



KVIB Srinagar organizes awareness camp at ITI Srinagar

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We Stand Committed for Timely Resolution of Public Grievances : CM Omar Abdullah

Holds public darbar at Gbl, Inaugurates Akhal Bridge at Kangan

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 22: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today convened a public darbar at Dak Bungalow, Ganderbal, where he directly interacted with numerous delegations and individuals from across the district to address their day to day issues and other concerns relating to development of the area.

During the public meeting, the Chief Minister patiently listened to the issues and demands raised by the public, issuing on-the-spot directions to concerned authorities for prompt resolution.

He urged the district administration to prioritize the redressal of public grievances, ensuring that people are not deprived of basic necessities. Reaffirming his commitment to the welfare and socio-economic development of Ganderbal, the Chief Minister pledged continuous support and timely action to address the concerns



raised by the residents.

Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, along with other senior officials of the district administration, were present to take note of the issues highlighted by the delegations.

Public delegations and hundreds of individuals from various areas like Beehama, Duderhama, Fatehpura, Shalabugh, Sehpora, Bamloora, Tulmulla, Barosa, Theeru, Gangerhama, Sherpathri, Lar, Safapora,

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Budget session of J&K Legislative Assembly

Speaker calls all-party meeting on Feb 27; Leaders of NC, BJP, Cong, PDP, PC invited

HT News Network

Srinagar, Ahead of the budget session, the Speaker of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly has called an all-party meeting on February 27 to ensure smooth functioning of the 43-day long session beginning on March 03.

Sources told news agency—that Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather has invited two leaders each from the ruling National Conference and main opposition party Bharatiya Janta Party and one leader each from Congress, Peoples Democratic Party, Peoples Conference and CPI (M) to attend the meeting to be chaired by him on Thursday at 1.00 AM in his office chamber at Jammu.

They disclosed that independent MLA Muzaffar Iqbal Khan



has also been invited.

"We have ensured representation to all recognized and registered parties having members in the House," an official said.

According to sources, Ali Mohammad Sagar (NC), Mubarak Gul (NC), Sunil Kumar Sharma (BJP), Surjeet Singh Slatthia (BJP), Ghulam Ahmed Mir (Congress), Sajad Gani Lone (Peoples Conference), Muhammad Yousouf Tarigami (CPI-M), Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra

(PDP) and Muzaffar Iqbal Khan (independent) have been invited.

The 43-day-long session beginning from March 3 is expected to be stormy with opposition parties set to corner the government on a host of issues.

While BJP will corner the government on issues of governance and commitments made by the ruling NC in its manifesto, Kashmir-based opposition parties like PDP and PC are likely to raise issues of Article 370, alcohol ban and other issues.

It is pertinent to mention that Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone has submitted a resolution seeking condemnation of the August 5, 2019 decisions in the strongest

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NEWS BRIEF

Army jawan injured in landmine explosion on LoC in Poonch

HT News Network/UNI

Jammu, Feb 22 (UNI) An army jawan sustained injuries in a landmine explosion on Saturday along the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir. Official sources said that army soldiers during routine patrolling along the Line of Control (LoC) inadvertently stepped over a landmine that triggered the explosion. "One soldier suffered injuries and was immediately evacuated. He was airlifted to the Command

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Free books, hijab distribution campaign applauded at Rajbagh

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 22: A free books and hijab distribution campaign at Zero Bridge in Rajbagh area on Saturday garnered widespread appreciation from locals and pediatricians alike.

The initiative aimed to spread awareness about religion and promote peace in society, while books included "Islamic and other books."

Speaking to the news agency—, one of the organizers, who named himself as Wasif present at the stall said the campaign was set up to educate people about social awareness, bring them closer to their religion and

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Police register first-ever e-FIR in Handwara

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 22: In a groundbreaking move towards digital policing, Police Station Vilgam in Handwara has registered its first electronic First Information Report (e-FIR) following a complaint lodged via WhatsApp.

The complaint was filed by Imtiaz Ahmad Dar, son of Mohd Assadullah Dar, a resident of Hanjipora, Kupwara, the driver of SRTC bus No. JK01Y-1121, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—According to the complaint, the incident occurred earlier today while Imtiaz was traveling from Tarathpora to Srinagar. He alleged that upon reaching Vilgam, he was wrongfully restrained and physically assaulted by two individuals namely Ashiq Hussain Bhat and Gower Ahmad Bhat, sons of Samad Bhat residents of Shehniyora, Vilgam.

The accused reportedly caused him physical

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Noted Kashmiri Journalist Naseer Ahmad Dies, Ex-CM, Director DIPR, Others Condole Demise

HT News Network

Jammu, Feb 22: Senior Kashmiri journalist and former Bureau Chief of Zee News in Srinagar, Naseer Ahmad, passed away earlier today, leaving the media fraternity in mourning. According to the Associated News Bureau, a resident of Bemina, Srinagar, Naseer, was around 60 years old and had been battling liver

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'Amid power paucity apprehensions, Govt keeps backup plan to tackle situation'

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 22: Amid apprehension of power shortfall in the months to come in view of less snowfall and water level, Power Development Department (PDD) Saturday said that it has

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Seizure of signboard asking tourists to avoid alcohol draws criticism

HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 22 (UNI) The alleged seizure of a signboard installed by the Traders Association in Srinagar's Lal Chowk, urging tourists to refrain from alcohol, has sparked strong criticism from political leaders on Saturday. Srinagar Lok Sabha MP and National Conference leader Ruhullah Mehdi questioned Jammu and Kashmir Police, asking

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Strange and unfortunate that signboard asking tourists to avoid alcohol seized: Mirwaiz

HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 21 (UNI) Kashmir's chief cleric and Hurriyat Chief Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on Saturday

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Tral's Aripal Spring runs dry despite recent rains

Officials warn of worsening crisis if spring fails to rejuvenate soon

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 22: Despite recent rainfall, the water level in Aripal Spring—on which nearly six water supply schemes depend—continues to remain dry, worsening the water crisis in the

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'Purple Revolution' integrated J&K into India's growing startup ecosystem: Dr Jitendra Singh

HT News Network

Srinagar Feb 22: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and MoS PMO, Dr. Jitendra Singh, on Saturday, said that the 'Purple Revolution' integrated Jammu and Kashmir into India's growing startup ecosystem. Speaking on the sidelines of the National Startup Festival here Dr. Singh, according to the news agency—said, "The cultivation of lavender in

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J&K experiences significant rise in day and night temps over past 24 hrs

HT News Network/UNI

Srinagar, Feb 22 (UNI) Jammu and Kashmir experienced a significant rise in day and night temperatures over the past 24 hours, with dry weather conditions prevailing across the Union Territory. According to the

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SC allows Yasin Malik to appear virtually in IAF personnel killing case

HT News Network/UNI

New Delhi, Feb 22 (UNI) The Supreme Court has permitted separatist leader Yasin Malik to appear virtually in a case concerning the 1990 killing of four Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel, overturning a lower court's directive for his physical production.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had challenged the Jammu court's order requiring Malik to be physically present for witness examination. Malik, currently serving a sentence in Tihar Jail following his conviction in a terror funding case, had resisted appearing via video conferencing (VC).



A Bench of Justice Abhay S. Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan heard the matter, with Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta representing the CBI. Mehta informed the Court that the third Additional

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GONGUL; Mega AgriTech 2025 Inaugurated by Javaid Ahmad Dar at SKUAST-K

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 22: Minister for Agriculture Production and Rural Development Department, Javed Ahmed Dar, today inaugurated GONGUL 2025, the 10th SKUAST-K AgriTech mela, a three-day mega event showcasing cutting-edge agricultural innovations, sustainable farming practices and entrepreneurial opportunities in the agriculture sector at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, Shalimar campus.

This year's mela is special as it emphasises secondary and sustainable agriculture, reflecting the objectives of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). With a greater focus on value addition, climate resilience and agri-entrepreneurship, the event brings together policymakers, industry leaders and farmers to shape the future of agriculture in J&K.

The mela has more



than 400 stalls exhibiting the latest farm machinery, precision agriculture, sale of seeds and planting material besides farm animals and birds. The mela for the first time organised a pet animal show in which pet dogs and cats displayed their training skills. Besides, the event is also featuring the majestic horses.

The Minister lauded SKUAST-K for choosing 'Gongul' as the name for AgriTech mela, which connects the next generation with rich Kashmiri culture. He narrated the childhood activities linked with Gongul (onset of sowing) in Kashmir and evolution of tech-driven farming in the valley. He emphasised the

need for preserving the Kashmiri culture, known globally for its cuisine, literature, architecture and rich traditions.

While hailing the HADP, he said the initiative is going to change the fortunes of the people of J&K.

The Minister assured full support of the J&K Government to SKUAST-K in leading the transformation of agriculture landscape of the region. He also ensured strict law enforcement for checking the trade of spurious agrochemicals.

Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, said the Gongul-2025 reflects the achievements and aspirations

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Kashmir Shawls, Carpet lead in exports Pashmina Lab augmented to enhance testing, QR coding Over 17,000 women trained, paid 36 Cr stipend in last 4 yrs

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 22 – The world-famous handicraft and handloom products worth 2,567 crore have been exported from Kashmir valley in the last two financial years and the first three quarters of the current fiscal. However, the exports in the current financial year have been hit by global conflicts. Giving details, a spokesperson of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, hoped that the exports are expected to touch cumulatively 3000 crore for 3 years, by the end of the last quarter of the CFY. As per the figures available with the Department, while Kani and Sozni shawls lead exports worth 1105 crore, hand-knotted carpet exports stood at 728 crore in the last three years. The other products exported include crewel, papier mache, chain stitch and wood carving. The spokesman further stated that the Department shall facilitate export of hand-made Kashmir products for which



a subsidy scheme is available, giving incentive of 10% of the total volume of handloom/ handicraft export products to any country with maximum reimbursement up to 5 crore in favour of the eligible exporters registered with the Department," he added. Highlighting the Government's strategy for welfare of artisan community, the spokesman said the Department has a well-established Design Studio in the Indian Institute of Carpet Technology and unique prototypes conceived by the School of Designs and Craft Development Institute. "The artisans can access these

contemporary designs and packaging models to add value to their products in niche high-end markets," he added. For welfare of artisans, the Department has several flagship schemes in operation including Credit Card Scheme, Mudra, Financial Assistance Scheme for Cooperatives, Karkhandar Scheme and Education Scholarship for the children of craftsmen. Under the National Wool Policy, the department has selected 100 weaver beneficiaries for distribution of free modified modern steel carpet looms in Kashmir at a total cost of Rs.43.70 lakh

and the department will pitch for another 250 improvised looms for distribution in the next financial year. Emphasizing upon the department's focus on testing and QR coding of GI registered craft products to weed out sale of counterfeit products, the spokesperson stated that the department has augmented manpower and equipment at its premier Pashmina Testing and Quality Certification Centre (PTQCC) and IICT lab for carpets. "The waitlist of 6 craft products including Sozni, Kani, Walnut Wood Carving, Khatamband, Papier Mache and Kashmir Pashmina at PTQCC has come down from 1700 on February 5 to 671 as on February 21, after strengthening of manpower," he said, adding that the lab will be further strengthened after more staff shall undergo necessary training at the Wool Research Association, Thane. He further stated that the proposal for additional equipment including Scanning Electron Microscope and a Digital Microscope have been submitted in the Union Ministry of Textiles, which shall further enhance the speed of testing and certification in PTQCC.

