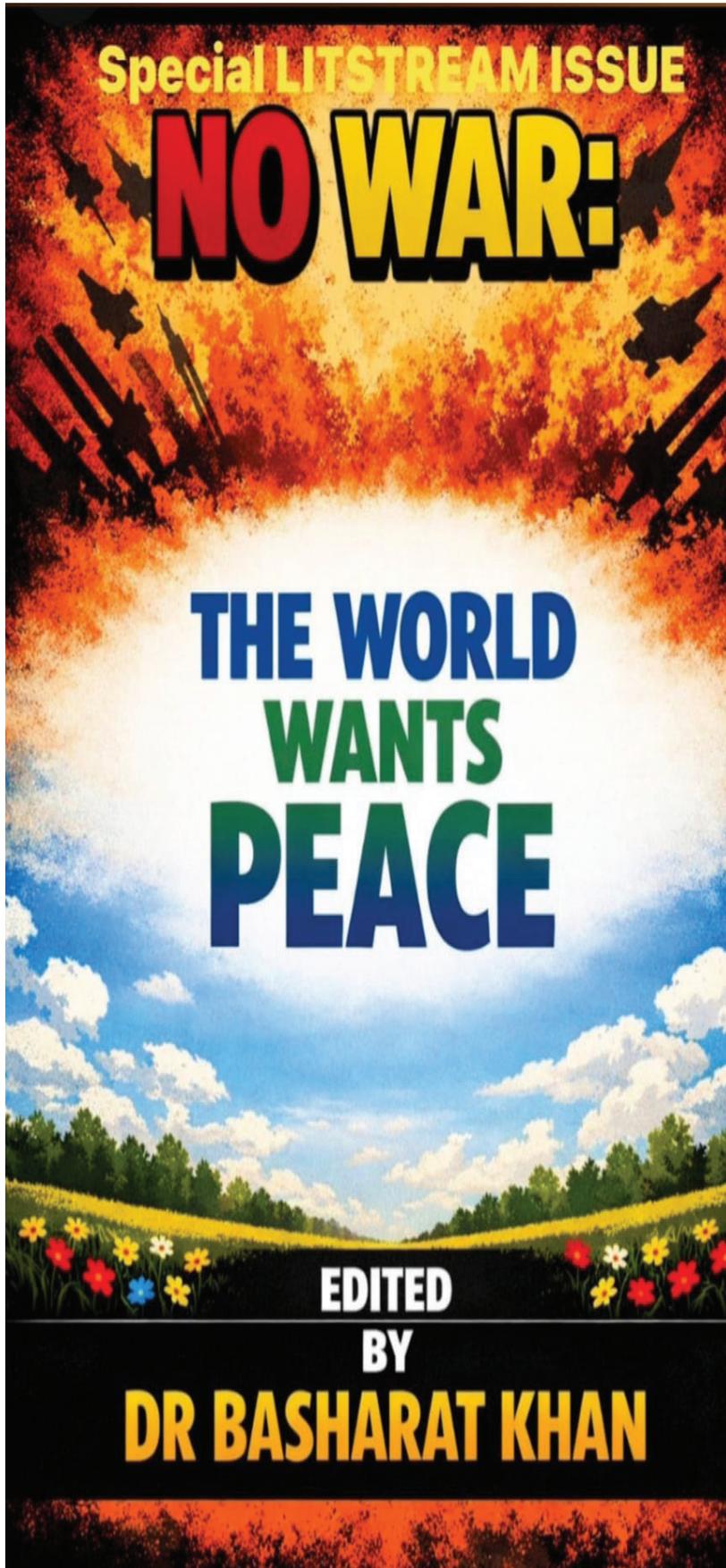
BILINGUAL WEEKLY LITERARY SUPPLEMENT OF DAILY HEADLINES TODAY

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2

No War: The World Wants Peace : A Global Chorus For Peace



Dr. Mallika Tripathi

The night had wrapped the world in an unsettling stillness, the kind that speaks louder than chaos. Akash sat on the roof, staring into the vast sky that stretched endlessly above him. The stars flickered faintly, as if unsure whether to shine or hide behind the shadows of uncertainty that loomed over the land. His thoughts were not with the sky, nor with the distant hum of the sleeping town below. They were with Amrita - his Amrita - who slept just a few steps away, unaware of the storm within him.