DLSA Budgam conducts review, monitoring meeting of panel lawyers

HT News Network



Srinagar, February 22: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Budgam, convened a review & monitoring and Mentoring meeting of panel lawyers. The meeting was chaired by O.P Bhagat, Chairman of DLSA Budgam/ Principal District and Sessions Judge, Budgam and was attended by Nusrat Ali Hakak, Sub-Judge/ Secretary DLSA Budgam and Mubashir Ahmad Wani Advocate besides panel lawyers of DLSA Budgam. The primary objective of the meeting was to assess the progress of legal aid cases assigned to panel lawyers over time. In-depth discussions were held regarding various cases, with a focus on identifying challenges, sharing best practices, and ensuring timely and effective legal assistance for beneficiaries. O.P Bhagat emphasized the importance of diligent case management, urging panel lawyers to remain committed to upholding the principles of justice and accessibility. During the meeting, the progress of several ongoing cases was thoroughly examined and reviewed. The participants engaged in a detailed dialogue on improving case outcomes and enhancing coordination.

Historic Mega Employee conclave of JKECC Held at SP Higher Secondary School Srinagar with the theme Role, Responsibility and Rights of a Public servant

HT News Network

Srinagar, Feb 22 (UNI) Srinagar, 22 February 2025 In a grand display of unity, solidarity, and cultural fervor, a mega get-together of Jammu & Kashmir Employees Coordination Committee (JKECC) successfully held in the sprawling open lawn of SP Higher Secondary School, Srinagar. Employees are main stake holders in Govt. & Society, can work like game changers. Shah Fayaz The memorable event, which was attended by a vast gathering of esteemed guests, members, and well-wishers of JKECC, aimed to promote unity, solidarity, and cultural exchange among the community, while celebrating the council's achievements and outlining its future plans. Shah Fayaz, President of



JKECC, presided over the function and expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the attendees for their overwhelming support. He highlighted the council's impressive achievements, including its initiatives in Education, cultural Preservation and social welfare, while emphasizing its commitment to promoting the

overall development of the community, Shah said that this Power gathering is message to power corridors that we are one on all fronts Eminent guests, including prominent leaders of JKECC addressed the gathering, sharing their valuable insights and experiences. They praised JKECC's endeavors and stressed the

importance of JKECC for larger interest of Society as well as Employees of this particular region and social well-being in the region. The get-together provided a unique platform for the attendees to interact, share ideas, and strengthen bonds, ultimately contributing to the growth and development of the community. The event also witnessed the launch of several new initiatives by JKECC, aimed at promoting education and social welfare in the region. JKECC has been actively engaged in various initiatives aimed at promoting education, and social welfare in the region. The council's dedication to the cause has been widely appreciated, and its efforts have borne fruit in the form of positive change in the community.

Special Lok Adalat held at District Court Complex Budgam

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 22: District Legal Services Authority Budgam organized a Special Lok Adalat of traffic challans and electricity bills today in the District Court Complex Budgam and Taluka Courts of District Budgam. The said Special Lok Adalat was organized under the Chairmanship of O.P Bhagat Chairman, District Legal Services Authority and Pr. District & Sessions Judge Budgam. Each Court had identified cases for the said Lok Adalat before hand and were placed before five different benches. A total number of 554 electricity bills were taken up for their amicable settlement. Out of which 308 cases were settled with a settlement amount of Rs 3,34,26,623. Besides, a total number of 750 traffic challans were taken for their amicable settlement out of which 654 cases were settled with a settlement amount of Rs 1,02,600.

DLSA organises special Lok Adalat at District Court Complex

HT News Network

Shopian, February 22: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Shopian today organized Special Lok-Adalat on Traffic Challans & Electricity Bills in the ADR Centre District Court Complex Shopian. The Lok-Adalat was held under the directions of Chairman DLSA & Pr. District & Sessions Judge, Shopian Noor Mohd Mir and under the guidance of Mudasar Farooq Secretary DLSA Shopian. In the said Lok Adalat 01 Bench was constituted by the DLSA headed by Additional Special Mobile Magistrate Shopian Rameen Rashid Khan and Deputy LADC Shopian Adv. Rafie Ahmad as bench member. A total no of one hundred eighty one cases were taken up for amicable settlement, wherein (169) one hundred sixty nine cases were successfully resolved with a settlement amount Rs 42000.

Holding of Special Lok-Adalat for Electricity Bills and Traffic Challans cases

HT News Network

Pulwama, February 22: Special Lok-Adalat for the cases of electricity bills and traffic challans was organized today in District Court & other subordinate courts of District Pulwama under the Chairmanship of Naseer Ahmad Dar, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District & Sessions Judge), Pulwama and under the supervision of Mudasar Farooq Secretary DLSA Pulwama. With the concerted efforts of all presiding officers of all the courts, cooperation rendered by the learned advocates a total number of 302 cases were taken up by 03 benches in the district out of which 261 cases were amicably settled in the said Lok-Adalat. An amount fine of Rupees Two Lakh Fourteen Thousand Three Hundred Fourteen was incurred.



KVIB Srinagar organizes awareness camp at ITI Srinagar

HT News Network

Srinagar, February 22: Jammu & Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) successfully organized an awareness camp today at I.T.I. Srinagar to sensitize the general public about the various government schemes being implemented by the Board.



The program was attended by Deputy CEO KVIB, Chief Planning Officer, Block Development Officer, Lead District Manager Srinagar, Director RSETI, Line Departments, Branch Heads of various banks and other dignitaries. The event witnessed an enthusiastic response from the local community, entrepreneurs, and aspiring businesspersons. The camp aimed to educate participants about the wider range of opportunities

available under the flagship programs of KVIB, including the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and other state-specific schemes designed to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship in rural areas. Addressing the gathering, KVIB officials emphasized the importance of utilizing these schemes to boost local industries and empower urban/rural communities. The session

included detailed presentations about the financial assistance, subsidies, and technical support provided under the schemes to facilitate the establishment of small and medium enterprises. Special emphasis was laid on the production of eco-friendly products and leveraging traditional crafts to enhance economic sustainability. Participants were also guided on the application process, eligibility criteria, and nec-

essary documentation required availing of these benefits.

The event featured interactive sessions, where experts addressed queries and provided personalized consultations to attendees. Success stories of beneficiaries who have established thriving businesses under KVIB schemes were also shared to inspire and motivate others.

It is pertinent to mention here that KVIB Srinagar have sanctioned/forwarded 2348 cases under PMEGP scheme to different Banks involving margin money Rs: 2028.30 lakh and 15 cases under JKREGP involving margin money Rs: 47.25 lakh.

Speaking at the event, a senior KVIB official stated, "We are committed to creating awareness about these schemes and ensuring that the benefits reach the grassroots level."

DLSA Srinagar organizes Special Lok-Adalat for Traffic Challans, Electricity Bills

HT News Network

Srinagar, February 22: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, organized a Special Lok Adalat for Traffic Challans & Electricity Bills at the District Court Complex, Srinagar. The Lok Adalat, aimed at amicably resolving Traffic Challans & Electricity Bills, was held following the direction of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority and Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and under the supervision of Secretary DLSA Srinagar. To facilitate the amicable settlement of cases, two benches were constituted for the said Special Lok



Adalat which settled maximum number of cases, marking a significant achievement in promoting

peaceful and quick resolutions for Traffic Challans & Electricity Bills. This initiative not only

provided justice to the parties involved but also highlighted the advantages of settling disputes through Lok Adalats. The Lok Adalat witness the active participation from the legal fraternity, officers & and litigants alike. By organizing Lok Adalats, DLSA Srinagar continues its mission to provide equitable access to justice for all, ensuring that litigants can resolve their disputes quickly and amicably without the prolonged procedures typically associated with conventional courts. Overall 11400 cases were taken up for settlement out of which 9662 cases were amicably settled & Rs.40,50,000 was awarded as settlement amount.

EDITORIAL

Make Raabita meaningful by holding officers accountable

On Friday chief minister Omar Abdullah chaired a review meeting of CM's public services and outreach office, Raabita to assess its functioning and strengthen its role in addressing public grievances effectively. During the meeting, the chief minister directed that Raabita nodal officers be designated at the district level to ensure prompt and efficient handling of public issues. He stressed the need for a proactive approach in reaching out to people, ensuring that government initiatives and grievance redressal mechanisms are accessible to every citizen.

The starting of Raabita was welcomed by one and all and it was expected that problems of the people will be solved through this platform. There is no denying the fact that even though some of the grievances have been addressed through Raabita most of them have remained un-addressed. People as a whole complain that the departments and the higher-ups of the departments don't take things seriously and it is due to this reason that only a few grievances have been solved so far.

During the review meeting the chief minister reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to a transparent, accountable and people-centric administration. He instructed officials to adopt a more responsive and result-oriented approach, ensuring that grievances are resolved in a time-bound manner. He emphasized on improving the quality of disposal of public grievances and to ensure that grievances are actually resolved when updating the final disposal of each grievance. The chief minister stressed upon all the important aspects of accountability but at the end of the day it has been observed that officers have not been held accountable for their actions.

There are many cases where the officers have provided wrong information in response to the grievances submitted by the citizens. Even though the citizens have expressed their resentment about the same while giving their feedback no follow-up action has been taken in such cases. It is important that necessary action is taken against such officers so that the people feel that nobody is going to take them for a ride and their genuine problems will be addressed.

A government officer should understand that he or she is a public servant and as such his or her primary objective should be to serve the people. If people lodge a grievance to the officers through Raabita they should seek complete and correct information from the field staff. At the same time the officers should give proper consideration to the feedback so that confidence is inculcated among the people.

A Holistic Approach to Adolescent Mental Health: India and Kashmir Centric

ARSHID QALM

This is the book I'm writing—A Holistic Approach to Adolescent Mental Health: India and Kashmir Centric. It is not just a collection of research, theories, or academic discourse; it is a movement toward building a sustainable mental health ecosystem for adolescents. It is a blueprint for change, a vision for an education system that nurtures not just academic excellence but emotional resilience, psychological well-being, and social intelligence.

Adolescence is a transformative yet challenging phase, marked by emotional turbulence, cognitive expansion, and social reorientation. It is the stage where young individuals start to forge their identities, shape their perspectives, and lay the foundation for their future selves. However, it is also a time when many adolescents silently struggle with stress, anxiety, social pressures, academic burdens, and unresolved emotional conflicts. Despite the urgent need for psychological support, mental health remains an overlooked aspect of education, particularly in India, where the emphasis on academic achievements often overshadows the emotional well-being of students.

The situation becomes even more complex in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where adolescents carry an additional burden of historical trauma, socio-political discord, and exposure to instability. Unlike their peers in stable environments, many students in Kashmir grow up witnessing uncertainty, displacement, and disruptions to their education, making them vulnerable to post-traumatic stress, hypervigilance, social withdrawal, and even substance abuse. This book delves deeply into these challenges, providing a comprehensive roadmap for educators, parents, policymakers, and mental health professionals to integrate mental well-being into the education system in a practical and sustainable way.

Through real-life case studies, research-backed strategies, and hands-on interventions, the book explores how schools, families, and communities can work together to create a holistic support system for adolescents. It begins by establishing why mental health should be treated as a core component of education and how psychological well-being directly impacts academic success, classroom engagement, and long-term career growth. A striking example comes from a boy in South Kashmir, who became increasingly withdrawn after facing persistent peer bullying. His grades declined, he avoided social interactions, and he showed symptoms of severe anxiety, which many teachers initially dismissed as a lack of interest. However, when a structured peer mediation and counselling program was implemented, his confidence was gradually rebuilt, and he reintegrated into school life, proving that early intervention in school settings can prevent long-term psychological damage.

One of the most critical themes explored in this book is emotional intelligence. Adolescents often struggle with impulse control, emotional regulation, and decision-making, making them vulnerable to peer pressure, social anxiety, and stress overload. Neuroscientific research highlights why the adolescent brain is wired for heightened emotional reactions, and this book demonstrates how

structured emotional intelligence training can equip students with the tools to self-regulate, empathize, and manage stress effectively. In one case study, a 15-year-old girl in Pulwama, who dreaded public speaking and social interactions, was introduced to mindfulness techniques and guided exposure therapy. Over time, she overcame her fears and later won a school debate competition, proving that mental health interventions don't just treat issues—they unlock hidden potential.

Another significant area this book explores is the impact of digital technology on adolescent mental health. The rapid rise of social media, online gaming, and digital entertainment has reshaped the way adolescents interact, compare themselves, and seek validation. While technology offers immense opportunities, it has also given rise to self-esteem issues, comparison anxiety, cyberbullying, and screen addiction. In this book, I discuss a case where students in Budgam experienced a sharp decline in academic performance due to excessive screen time. To counteract this, their school implemented a Tech-Free Tuesday initiative, promoting offline socialization, creative activities, and face-to-face interactions. Within three months, students reported improved sleep patterns, reduced anxiety, and enhanced focus, highlighting how structured digital detox interventions can positively impact adolescent mental well-being.

The unique challenges faced by adolescents in Jammu and Kashmir require a culturally sensitive approach to mental health intervention. Unlike in metropolitan areas, where psychological ser-

vices are widely available, many students in Kashmir hesitate to seek help due to social stigma, cultural expectations, and the lack of trained mental health professionals. In response, this book advocates for community-driven solutions that integrate local traditions, storytelling, and art therapy into psychological interventions. Programs like aesthetic literacy and expressive arts therapy, introduced in Piramal Foundation-led initiatives, have allowed students to use traditional Kashmiri art, poetry, and storytelling as therapeutic outlets, helping reduce stigma and encourage self-expression.

One of the most compelling stories in the book is that of a 15-year-old boy from Shopian, who became involved in opioid abuse due to unresolved childhood trauma. Instead of punitive disciplinary action, his school partnered with local mental health professionals and rehabilitation centres to provide him with structured therapy, family counselling, and mentorship. Over time, he not only recovered but went on to become an advocate for drug awareness, conducting peer-led anti-addiction programs to help prevent others from falling into the same trap. His story is a testament to the fact that every adolescent, no matter how lost, can be guided toward resilience with the right support system.

This book also presents a policy vision for integrating mental health into the Indian education system. It emphasizes how NEP 2020's focus on holistic learning can be expanded to incorporate mandatory mental health curricula, structured counselling services, and profes-

sional development programs for teachers. Schools should no longer be places where mental health is treated as an afterthought; instead, they should be safe spaces where students can express, process, and navigate their emotions without fear of judgment. Successful global models, such as Finland's emphasis on mental well-being in education, the US's Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, and Rwanda's post-conflict trauma-informed school frameworks offer valuable insights that India can adapt to its unique adolescent mental health landscape.

At its core, this book is a call to action. The future of India does not rest solely on academic excellence; it rests on psychologically healthy, emotionally intelligent, and socially resilient youth. Schools, families, and policymakers must work together not just to produce academically successful students but to nurture well-rounded, mentally strong individuals. Adolescents should not have to struggle in silence, they should be empowered with the tools, resources, and support systems they need to thrive.

This is not just a book, it is a vision for change. It is a manifesto for creating a world where mental health is not a privilege, but a fundamental right for every adolescent. It is my effort to bridge the gap between education and emotional well-being, ensuring that every student, whether in urban India or in the valleys of Kashmir, has access to the support they need to build a confident, balanced, and fulfilling future.

Stay tuned for its release, this is just the beginning of a much-needed transformation.

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Make the right choices in life

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Yes, there are five choices; by making them we can excel in life. These are to become good people. We know whom we call good. They are good in their behaviour, choices, etc. The next level is of those, who are not only good but they mostly follow dharma also, which pleases God. The next level is that of welfare workers, who dedicate their lives to the service of humanity without any selfish motive. Out of the followers of dharma, God appoints some as His (nimitta) instrument to carry out activities for God to uphold dharma. The topmost level

of course is of bhaktas (devotees) of God. I will now give details regarding how one can become these five and what benefits one will derive by doing so.

To be good in spiritual parlance means to have the highest percentage of the mode of goodness. There are three modes, which are: goodness, passion and darkness. They are always competing with us. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 14.10) The mode of goodness is illuminating and free from diseases on account of purity. (14.6) The mode of passion suffers from the fault of attachment. (14.7) One is too attached to certain acts and their results. Unfortunately,

the results are not in our hands. (2.47) One, therefore, suffers from anxiety, fear, depression, etc.

The mode of darkness deludes, which gives rise to many faults like carelessness. (14.8) Lord Krishna has set out in great detail about activities in goodness in the Bhagavad-Geeta. If we imbibe them, the percentage of the mode of goodness will gradually increase in us. There are many benefits in doing so and the best is goodness being the stepping stone to devotional life - the highest, and good karmaphalas of course. The next level is of persons, who strictly follow dharma besides being good.

This sets them apart from the masses. One is aligned with the plan of God for us, who is for upholding dharma. God even incarnates to do so. (6.7) We know what dharma is; it is the highest moral and religious principle. Benefits are many including accumulating pious karmas. The third higher level is that of welfare workers. God promises no 'durgati' (bad end) for such persons. (6.40) This is a big achievement because old age and bad ends are very scary prospects for human beings. Lord Krishna has singled out King Janaka as the role model in the Bhagavad-Geeta (3.20) in this connection. The next higher level is

that of 'nimittas' (instruments) of God; He chooses them from those who are habitually followers of dharma and are inclined to serve God as Arjuna did. God does everything as a karta for them and they get credit for the acts done. (11.33) The topmost category is those of devotees of God. Their rise is from being good people to strict followers of dharma. Then, they do spiritual practices like praying, darshan of God's Deities, offering obeisance to God, chanting of God's names and mantras, dhyana of God, thanking God for favours done, etc.

They become very dear to God, who is everything.

(7.19) The topmost benefit of being a devotee of God is liberation in a few lives. (6.45) I am going to describe the benefits in greater detail because these are the highest. God guides, and He, being omniscient, knows what will work every time. I have made a habit of praying for guidance anytime I have some doubts about something. I have been surprised by God's response. They are no longer intuitions because they work. The same happens in the case of help. God helps His devotees like one cannot even dream of.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

Role Of HOI As A School Leader

MUNTASHIR KIFAYAT

Effective Heads of Institutions (HOIs) are vital in driving holistic education reforms and realising the vision of NEP 2020, yet many remain limited to administrative tasks.

The success of the implementation of NEP 2020 lies significantly in the proactive and innovative roles of HOIs (school leaders). An HOI prepares a school development plan by embracing holistic education reforms, integrating technology, and fostering a learning environment.

Being a government teacher, I observe and value the impact of a credible HOI in adapting to and engaging with the community, leaving a lasting impact on the broader educational environment. The school HOI plays a key role in realizing the vision of NEP 2020,

ensuring the effective transition from policy to practice. However, I also observe that the majority of HOIs have restricted themselves to DDOs (passing salary bills only). In lower schools, in most cases, the HOI is either satisfied with a clerical job or spends time roaming between the school and the ZEO office, with no research, no vision, no mission, no strategy, and no goal for the holistic development of the school.

A school's HOI should be a researcher with a strong grasp of pedagogy, especially for inclusive education. My HOI should be the first source of learning for me—the first to inculcate work culture, pedagogy, the concept of holistic development, and inclusive education. He should be the one to connect me, as an educator, with the community.

In a school, the HOI stands for the Head of the Institution, responsible for overseeing all aspects of the school's operations, including academics, student welfare, and overall school culture. His role is of utmost importance in setting the vision, driving improvements, and ensuring that the school achieves its educational goals.

Leadership occupies a pivotal position in every sphere of human activity. In education, leadership can be instrumental in reshaping, reinventing, and reorienting the growth and dynamics of the education system. The New Education Policy (NEP 2020) is designed to revitalize the landscape of the Indian education system, where leadership plays a crucial role. School leaders are instrumental in utilizing available resources and ushering in sustainable changes in the teaching and learning environment.

Key Responsibilities of a School HOI or School Leader

Vision and Strategy: The primary responsibility of an HOI is to develop a clear mission focused on students' academic progress. He must inspire and lead new, challenging innovations. The vision of a school is to transform students and prepare them not only for tests but also for life's challenges.

Vision: What the school aims to accomplish.

Mission: A general statement about achieving the vision.

Strategy: A series of steps using the mission to achieve the vision.