He clasped his hands together, his fingers trembling slightly. How was he supposed to tell her? How could he look into her hopeful eyes and speak words that would shatter her fragile joy? She was expecting their child in just a few weeks - a life they had dreamed of together, a future they had carefully woven with love and laughter. And now, just when she needed him the most, he was being pulled away by a force far beyond his control.

War.

The word itself felt harsh, like a wound that refused to heal. It demanded sacrifice without asking, tore families apart without mercy, and left behind echoes of grief that lingered for generations. Akash had always known the call of duty could come at any time, but knowing it and living it were two entirely different things.

He closed his eyes, trying to steady his breath. "Just tell her," he whispered to himself. "She deserves to know." But his heart resists.

After a while, he slowly rose and walked into the room. The soft yellow light of the lamp illuminated Amrita's face. She sat on the bed, her fingers moving gently as she knitted tiny clothes for their unborn child. A soft smile played on her lips, as though she was already imagining the little life wrapped in those threads of love.

"Akash, look," she said excitedly without even turning fully toward him. "I think this one will fit perfectly. And I was thinking - what if it's a girl? We could name her..." Her voice trailed into dreams, into possibilities untouched by reality.

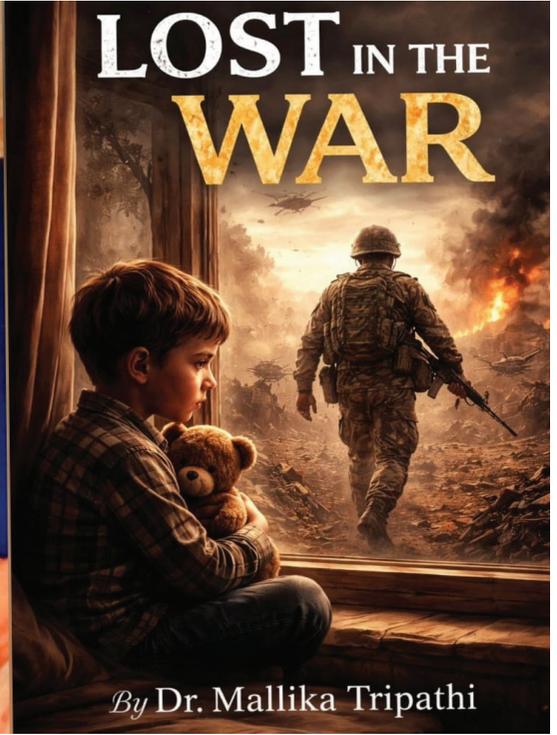
Akash stood there, frozen. He moved closer and gently held her hands. For a moment, time paused. This was his chance. This was the moment to speak, to break the silence, to prepare her for the inevitable.

But Amrita's eyes sparkled with such innocent joy that his words dissolved before they could form.

She kept talking - about the baby, about their future, about how she imagined him holding their child for the first time. Each word tightened the knot in his chest.

And then, quietly, he let go. Without a word, without a warning, he stepped back. Sometimes silence feels easier than truth, even when it hurts more.

That night, while she slept, Akash packed his bag. Every fold of his clothes felt heavy, every zipper closing like the shutting of a door he didn't want to leave behind. He



By Dr. Mallika Tripathi

paused one last time, looking at her sleeping form. He wanted to wake her, to say goodbye, to hold her just once more. But he didn't. Instead, he left - taking with him unspoken words, unfinished moments, and a love burdened by distance.

Morning arrived, but it brought no warmth. Amrita woke up with a strange uneasiness. The room felt emptier than usual. She called out softly, "Akash?" expecting him to respond from somewhere nearby.

Silence answered. Her heart skipped a beat as she searched the house, each step growing heavier. When she realized he wasn't there, a wave of confusion washed over her. And then, like a sudden strike, the truth came.

He had been called to the border. The news fell on her like a storm. "Pooh sector," someone mentioned - a place she had barely heard of, yet now it defined the distance between them. A place where danger lingered, where uncertainty reigned, where life and death walked side by side.

Amrita sat down, her hands trembling. Memories of the previous night replayed in her mind - his hesitant presence, the way he held her hands, the silence she had ignored. "He was trying to tell me," she whispered, her voice breaking. "And I didn't even listen..."

Regret is a cruel companion. It doesn't just remind you of what happened; it shows you what could have been. She tried calling him again and again. Each attempt met with the same response - no connection. The silence of the network mirrored the silence he had left behind.