A good vision statement for a school could be: "To cultivate a community of lifelong learners, empowered by a holistic educa-

tion that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and social responsibility to thrive in a dynamic world."

Academic Leadership: Monitoring teaching and learning quality, ensuring effective pedagogy, and analyzing student achievement data to drive improvement.

Community Engagement: Building relationships with parents, guardians, and community organizations to seek their support.

Valuing Resourceful Educators: Appreciating and cherishing skilled educators while fostering a positive working environment.

Student Welfare: Promoting a safe and inclusive school climate, addressing student needs, and supporting student well-being.

Compliance and Reporting: Ensuring adherence to educational policies, regulations, and reporting require-

ments. **Leading by Example:** Demonstrating a relentless pursuit of knowledge and openness to new ideas.

Financial Management: NEP 2020 calls for significant investment in education. An HOI should be capable of securing and utilizing funds judiciously.

Training and Leadership Development for HOIs

The impact of an HOI is more significant in a school than that of teachers, yet they receive lesser training. There should be more rigorous training programs for HOIs, ensuring they lead from the front in all aspects, much like an officer in the army.

There should be both offline and online training programs exclusively for HOIs. For education lead-

ers such as school headmasters, NEP 2020 recommends several modular leadership programs, including workshops to enhance leadership qualities.

For the past decade, primary school HOIs in remote rural areas have often been only 12th-pass, lacking the qualities of leadership and management altogether. These positions should be filled with well-trained and qualified HOIs. The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) should take responsibility for training HOIs more rigorously, infusing leadership qualities into them.

The writer is a teacher at the Secondary School Narabal muntashirkifayat@gmail.com

The Digital Dilemma: Reconciling Technology With Social Ethics

Years ago, life in a society was simple, and people lived harmoniously, sharing their moments of happiness, excitement, and pain. People would meet on a regular basis to better understand one another and stay in touch. This period was marked by calm, unity, and the comfort of oneness. This changed with the emergence of contemporary technologies, particularly the internet. The internet is an environment in which everyone is virtually connected, transcending traditional borders. This has transformed the entire world into a single village, with people from all over the world able to communicate with one another in only seconds. The internet has altered our lives and made them easier by providing vast amounts of information in a single location within a matter of seconds. Traditional markets have been surpassed by e-marketplaces, where global giants such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra operate. Even groceries can be purchased and sold on the internet. However, it is not without its restrictions. Just like a coin, the internet has two sides. It has various limitations.

However, technology is value-neutral; its good and bad aspects are determined by how it is used. While the internet offers many benefits, concerns over its misuse are rising, particularly in areas like cyber fraud and online betting. India, in particular, has become a hotbed for unlawful internet activity. Financial fraud is at the top of the list, along with others. Online betting has been a significant source of concern, and it has been encouraged even by so-called national figures. Online scams, financial fraud, and cyber-bullying are among the most common bad acts that occur throughout India.

The situation in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is identical. People use social media for a variety of reasons, but the majority of them are not in line with the social structure or lack morality. A large number of people are involved in internet betting and gambling; they spend hours and use all of their resources to find ways to make money through online betting. The problem is also becoming more prevalent among children.

Another frightening aspect is the drive for popularity, which has led to teenagers engaging in foolish and immoral behavior on the internet, particularly on Instagram through reels. People posing as influencers and content creators use social media to obtain followers by engaging in irrational, unproductive, and socially destructive behavior, causing the social setup to fail. This type of behavior is becoming more common as people's desire for followers and instant celebrity drives them to reveal their true selves on social media.

However, none of these events occur at once. There are variables that motivate and sustain them for an extended period of time.

There is an increasing amount of unemployment among young people, both educated and unskilled, allowing them the opportunity to choose alternate ways of earning.

Economic slowdown - Even established firms are experiencing a recession and are looking for new ways to grow their brand, such as creating hilarious content for various social media platforms.

Erosion of conventional social frameworks - The advent of a new period has precipitated the deterioration of existing social structures, resulting in individuals engaging in immoral behaviors without regard for ethical considerations.

Rise of liberal ideology - Emerging Western culture and liberal ideology have instilled the concept of liberalism in the minds of young people, who prioritize themselves over their communities.

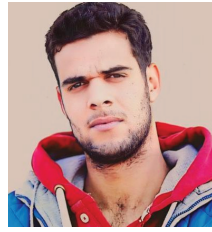
Inadequate governmental oversight of the escalating activity.

Greed for fame and thirst for money drive people to earn more while working less. Furthermore, the love for followers has played a significant role in the rise of this phenomenon.

Individuals thrive when society thrives, not the other way around. Society is what makes an individual's existence worthwhile, and hence it is a fundamental structure. This fundamental framework, if undermined, ruins good living conditions. For a society to thrive, moral values and ethics must remain at its core. Educational institutions, families, and NGOs must work collectively to guide the youth toward responsible digital behavior. Only then can we balance the benefits of technology with societal well-being.

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Aripal: A place Where Nature's Bounty coalesce & Commingle Opportunity for a Limpid & Pellucid Futurity



NAWAZZ IBN AHAD

Snuggled almost 10 kilometers from Tral headquarters in the heart of Pulwama district, Aripal is Hidden paragon and Gem with Untapped pecuniary and mercantile latent and potential, it is a land with astonishing panorama and landscapes and unexplored tourism opportunities. Blessed with pristine cosmical and inborn comeliness and pulchritude, this region remains largely obscure despite its prodigious potential to boost the local parsimony. Aripal Tehsil is a hidden jewel in the crown of Kashmir's natural wonders. Renowned for its crystal-clear Aripal Spring, cradled by towering deodar trees and enveloped in the lush greenery of the Wasturwan forests, this tranquil destination exudes an unmatched charm. The region's pristine beauty is further accentuated by its trekking hotspots, such as Nagberan, Tarsar Lake, and Marsar Lake, which attract adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers alike. Adding to its allure is Nargistan, a burgeoning hub for local tourists, especially during the summer season, where visitors flock to soak in the region's serene ambiance and breathtaking vistas.

Aripal is dewelling to some of Kashmir's most captivating tourist attractions. The mesmerizing Nagberan, with its lush green meadows and tranquil ambiance, is a ecstasy and nirvana for nature lovers. Tarsar and Marsar Lakes, embraced by towering cedar forests, offer a spectacular retreat for adventure seekers and trekkers. These twin lakes, glistening under the azure sky, are a sight to behold, yet they remain underutilized in Kashmir's tourism industry. Adding to the region's charm, Aripal Spring, cradled in the lap of the Wasturwan Mountains, flows with crystal-clear water, providing an exhilarating escape for visitors. Meanwhile, the serene Nargistan Tourist Resort, surrounded by dense woodlands, holds immense potential for eco-tourism and sustainable development. The region's unspoiled charm and rich biodiversity make it a perfect destination for eco-tourism, trekking, and cultural exploration. However, despite its immense potential, Aripal remains relatively undiscovered on the tourism map. By leveraging its natural assets and promoting sustainable tourism practices, Aripal could emerge as a key driver of economic development, creating employment opportunities and boosting local businesses. Despite its natural splendor, Aripal remains an underutilized resource in terms of economic development. With limited employment opportuni-



ties beyond government jobs, the youth of Aripal often find themselves grappling with unemployment and underemployment. However, the untapped potential of tourism in the region offers a promising solution to this pressing issue. By harnessing its scenic landscapes, trek-

king trails, and cultural heritage, Aripal has the potential to become a thriving tourist destination, generating thousands of jobs for local youth. Despite possessing such scenic marvels, Aripal has yet to be fully developed as a tourist destination. The lack of infrastructure, pro-

motion, and proper facilities hinders its growth as a major travel hotspot. If harnessed properly, tourism in Aripal can spawn employment, uplift local businesses, and provide sustainable livelihoods for the community. Developing eco-friendly accommodations and organiz-

ing adventure tourism activities such as trekking, camping, and heritage walks could significantly boost visitor influx. Additionally, showcasing local handicrafts and traditional Kashmiri cuisine to tourists could add economic value to the region.

To transform Aripal into a thriving tourist hub, government intervention and private investments are crucial. Initiatives like homestay promotions, adventure tourism campaigns, and cultural festivals could bring this hidden gem into the limelight. Strengthening Aripal's tourism sector not only preserves its natural beauty but also enhances its economic prospects, ensuring prosperity for future generations. By doing so, Aripal can transform from a hidden gem into a bustling tourist hub, providing livelihoods for its youth and preserving its natural beauty for generations to come. The potential is vast, the landscapes are breathtaking, and the opportunity is knocking—Aripal is ready to be Kashmir's next great tourist attraction. In a region where government jobs are the primary source of employment, tourism offers a beacon of hope. Aripal's untouched landscapes and cultural richness are not just assets for visitors but also a pathway to prosperity for its people. The time has come to embrace this opportunity and pave the way for a brighter, more sustainable future for Aripal and its youth.

Climate Change in Kashmir: A Catastrophe in the Making



JAVOID BHAT

Kashmir, known for its breathtaking landscapes and snow-capped mountains, is experiencing an alarming climatic shift. This year, the region has recorded one of the lowest snowfalls in recent history, raising serious concerns about its fragile eco-

system and the livelihoods of millions. The decreasing snowfall is not just an anomaly; it is a clear indicator of the worsening climate crisis. If this trend continues, Kashmir may face an environmental catastrophe that could have far-reaching consequences.

For centuries, Kashmir has relied on its winter snowfall to sustain its rivers, lakes, and agriculture. However, in recent years, snowfall has been erratic and significantly lower than usual. This winter has been particu-

larly dry, with major parts of the valley receiving little to no snow. Even higher-altitude areas, which usually witness heavy snow accumulation, have reported unusually low levels.

The reasons behind this decline are linked to global climate change. Rising temperatures, changing wind patterns, and decreasing moisture levels in the atmosphere are disrupting Kashmir's traditional weather cycles.

Snowfall acts as a natural reservoir, gradually melting in the summer to

provide a steady supply of water to Kashmir's rivers, including the Jhelum and its tributaries. With less snowfall, the region is likely to face severe water shortages in the coming months. This will impact agriculture. Kashmir's farmers depend on snow-fed rivers for irrigation. A dry winter means reduced water availability in summer, leading to poor crop yields. Besides Many villages and towns rely on glacial meltwater for drinking and household use. A decline in snow levels threatens this criti-

cal resource. Kashmir's economy is heavily dependent on agriculture and horticulture, particularly apple farming. The lack of snowfall disrupts the natural dormancy period of apple trees, leading to lower yields and inferior fruit quality. Saffron cultivation, another key industry, also requires sufficient moisture from snowfall. A dry winter spells disaster for thousands of farmers who rely on these crops for their livelihood.

The declining snowfall in Kashmir is a wake-up

call. Immediate action is needed to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects. The decreasing snowfall this year is not just a seasonal irregularity—it is a sign of an impending environmental crisis. If urgent steps are not taken to address climate change, the region could face severe water shortages, agricultural decline, and economic distress. Protecting Kashmir's environment is our responsibility. The time to act is now before this paradise is lost to climate change.

Maintaining home gardens, Oxygen factory at home



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Natural vegetation has a widespread reach up to lofty mountains, plateaus, hills, meadows, and water bodies. Banks are rich in a variety of natural vegetation like herbs, shrubs, running grass, and many more.

Nature itself likes and loves beauty, so we can see bizarre and lovely, picturesque views all around the corners of the world.

There are millions of natural vegetation and varieties produced after different techniques like grafting and genetic engineering. Genetic engineering plays an immense role in the upliftment of horticulture,

floriculture, and agriculture.

Genetic engineering Genetic engineering is the technique used in laboratories to produce new varieties. Example tomato and potato produced a new variety called pomato.

Home gardens There is an ample percentage of people who love flowers and plants; scientifically, we call them Anthophile. Some people have their hobbies as they manage and maintain home gardens at home. Advancements in floriculture sector.

What is floriculture. Floriculture also called as flower farming, this sector has great importance is aspects of economic development. This sector greatly known for the marketing of ornamental plants, and cultivation of flowers.

Like other sectors, floriculture greatly generates employ-

ment and produces new varieties through a number of techniques like grafting and budding.

Vase or flowers bed which one is best

Vase adaptation is great but you have keep in mind the care on regular basis like watering, pruning regularly, even during harsh winters we can keep pots inside our house and till the ending of the winters.

Flower beds Flowers beds are more attractive than flowers pots. We can maintain flower beds in a very alluring and beautiful ways. Like keep flowers height in an ascending order so that every flower may get visible and enhance the beauty of the garden.

What are best flowers and plants to choose for the home garden.

In this case different people have different choices some like plants having medicinal



importance like aloe vera rose etc. some people make garden as their hobbies.

Roses of different types because roses bloom after every 6-8 weeks and during the growing season and lasts for upto winters.

Roses are shrubs it will stop soil erosion, and has great medicinal importance.

Flower seedlings, are seasonal and most of the lover plant it in their gardens and like hamesh bahar, chrysanthemum, etc. looks so mesmerizing and enhances the beauty of the gardens.

What are famous and attractive plants

Plum is one the beautiful and lavishing plant, cyprus, pines, golden cyprus, english cyprus, italian cyprus, peach flower tree, canadian maple, etc are the plants lovers can plant all of them are accordingly the space available.

Role of watering, watering is necessary to maintain the garden in all respects, watering regularly your gardens.

Fertilizer, cow dung, chemical fertilizers lik di but in very little quantity.

Role of maintenance, lovers have to maintain, and look after every plant on regular basis.

Why gardens are important, gardens enhance the beauty of our surroundings, provides us oxygen, and reduces carbon dioxide concentration from the environment.

During the peak summer, the flowers, and plants look so mesmerizing, endowed and charming. Everyone wants

catch their aroma and wants spent time within them.

Such filed generates employment and for the gardeners who have good knowledge and it has great market. There are ample percentage of individuals related to it.

Morning and evening, friend.

Well-maintained home gardens are the morning and evening friend; there are people who have fewer chances to get out and go for regular walks. Home gardens with carpet like surface provide you smoothening like environment and you get enjoyed all the time.

Morning and evening walk for 30 to one hour may provide you good health and is very vital for your good health.

One who walk or run slowly on green carpet like surfaces may get great and immense health benefits.

Lovers should keep water tank of 500 litres to 1000 liters

during prolonged drought or when there is shortage of water in your surroundings.

Government administration should provide seedlings on subsidiary plans and should provide skill centres where gardeners may learn new techniques and how to enhance and producing more new varieties. We need lovers and we have generate employment where we have a chance. Not a single chance should be ignored. This sector has great and immense potential to generate employment for the skilled youth.

Where from we can get best and fresh varieties. This season starts from the mid February every year. We can purchase from leading nurseries like we near botanical garden Srinagar, Tengpora bypass, and there sellers at main markets in your towns, cities.

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District Admin Kupwara holds Mega Workshop on Disaster Management

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 22: District Administration Kupwara today organized a One Day Workshop on Disaster Management which was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan.

The workshop was attended by SSP Kupwara, Gulam Jeelani; ADC Kupwara, Mohd Rouf Rehman, besides, district/sectoral officers, Senior Officers from Army, CRPF, NDRF, SDRF, Tehsildars and other stakeholders.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that the aim of organizing the workshop is know how to pool and utilize the resources from different agencies and stakeholders to tackle different kinds of disasters in the district.

She said that the administration

faces different adversities including flash floods, earthquake, cloud bursts, fire etc which need coordinated and immediate effort to tackle with the situation.

Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among departments, volunteers, and individuals to minimize losses from unpredictable and unavoidable disasters.

ADC Kupwara also spoke and thanked the participants for attending the Workshop. He also emphasized the need for collaborative efforts from different agencies to strengthen the efforts for disaster management in the district.

Meanwhile, experts and officers from different departments including SDRF presented their plan in the meeting for dealing with the untow-



ard circumstances. Later, the officials and volunteers from SDRF, NDRF including Aapda Mitras provided detailed awareness

and demonstrations about various life saving techniques to be followed while taking rescue and rehabilitation operation. They demonstrated how to support disaster victims, including procedures for cardiac attacks, road accidents, burns, drowning, and the use of critical ambulances.

The demonstration session covered essential topics such as earthquake preparedness, first aid, Basic Life Support (BLS), and Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). An award ceremony was also held during which certificates of appreciation and mementos were given to the officials and volunteers who have shown good performance in mitigation efforts during disasters. The workshop was attended by SSP Kupwara, Gulam Jeelani; ADC Kupwara, Mohd Rouf Rehman, besides, district/sectoral

officers, Senior Officers from Army, CRPF, NDRF, SDRF, Tehsildars and other stakeholders.

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JSW GROUP CHAIRMAN SAJJAN JINDAL RECEIVES 'BUSINESS LEADER OF THE DECADE' AWARD AT AIMA MANAGING INDIA AWARDS

■ HT News Network

Srinagar February 21: JSW Group Chairman Sajjan Jindal has been conferred with the coveted 'Business Leader of the Decade' honour at the 15th AIMA Managing India Awards, in recognition of his transformative leadership in expanding JSW Group into a global conglomerate.

The award was presented to Jindal at a ceremony here today in the presence of Chief Guest Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education, and Guest of Honour Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry; Electronics and IT. The citation was read by Yezdi Nagporewalla, Chief Executive Officer, KP&MG India.

Under Jindal's stewardship, JSW Group has achieved remarkable growth, more than doubling its revenues to US\$24 billion. His strategic vision has led to JSW nearly tripling its annual steel production capacity to 39 million tonnes, whilst establish-



ing the group as a major force in renewable energy and cement manufacturing.

The award recognises Jindal's pivotal role in aligning JSW Group with India's infrastructure modernisation initiatives. Under his leadership, JSW has emerged as the second-largest private player in India's ports sector, whilst also venturing into future-focused sectors including electric

vehicles and military drones through international partnerships. The All India Management Association (AIMA) Managing India Awards celebrate outstanding contributions to India's business landscape. The ceremony brought together distinguished award winners, industry leaders and AIMA office bearers for this landmark 15th edition of the awards.

DC Kupwara Flags off 'Poshan on Wheels' rally for mass awareness

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 22: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today flagged off 'Poshan on Wheels' rally, an IEC campaign about the Poshan Schemes, here at D.C Office Kupwara. District Programme Officer ICDS Kupwara, Tanveer Hakeem; CDPO Kupwara, Mujeeb Wani were present on the occasion.

The rally saw participation of large number of Anganwari Workers of Poshan Project Kupwara and other stakeholders who were holding banners and placards, spreading awareness about the Poshan Schemes and healthy lifestyle. The rally went through different streets of Kupwara town,



making the commitment for a Malnutrition free Kupwara. On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that the aim of the rally is to create awareness about the importance of nutrition and healthy practices among the masses. She impressed upon the officers and field functionaries

to sensitize the people at ground level regarding balanced diet and healthy life style practices. She stressed the administration's commitment to improving health and nutrition outcomes in the district, especially for women and children, and urged the community to actively

participate in the campaign.

DPO Kupwara, Hakeem Tanveer also spoke and said that the department is making concerted efforts to reach the benefits of Poshan Schemes to the targeted beneficiaries for which rigorous IEC campaign is held across the district.

Police books 02 notorious drug peddlers under PIT NDPS Act in Sopore

■ HT News Network

Sopore February 22: Continuing its drive against drug peddlers and its propagators, police have booked 02 notorious drug peddlers under PIT NDPS Act in Sopore after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent authority. Two notorious drug peddlers namely Firdous Ahmad Dar son of Nazir Ahmad Dar resident of Mahrajpora Sopore and Firdous Ahmad Bhat son of Ghulam Mohiudin Bhat resident of Mazbugh Sopore have been booked under PIT NDPS Act after obtaining formal detention orders from the competent authority & subsequently lodged in District Jail Udhampur and District Jail Kathua. Its pertinent to mention here that many cases are registered against these drug peddlers and they were involved in promoting drug trade by supplying drugs to local youth of Police District Sopore.

Consistent actions of Police against the criminals should reassure the community members that police are making all efforts to eradicate social evils and making all efforts to keep our society free from drug abuse.

Police recovers stolen vehicle from accused involved in extortion case in Srinagar

■ HT News Network

Srinagar February 22: In a significant breakthrough, Police in Srinagar recovered stolen vehicle from accused person in extortion case. The accused, identified as Imtiyaz Ahmad Shah @ 99, son of Ghulam Qadir Shah, a resident of Aikal Mir Khanyar, was apprehended by the team of Police Station Safakadal in connection with the extortion case vide FIR No. 02/2025 under section 308(2) BNS.

Upon his disclosure, a stolen (Alto) vehicle has been recovered by the investigating team. More recoveries are expected in the ongoing case.

It is pertinent to mention here that the accused person is involved in more than 30 FIRs involving theft and extortion in addition to being booked under PSA twice. The apprehension of the accused person is a significant achievement of Srinagar Police which was undertaken by the team of Police Station MR Gunj led by SHO Police Station MR Gunj. Police is committed to eliminating social crimes from the society. Respectable citizens are requested to share information of anti-social elements with J&K Police in eradicating crimes and maintaining peace and order in the society. Police is committed to eliminating social crimes from the society. Respectable citizens are requested to share information of anti-social elements with J&K Police in eradicating crimes and maintaining peace and order in the society.