Hours passed, but time felt distorted, stretched thin by anxiety. Questions flooded her mind relentlessly.

How was he?

Was he safe?

Would he return before the baby was born?

Would he return at all?

The uncertainty was suffocating. Unable to bear it, she called her

mother. The moment she heard her voice, the dam of restraint broke. "Maa..." she cried, her voice shaking uncontrollably. "Akash will come back, na?"

There was a pause on the other end—a silence filled with helplessness. Sometimes, even a mother doesn't have answers. "Maa," Amrita continued, tears streaming down her face, "he wanted to tell me yesterday... I saw it... but I was so lost in my own happiness... I didn't let him speak. He left without even saying goodbye."

Her words dissolved into sobs. "I didn't even hold him properly... didn't even ask him what was wrong..."

Grief is not always about loss; sometimes, it is about the moments we failed to live. And then, amid her tears, a deeper pain surfaced - a question that echoed far beyond her personal sorrow. "Maa... why do people fight?" she asked, her voice trembling with both anguish and innocence. "Why is there so much war? Can't we just live peacefully?"

Her question hung in the air, unanswered yet profoundly powerful.

Miles away, at the border, Akash stood among countless others like him - men bound not by choice, but by duty. Each of them carried a story, a family, a life waiting back home. Yet here they were, standing on a line that divided not just land, but humanity itself. The air was cold, harsh, and unforgiving. But what weighed heavier was not the weather - it was the thought of what they were protecting, and what they were losing in the process.

Akash looked at the horizon. Somewhere beyond it was Amrita. He imagined her holding the tiny clothes she had knitted, waiting for him. He imagined their child, who hadn't even entered the world yet, already entangled in its conflicts. He placed his hand over his heart, as if trying to hold on to that image, to preserve it against the brutality surrounding him.

A lump formed in his throat. "Will this ever end?" he thought.

War doesn't just destroy cities; it erodes hope. It takes away fathers before children can know them, separates lovers without warning, and leaves behind questions that no victory can answer.

"I'll come back," he had told himself countless times. But war does not listen to promises.

One fateful dawn, as the sky was just beginning to pale, the sound of an unexpected attack shattered the uneasy calm. Everything happened too quickly - orders, movements, explosions. Akash ran forward, not thinking of himself, only of his duty, of protecting what lay beyond that border.

And then-

A deafening blast. For a moment, everything went still.

The world blurred into silence, as though time itself had stopped to witness yet another life slipping away. Akash fell, his body surrendering to the violence he had tried to withstand. His eyes, half-open, searched the distant horizon one last time. Perhaps he saw her. Perhaps, in that final breath, he whispered her name. And then, he was gone.

Back home, the morning had begun like any other - heavy, uncertain, filled with waiting. Amrita sat quietly, her hands resting over her womb, speaking softly to the life within her. "Your father will come soon," she murmured, trying to believe her own words.

The doorbell rang.

A strange chill ran down her spine as she walked toward the door. Something felt wrong - terribly wrong. When she opened it, she found two uniformed officers standing there, their faces solemn, their eyes carrying a sorrow that needed no words. Her heart stopped. "No..." she whispered, shaking her head even before they spoke. "No... you're mistaken... this can't be..."

CONT. ON PAGE 6

UNBURIED POEM**Fatima Z. Sarah**

We are the nations that bury poetry alive,
We slit the throat of every trembling line,
We drown the last sweet rhyme in blood-
dark seas,
and dare to call that silence victory.
We walk behind the coffin of love itself,
flags cracking like whips against the
grieving wind,
while little children learn the alphabet
of war.
And mothers sing their lullabies in
broken minor keys.
Yet deep inside the chest of a frightened
world,
one unbroken verse still trembles, soft
and warm....
It carries neither sword nor border nor
boast,
only the quiet, stubborn heartbeat of
hope.
Oh, let us lay down these rifles of rhetoric,
unclench the fists that choke the fragile
rose.
Let the poem rise again from its shallow
grave,
not as a martyr draped in sorrow,
but as a bride in flowing white silk of
ceasefire,
adorned with olive leaves and tender
morning light.

No more funerals for what could have
been.
No more cruel distance between heart
and heart.
This world is wide and gentle enough for
every language of love
if only we stop teaching it the grammar
of war.

Let the seas return their stolen songs with
mercy.
Let the graves gently surrender their
stolen dead.