DC Baramulla Inspects Developmental Works in Sopore; Stresses Timely Completion of ongoing projects

■ HT News Network

Baramulla, February 22: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, conducted an inspection of developmental projects in Nagbal, Seerjageer, and Ladoora to assess progress and ensure timely execution of works aimed at improving connectivity in the region.

During the visit, the DC reviewed the Ladoora-Nagbal Bridge, being constructed at a cost of 5.17 crore, and the Sopore-Seerjageer Bridge, with an estimated cost of 12.69 crore. These projects are important for enhancing road infrastructure and easing transportation for the local population.



DC directed the executing agencies to expedite the work while ensuring adherence to quality standards. He stressed the need for modern engineering techniques, proper safety measures, and minimal inconvenience to the public during execution. He also instructed

officials to closely monitor progress and ensure completion within the stipulated timeframe.

DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Sopore and Superintending Engineer R&B, along with other concerned officers.

8 Metric Tons of Misbranded Fertilizer seized in Shopian

■ HT News Network

Shopian, February 22: The authorities in Shopian district conducted a major enforcement action today and seized 8 metric tons of misbranded fertilizer viz Vermicompost/Organic Manure.

The operation was carried out based on specific inputs by Farooq Ahmad, Chief Agriculture Officer in coordination with the Enforcement Wing of the Agriculture Department and Naib Tehsildar Shopian, Sajad Ahmad.

Following the confiscation, the concerned shop owners were served a show cause notice by the Law Enforcement Inspector, and the shops were sealed in the presence of Naib Tehsildar.

Officials have reiterated that strict action will be taken against individuals engaged in the sale of misbranded or substandard agricultural inputs, which pose a threat

to farmers and crop yields. The investigation into the matter is currently underway and shall be prosecuted in the court of law.

Pertinently, following the directions of District Development Commissioner, Shopian, block-wise teams comprising officials from the agriculture, horticulture, and revenue departments, led by authorized personnel, are actively monitoring the sale of agricultural inputs across the district.

During the enforcement action, the Chief Agriculture Officer advised farmers to request testing reports and permissions from licensed holders before purchasing agricultural inputs.

Farmers have also been urged to report any suspicious products or activities in the market to the Law Enforcement Inspector wing on phone number 9596182640 for prompt action.

Municipal Council Anantnag Organizes "SVANidhi Se Samriddhi" Program

■ HT News Network

Anantnag February 22: The Municipal Council (MC) Anantnag today organized an impactful "SVANidhi Se Samriddhi" programme at Town Hall Anantnag aimed at empowering street vendors by creating awareness about the benefits of the PM SVANidhi scheme and other government-linked welfare initiatives.

Commissioner Secretary, Mandeep Kour, while addressing the function virtually, emphasizing the need for street vendors to avail full benefits of the SVANidhi scheme. She urged them to focus on proper sanitation, cleanliness, digital payments, and actively seek assistance



through various government welfare schemes to enhance their businesses and livelihoods.

The event witnessed the presence of Director Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir,

Qazi Sarwar, and Additional District Development Commissioner, Abdul Aziz Sheikh. Addressing the participants, the officers stressed the importance of maximizing the benefits of the SVANidhi

scheme, ensuring financial inclusion, and enhancing socio-economic upliftment through government support.

A large number of street vendors, local residents, and stakeholders actively participated in the event, making it a grand success.

Besides, awareness sessions, the programme also featured various cultural performances, adding a vibrant touch to the occasion.

The Municipal Council Anantnag remains committed to the welfare of street vendors and will continue to work towards their empowerment by facilitating access to financial aid, capacity-building initiatives, and government welfare schemes.

DC Budgam reviews arrangements for upcoming Maha Shivratri Festival

HT News Network

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 22: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo today held a meeting to review the arrangements put in place for the ensuing festival of Maha Shivratri.

The festival having great religious and cultural significance is scheduled to be celebrated on February 25 with zeal & enthusiasm by the Kashmiri Pandit community.

While taking review, DC directed concerned departments to ensure all necessary arrangements are put in place for the devotees especially at the Pandit colony, Sheikhpura, Budgam and other places.



DC instructed for ensuring hassle-free traffic movement for the devotees to the adjoining city areas, besides adequate facilities at the designated place for parking of the vehicles. He also directed for ensuring uninterrupted supply of electricity, besides illumination at the temple.

He directed executive engineer PHE Budgam to ensure adequate drinking

water facility is available at the venue so that devotees do not face any problem.

DC also directed the health department to deploy a medical team at the venue with the availability of all medicines and first aid facilities.

He directed department of floriculture to ensure availability of sufficient quantities of flowers at the colony.

AD Food was directed to ensure sufficient food grains there, and AD fisheries to install stalls of Fish, walnut, Almonds, lotus stem, saffron, honey etc inside the premises of pandit colony.

He also stressed on concerned for maintaining proper sanitation at the temple premises.

Police authorities were asked to take all measures to ensure adequate security arrangements in and around the Colony.

Besides CPO budgam, CMO, Food safety officer, AD food, AD fisheries, Executive Engineer KPDC, PHE, DSP HQ, representatives of all other concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Dy CM visits GMC Jammu; assures hassle free deliverance of healthcare services

HT News Network

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 22: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, today visited Government Medical College, Jammu and reviewed functioning of the institution.

The Deputy Chief Minister took stock of the facilities being provided to the patients besides assessing the strength of doctors and para medical staff deployed there.

While interacting with the staff, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the government has already issued instructions that the people should not face any inconvenience with respect to the public services, especially the healthcare facilities. He said that the government is committed to ensure speedy and hassle free deliverance of public services to the people.

"Patients should not face any inconvenience while availing the facilities



meant for them as health is one of the main priority sectors of the Government," maintained the Deputy Minister. The Deputy Chief Minister directed the hospital authorities to ensure that the patients are provided with quality healthcare facilities. He

said that it should be ensured that benefits of all health related policies are provided to them without any fail. Principal Medical College and other senior faculty members accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during his visit.

PDD Sub-Division Langate Hosts Awareness Program on PM Surya Ghar Mufat Bijli Scheme

DR. AB QAYOOM

Langate, Feb 22: The Power Development Department (PDD) Sub-Division Langate, including Handwara, organized an awareness program on the PM Surya Ghar Mufat Bijli Scheme at the Municipal Town Hall, Langate. The initiative aimed to educate the public on the scheme's benefits, registration process, and the advantages of solar energy as a sustainable power solution. The event saw the participation of SE PDD North as the Chief Guest, alongside officers from PDD Division Handwara and Sub-Division Langate. A large number of local residents also attended the session, engaging in discussions about the scheme. Prominent public representatives, including DDC Chairman Kupwara Irfan Sultan Pandithpori, MLA Langate Shaikh Khursheed Ahmad, DDC Mawer Khursheed Ahmad Dar, and Dr. Ayoub, Executive Engineer (Exn) PDD Handwara, were present at the event. Other key officials, including AEE Langate



and AEEs of Handwara Division, also contributed to the awareness session. During the program, officials emphasized the availability of online registration links for eligible individuals to apply and avail the benefits of the scheme. The initiative, aimed at promoting clean energy and free electricity through solar power, was well received by the attendees, who appreciated the detailed information and support provided by the PDD team. The department has announced plans to conduct similar awareness camps across Handwara and Langate in the coming months to ensure wider outreach and participation in the scheme.

ZEO Langate holds environment awareness programme

Rp Jawaid Iqbal

Langate:- Zonal Education Officer Langate in compliance to the orders issued by Worthy Chief Education Officer Kupwara organised Environmental Building Programme as part of the Inclusive Education initiative under SAMAGRA Shiksha. The said program was conducted at Government Girls Higher Secondary School Langate, in which all stakeholders, including School Nodal Officers (SNOs) for UDISE, parents, Children with Special Needs (CWSN), special educators, ZNO and resource persons participated. Eminent personalities who adorned the occasion included ZEO Langate Mr. Naseer Ahmad Moulvi, ZEO Langate Mr. Reyaz Ahmad Shah, District Coordinator Inclusive Education Javid Ahmad



Wani and ZNO Altaf Hussain Dar. The basic objective of the programme was to identify and screen CWSN students, provide them with a conducive learning environment, and foster inclusion within the educational framework. The initiative aligns with the broader goal of achieving equitable access to

education for all, particularly under the Inclusive Education component of SAMAGRA Shiksha. During the event Resource person Ma'am Neelofer ji highlighted the challenges and opportunities related to the CWSN community, emphasizing grassroots-level implementation. Mr Javid Sb Resource Person

provide platform to have a comprehensive discussion on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, focusing on its effective execution to ensure that CWSN students benefit from the various government schemes designed for them. The programme witnessed active participation from all stakeholders, and a discussion on different matters related to Inclusive Education was held in a congenial atmosphere. DNO Inclusive Education Kupwara Mr Javid Ahmad Wani provided a vital insight of IED component it's schemes and other related aspects. The vote of thanks to visiting officials, teachers and students was presented by ZEO Langate and he laid stress on to the early identification of CWSN children for their mainstreaming and inclusive Education in our schools.

Er Aijaz Hussian Leads Budget Par Charcha in Pulwama, Discusses Key Initiatives for Economic Growth and Welfare

HT News Network

Pulwama: Er Aijaz Hussian, Senior Leader BJP and DDC/Member Haj Committee of India, convened an engaging and insightful meeting on the 2025 Budget Par Charcha in Pulwama. The event was honored by the presence of District President Pulwama, Gayoor Ahmad Andrabi, as the guest of honor, with Er Aijaz Hussian attending as the chief guest.

During the session, Er Aijaz Hussian provided a comprehensive overview of the newly introduced budget, emphasizing how it brings tangible benefits for the common masses. He elaborated on the key initiatives and provisions aimed



at fostering economic growth, improving infrastructure, and enhancing social welfare.

Er Hussian further discussed the government's vision for sustainable development and how the

budget's provisions will create new avenues for progress and opportunity in the region. The meeting witnessed active participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including members of civil society,

businessmen, industrialists, and educationists. Attendees engaged in meaningful discussions on how the budget can shape the future of Pulwama and Jammu & Kashmir.

The event served as a platform for open dialogue, where ideas and suggestions were shared to further improve economic policies and drive progress. The gathering highlighted the growing interest in policy matters and demonstrated the community's eagerness to contribute to the region's development.

The session concluded with a firm commitment to ensuring that the benefits of the budget reach all sections of society, with a focus on continued efforts for the welfare of the people.

MVD Baramulla Cracks Down on Traffic Violators, Seizes 13 Vehicles, realizes fine 38K

HT News Network

Baramulla, February 22: In a decisive move to enhance road safety and enforce traffic regulations, the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Baramulla, headed by ARTO Baramulla Muazzam Ali, conducted an intensive two-day enforcement drive across key locations in the district. The crackdown resulted in realisation of Rs 38,000 in fines and the seizure of 13 vehicles operating with expired fitness certificates and permits.

The enforcement teams targeted major traffic violations, including over speeding, reckless driving, overloading, improper documentation, and non-compliance with seat belt and helmet rules. Vehicles lacking Speed Limiting Devices (SLDs) were also penalized as part of the strict measures.



ARTO Muazzam Ali said the drive aimed to instill discipline among motorists and reduce road accidents. He emphasized that strict enforcement would continue to ensure compliance with traffic laws and improve overall road safety. He further stated that similar drives would be conducted regularly, focusing on ensuring that all vehicles meet fitness and safety standards.

Gongul-2025 Kicks Off at SKUAST-K, Showcasing Agri Innovations & Sustainability

DR. AB QAYOOM

Srinagar, Feb. 22: Agriculture Minister Javid Ahmed Dar today inaugurated Gongul-2025, the 10th SKUAST-K AgriTech Mela, at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), Shalimar campus. The three-day mega event showcases the latest agricultural innovations, sustainable farming practices, and agri-entrepreneurship opportunities, attracting policymakers, industry leaders, and farmers from across Jammu & Kashmir. This year's mela places special emphasis on secondary and sustainable agriculture, aligning with the objectives of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). With over 400 stalls, the event features cutting-edge farm machinery, precision agriculture

tools, high-quality seeds, planting materials, and farm animals. For the first time, a pet animal show has been organized, where trained dogs and cats showcased their skills. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Agriculture Minister Javid Ahmed Dar lauded SKUAST-K for naming the AgriTech Mela Gongul, a term deeply rooted in Kashmiri agricultural traditions. He highlighted the importance of preserving Kashmir's rich cultural heritage while embracing modern farming techniques. He also reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting SKUAST-K in transforming J&K's agriculture sector and ensuring strict regulation of agrochemicals to prevent the sale of spurious products. Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai along with Director Extension SKUAST-K and other officials of SKUAST-K said that the Gongul-2025 reflects the



aspirations of J&K's Holistic Agriculture Development Program, envisioning the region as a model bioeconomy for Viksit Bharat through innovation-driven farming. They thanked the J&K government for its continued support in fostering agricultural advancements. MLA Irfan Hafiz Lone stressed the need for policy interventions to prevent the rapid shrinkage of agricultural land and promote the export of local produce. MLA Hilal Akbar Lone called for effective implementation of laws to conserve natural resources, while Ashok Dalwai, Chairman of the Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru, underscored J&K's crucial role in India's Vision 2047. The event features multiple sub-themes, including: Brand Bizz Fest - Facilitating networking among MNCs, FPOs, SHGs, and industry leaders. Food Fest - Showcasing

diverse cuisines from student startups and local food entrepreneurs. Startup and Tech Show - Highlighting groundbreaking agricultural innovations. Industry Exhibition - Displaying advanced farm machinery and technologies. Organic & Natural Farming Show - Promoting bio-inputs and sustainable farming. Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Show - Exploring Himalayan herbal products. Processed Products Show - Showcasing value-added farm products. Seed & Planting Material Show - Providing high-quality seeds and plants for farmers. With an extensive lineup of exhibitions, discussions, and hands-on demonstrations, Gongul-2025 is set to shape the future of agriculture in Jammu & Kashmir, blending tradition with modern technology.

Justice Sreedharan reiterates importance of ensuring timely legal aid for inmates, strengthening rehabilitation measures

HT News Network

BHADERWAH, FEBRUARY 22: Reaffirming commitment of Legal Services Institutions towards ensuring access to justice and upholding the constitutional rights of prisoners, Justice Atul Sreedharan, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority today conducted an extensive tour to District Jail Baderwah to assess the living conditions of inmates, legal aid availability and evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reformative measures. Amit Kumar Gupta, Member Secretary, J&K LSA, Anoop Sharma, Registrar IT, High Court of J&K and Ladakh as well as Muzamil Hayat Kabli, Under Secretary (Adm), J&K LSA, accompanied the Executive Judge, J&K LSA.

Present on the occasion were Balbir Lal, District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA), Baderwah; Harvinder Singh, District Magistrate Doda; Sandeep Mehta, SSP Doda; Hamidullah Malik, Jail Superintendent and Tabraiz Qazi, Secretary, DLSA Baderwah. During the visit, Justice Sreed-



haran inspected various facilities within the jail, which currently houses 164 under-trial prisoners, 23 detainees and 04 convicts, against a total capacity of 155 persons. He also visited the separate female block, where 15 under-trial prisoners including 7 foreign nationals are lodged.

The video conferencing facility in the jail was also found operational, with an ongoing trial in the case titled "State vs Sahil Dingra" in which the accused appeared before the 2nd Additional Sessions Judge, Jammu through virtual mode from district jail Baderwah. The Executive Chairman

also inaugurated an Eye Check-up Camp organized by the District Administration in collaboration with the Red Cross Society, where 60 inmates were registered for examination and all the medicines prescribed were provided free of cost by the Red Cross Society. Taking note of medical needs, Justice Sreedharan directed the District Magistrate to explore the feasibility of providing e-consultations through tele-medicine services, particularly for addressing psychiatric and psychological concerns of the inmates. He also advised the District Administration to consider installation of a defibrillator within the jail dispensary to cater to the cardiac emergencies. Justice Sreedharan also inspected the 10-bedded medical dispensary, which was found clean and well-maintained. He also visited the Yoga and Meditation Centre, where live yoga classes were being conducted under the guidance of Dr. Nidhi Padha, helping inmates incorporate physical and mental wellness into their daily routine. Besides, rehabilitation and vocational training being imparted to the jail inmates in the Vocational Centre was also inspected.

Javed Dar inaugurates 3 day mega AgriTech mela Gongul-2025 at SKUAST-K

HT News Network



SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 22: Minister for Agriculture Production and Rural Development Department, Javed Ahmed Dar, today inaugurated GONGUL 2025, the 10th SKUAST-K AgriTech mela, a three-day mega event showcasing cutting-edge agricultural innovations, sustainable farming practices and entrepreneurial opportunities in the agriculture sector at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, Shalimar campus.

This year's mela is special as it emphasises secondary and sustainable agriculture, reflecting the objectives of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). With a greater focus on value addition, climate resilience and agri-entrepreneurship, the event brings together policymakers, industry leaders and farmers to shape the future of agriculture in J&K.

The mela has more than 400 stalls exhibiting the latest farm machinery, precision agriculture, sale of seeds and planting material besides farm animals and birds. The mela for the first time organised a pet animal show in which pet dogs and cats displayed their training skills. Besides, the event is also featuring the majestic horses.

The Minister lauded SKUAST-K for choosing 'Gongul' as the name for AgriTech mela, which connects the next generation with rich Kashmiri culture. He narrated the childhood activities linked with Gongul (onset of sowing) in Kashmir and evolution of tech-driven farming in the valley. He emphasised the need for preserving the Kashmiri culture, known globally for its cuisine, literature, architecture and rich traditions.

While hailing the HADP, he said the initiative is going to change the fortunes of the people of J&K.

The Minister assured full support of the J&K Government to SKUAST-K in leading the transformation of agriculture landscape of the region. He also ensured strict law enforcement for checking the trade of spurious agrochemicals.

Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, said the Gongul-2025 reflects the achievements and aspirations of J&K's Holistic Agriculture Development Program. He said SKUAST-K has envisioned J&K as a model bio-economy for Viksit Bharat through futuristic innovation-led farming. He thanked the J&K Government for generous support to the university initiatives.

Member Legislative Assembly for Kreeri Constituency, Irfan Hafiz Lone, while appreciating SKUAST-K in empowering J&K farmers, policy formulation and law enforcement for preserving the fast-shrinking agriculture land and promoting export potential of local produce.

MLA Sonawari, Hilal Akbar Lone, stressed on implementation of the existing laws for saving the natural resources. He lauded the role of the scientists towards welfare and empowerment of farmers.

Chairman, Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru, Ashok Dalwai, said J&K has a crucial role to play in accomplishing the country's targets set under Vision 2047. He said it is important to educate rest of the country about J&K's agri-transformation journey under HADP.

This year's edition is structured around several key subthemes, each offering unique insights into different aspects of modern and sustainable agriculture. The Brand Bizz Fest facilitated networking between MNCs, FPOs, SHGs and industry leaders, while the Food Fest celebrated diverse cuisines crafted by student startups and local food entrepreneurs. The Startup and Tech Show highlighted groundbreaking agricultural innovations and the Industry Exhibition showcases cutting-edge machinery and advanced farming technologies.

Gongul-2025 also emphasised sustainable farming through the Organic and Natural Farming Show, focusing on bio-inputs, and the Medicinal & Aromatic Plants Show, exploring Himalayan herbal treasures. The Processed Products Show exhibited value-added and diversified farm products. Additionally, the Seed Show and Planting Material Show provided premium quality seeds and plants for the farmers and gardening enthusiasts.

Special Lok Adalat for Traffic Challans, Electricity Bills held at Kulgam

Farooq Rather

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 22: District Legal Services Authority, Kulgam organised a Special Lok Adalat today at District Court Complex Kulgam, under the chairmanship of Pr. District & Sessions Judge Kulgam, and Chairman District Legal Services Authority Kulgam Aijaz Ahmad Khan.

During the Lok-Adalat, three benches were constituted one at Headquarter & one each at D.H.Pora and Qazigund.

MLA Hilal Akbar Lone Lays Foundation Stone of New School Building at Vijpara Hajin

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 22: The Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Sonawari Constituency, of Bandipora District, Advocate Hilal Akbar Lone on Saturday laid the foundation stone for a new 06 roomed double storey school building at Secondary School Vijpara Hajin. The MLA accompanied by Executive Engineer R&B Sumbal Mushtaq Ahmad and other concerned officials laid the foundation stone in presence of Chairman District Development Council Ab Gani Bhat.

Giving details, Ex-En R&B Sumbal said that the construction of the new 06 roomed double storey building is being undertaken with an estimated cost of Rs.80 lakh. He informed that work for Rs.75.45 lakh has been advertised, with Rs.59.95 lakh already allotted for the execution of the project.

During his visit to Vijpara, MLA Hilal Akbar Lone also inspected various ongoing infrastructure projects in the area, assessing their physical progress.