Let the poem walk once more, barefoot
and free,
hand in trembling hand with peace.
Two lovers the world has tried so hard
to kill,
yet failed, because some things
refuse to stay buried.

No war.

The world needs peace.
And poetry -
at last,
Gets to breathe, to bloom, to live...!!

**(Fatima Z. Sarah is a Delhi-based script-
writer, award-winning author, and poet.
Ranked 5th among contemporary English
poets worldwide, her literary works have
been published in two anthologies and
several reputed magazines. Renowned for
her emotionally resonant storytelling and
exceptional lyrical prowess, she brings
profound depth and nuance to both the
page and the screen.)**

PEACE**Abdukahhorova Gulhayo**

We long for peace, with light within our hearts,
Let mornings come without war, filled with joy
in every part.
May flowers bloom freely in our motherland's

embrace,
Not sorrow in our souls, but sweet dreams take
their place.

Let children's laughter echo in every home,
Let the word "fear" in no human heart be known.
Holding hands in friendship, let us stand as one,
With kindness, open roads to a bright future to
come.

Our sky is clear, our intentions pure and bright,
Let evil fade away, let goodness shine with light.
Hope in every heart, a radiant glow in every eye,
We long for peace—our greatest pride held high.

**(Abdukahhorova Gulhayo is a young poet from
Uzbekistan)**

**EXTINGUISH THE
FIRES OF WAR****Metwally Basal**

Return to your senses
And do not be like moths that
Mistake fire for light
And destruction for life
What will your hands reap from
war
But ruin and devastation
Do you not hear the cries of the
children
Do you not see the remains of
innocent victims
And the rivers of blood
Do not the tears of children and
the wailing of women awaken
your consciences?
Greed has blinded you so much

that
You do not see today what has
befallen the earth
Of distress and calamity
Perhaps one day you will realize
the magnitude of the disaster
When you awaken and find
nothing on earth
But annihilation

**(Mitwally Basal is a poet,
short story writer, novelist, and
critic; he also works in journal-
ism and publishing for a number
of print and electronic maga-
zines and newspapers.)**

WAR IS THE BLACK SCARF**Valentina Yordanova Accordia (Bulgaria)**
(Translated into English By Yoana Konstantinova)

Bombs are falling, shells are whistling.
The sky is painfully crying out of fear.
Mothers as well are crying sadly out loud.
And they once sang a song of laughter.
A terrifying sight roars in the dust –
it smells of death and sorrow.

It echoes far and wide. Chaos rages all around.
People are running, birds are circling in fear.
The air is suffocating with a smoke screen
and there is a shortage – hearts stop beating.
And once there was a dewy tear – fragrant.

Mothers are carrying young children in their arms –
looking for salvation at least for them to find.
A child is kneeling next to a woman's corpse,
sobbing loudly – with tears cursing the war.
The mother is killed – with a torn chest and no pulse,
and he hopes she will see again – she is still alive.
They once walked the streets – holding hands.

And houses are collapsing. Wild fires are blazing.
Cities and villages disappear in a cloud of dust,
and once they were warm family homes.
Now they are collapsing with the bloody snow that has
fallen.

People have long been hostile to each other –
their hearts – are mirror ice – from cold.
In their footsteps – death lurks at full speed.

From the war, their souls are drowning in deep sorrow.

Fathers have held their breath in trenches and unfurled
flags.
Somewhere a machine gun bark is heard, mowing down
the enemy.
War is ominous – it paints emptiness and blindness.
Black headscarves are worn by women – instead of
flags.
The picture overflows with sadness – spreading sea,
from which tears roar with a powerful tidal wave.

There is no love between people, and they are brothers
of the same
blood. The wind caresses the corpses of soldiers out of
pity.
It collects scattered photographs of women and children
–
turned into sad fallen leaves of men.
And the dust holds them in dirty red albums.

Graves sprout – like flaming crocuses,
over which a cloud of eternal sorrow and grief remains.
Weighed down on the ground – they are leaden soldiers,
forever marked with tears and flowing blood.
Hearts are orphaned. The world is left breathless.

And let there be no WAR – the black scarf!
History tells enough about it...
I want a united brotherhood to reign everywhere
and with love we sow the seeds of peace!
Let bullets never fly – instead of birds
and may the sky remain crystal clear forever!

PEACE is light – a white canvas and let us draw
together
white doves in flight and create joy in the World!

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etry is guided by the heart and shaped by the soul.)**