He urged the concerned departments and executing agencies to ensure the timely completion of these works, emphasizing the importance of adhering to set deadlines.

Later, the MLA interacted with local residents, listened to their grievances, and assured them that their genuine issues will be addressed on priority. Later, the MLA interacted with local residents, listened to their grievances, and assured them that their genuine issues will be addressed on priority.

KPIs under Aspirational District Programme reviewed at Kupwara

HT News Network

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 22: In order to review the Key Performance Indicators of Financial Inclusion under Aspirational District Programme (ADP) in Kupwara district, Under Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Abdul Gufran convened a meeting of officers at Conference Hall, D.C Office Kupwara.

The review was aimed at assessing the progress of various development initiatives and ensuring the alignment of district-level performance with the overarching goals of the ADP.

The meeting focused on the current status of the district's growth in several critical sectors, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, financial inclusion and skill development.

During the review, the Under Secretary emphasized the importance of strengthening the monitoring mechanism and improving the pace of implementation in order to achieve the desired outcomes.



The bankers were directed to improve their targets under the KCC and other centrally sponsored schemes so that the beneficiaries do not face any inconvenience in getting benefits under these schemes.

CPO Kupwara, ACD, CAO, ALC, DSWO, LDM, besides, District Coordinator, NRLM Kupwara, officers from

DIC, bankers and other concerned attended the meeting. During the review, the Under Secretary emphasized the importance of strengthening the monitoring mechanism and improving the pace of implementation in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

ELECRAMA 2025 marks beginning of India's next generation electrical revolution

Jeangir Malik

SRINAGAR, Feb 22: As India accelerates its journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047 and strengthens its position as a global manufacturing hub under Aatmanirbhar Bharat; the power sector plays a crucial role in driving economic growth, energy security, and sustainability. In this evolving landscape, IEEMA (the Indian Electrical & Electronics Manufacturers' Association) commenced ELECRAMA 2025, the world's largest electrical show on an inspiring note today at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida.

The 16th edition of ELECRAMA showcases India's capabilities in electrical and power technologies, reinforcing its role as a trusted global partner. The grand inauguration was graced by Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister of Power and Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs highlighting the government's commitment to strengthening India's energy infrastructure and fostering innovation in the sector.

The event also witnessed industry visionaries like Oliver Blum, CEO, Schneider Electric; Matthias Rebellius, CEO, Siemens Smart Infrastructure; Sunil Singhvi, President, IEEMA; Vikram Gandotra, President (Elect) and Chairman, ELECRAMA 2025 and Siddharth Bhutoria, Vice President, IEEMA & Vice Chairman, ELECRAMA 2025, who shared insights on the future of the electrical and power sector.

Addressing the gathering, Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister of Power and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs emphasized India's commitment to energy security, grid modernization, and sustainability, aligning with the nation's long-term vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. "India is well positioned to become the

world's third-largest economy by 2027 and a developed nation by 2047, with power driving this transformation. The electrical and electronics manufacturing



industry will be key in scaling clean energy, advancing grid modernization, and strengthening transmission networks. With over 200 GW of renewable energy capacity installed and a target of 500 GW by 2030, India is making significant progress in sustainable energy adoption. Expanding EV infrastructure and Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) technology will further accelerate the shift towards e-mobility. By 2030, India aims to achieve 800 GW of generation capacity, with 50% from renewable energy, reinforcing its role as a global clean energy leader. I commend IEEMA for organizing ELECRAMA 2025, a pivotal platform bringing together industry leaders, innovators, and policymakers to drive digital transformation and sustainability, solidifying India's position as a hub for energy innovation and economic growth." Marking its 16th edition, ELECRAMA

2025 presents cutting-edge innovations in energy storage, electric mobility, automation, and AI-driven power systems. The event will also host high-impact B2B

meetings, thought leadership sessions, and policy dialogues, fostering collaboration between global and Indian stakeholders.

Adding to the launch of ELECRAMA 2025, Oliver Blum, CEO, Schneider Electric, emphasized India's growing role in the global energy landscape, stating, "The rapid expansion of AI, data centres, and industrial growth is driving an unprecedented need for advanced energy solutions. With its robust manufacturing base, skilled workforce, and strong focus on sustainability, India is well-positioned to spearhead the next phase of the energy transition. ELECRAMA 2025, hosted by IEEMA, will be a key platform to showcase innovations, set new industry benchmarks, and forge global partnerships that will define the future of electrification." Matthias Rebellius, CEO, Siemens Smart

Infrastructure, highlighted India's evolving energy sector, remarking, "India stands at a crucial inflection point, with digitalization and clean energy adoption reshaping its power sector. Strategic investments in smart grids, automation, and renewable energy are accelerating progress, positioning the country as a leader in sustainable electrification. ELECRAMA 2025, organized by IEEMA, will be instrumental in bringing together industry leaders to drive innovation, collaboration, and the deployment of next-generation energy solutions that will shape a more resilient and efficient future."

Adding to the significance of the event, Sunil Singhvi, President, IEEMA, stated, "India's power sector is undergoing a remarkable transformation, fuelled by visionary leadership, robust policy initiatives, and industry collaboration. The nation has already achieved 210 GW of renewable energy, and with a clear roadmap, we are confident in reaching 500 GW by 2030. India is also emerging as a global hub for EV manufacturing and charging infrastructure, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable energy solutions. As supply chains shift globally, India stands poised to be a key player in the energy sector, offering innovation, reliability, and world-class quality. With a strong focus on up-skilling, fostering startups, and enhancing market access, we are shaping India's future as a trusted leader in the global energy ecosystem. In this journey, IEEMA's ELECRAMA 2025 will serve as the definitive platform for industry collaboration, upskilling, and business excellence. Bringing together global stakeholders, it will shape the future of the sector and strengthen India's position in the global energy landscape."

Body of hostage Shiri Bibas returned Friday confirmed by Israel

AGENCIES

JERUSALEM, FEB 22 (UNI)

The body of Israeli hostage Shiri Bibas, which was handed over to Israel on Friday night by Hamas via the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Gaza, was confirmed by forensic analysis, Israel's state-owned Kan TV News and other leading media outlets reported on Saturday.

After being handed over to the Israel Defence Forces, the body was transferred to the National Institute of Forensic Medicine based in Tel Aviv, where the identification was made. Bibas's remains were supposed to be returned to Israel on Thursday, along with the bodies of her two children and another hostage, 83-year-old Oded Lifshitz, as part of an arrangement under a three-phase cease-fire-hostage deal between Israel and Hamas, which took effect on Jan. 19.

However, forensic analysis showed the remains returned were not hers. In the developments afterwards, a senior Hamas official, speaking on condition of anonymity, explained that the mix-up occurred due to the chaos caused by Israeli airstrikes, which led to the misidentification of the remains.

"It was an unintentional mistake," he said.

Earlier on Friday before the final delivery of the remains of Bibas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel will seek revenge against Hamas over its failure to hand over Bibas's body.

"We will ensure that Hamas pays the full price for this cruel and evil violation of the agreement," he said.

Trump deems Zelensky not very important at peace talks

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, FEB 22 (UNI)

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday depicted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's presence at peace talks as "not very important."

In an interview on Fox News Radio's The Brian Kilmeade Show on Friday, Trump criticised Zelensky's handling of the war. "I've been watching this man for years now, as his cities get demolished, as his people get killed, as the soldiers get decimated." Trump went on to accuse Zelensky of lacking leverage in negotiations. "He has no cards," said Trump. The American president said that Zelensky's participation in talks over the past three years had not led to any substantial progress.

"He's been at meetings for three years, and nothing got done," Trump said.

While acknowledging the devastation in Ukraine, Trump argued that Zelensky's involvement in peace talks has made it more difficult to reach deals. "He makes it very hard to make deals. But look what's happened to his country, it's been demolished."

Landmine blast kills 1 in S. Afghanistan

AGENCIES

LASHKAR GAH, AFGHANISTAN, FEB 22 (UNI)

At least one person was killed as a landmine left over from past wars went off in south Afghanistan's Helmand province on Saturday, a local official said.

The deadly accident took place on a road in Gereshk district early Saturday morning when the old landmine exploded on a tractor, killing the driver on the spot, provincial police spokesman Ezatullah Haqqani said.

Afghanistan is reportedly one of the most landmine-contaminated countries in the world, with dozens of people, mostly children, being killed and maimed every month.

Trump nominates replacement for chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, FEB 22 (UNI)

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday fired the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General Charles Brown, and announced his nomination of retired Air Force Lieutenant General Dan Caine as a replacement.

"I want to thank General Charles 'CQ' Brown for his over 40 years of service to our country, including as our current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is a fine gentleman and an outstanding leader, and I wish a great future for him and his family," Trump said in a post on social platform Truth Social.

Without giving a reason for Brown's dismissal, Trump described Caine as "an accomplished pilot, national security expert, successful entrepreneur, and a warfighter with significant interagency and special operations experience."

Trump said that during his first presidential term, Caine "was instrumental in the complete annihilation of the ISIS caliphate."

Trump says USAID gave \$21mn 'to my friend PM Modi in India for voter turnout'

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, FEB 22 (UNI)

US President Donald Trump has again said that USAID gave \$21 million for "voter turnout in India", only this time he said it was given "to my friend PM Modi in India for voter turnout".

For the third time in as many days, the US President mentioned the US Agency for International Development (USAID) as having disbursed the money.

"...\$21 million going to my friend PM Modi in India for voter turnout. So, we're giving \$21 million for voter turnout in India, what about us? I want voter turnout too."

"\$29 million to strengthen the political landscape in Bangladesh; it went to a firm that nobody ever heard of. Can you imagine a little firm, they got a cheque for \$29 million from the US government.

There are two people working in that firm; they must be very happy. They're very rich. They'll be on the cover of a very good business magazine produced soon," he added sarcastically.

Earlier this week



too, Trump mentioned the amount given by USAID. "\$21 million for voter turnout in India. Why are we caring about India turnout? We got enough problems. We want our own turnout," he said, addressing the Republican Governors Association meeting in Washington DC.

"Can you imagine all that money going to India. I wonder what they think when they get it. It's a kick-back scheme."

The Ministry of External Affairs, reacting to the statements by President Trump, said on Friday that the revelations are deeply troubling and has led to concerns about foreign interference in India's internal affairs.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said:

"We have seen information put out by the US administration regarding certain USAID activities and funding.

"These are obviously deeply troubling. This has led to concerns about foreign interference in India's internal affairs.

"Relevant departments and agencies are looking into this matter. It would be premature to make a public comment at this stage."

Earlier, Trump, questioning the over \$21 million USAID grant by the Biden administration "for voter turnout" in India, said the funds may have been used "to get somebody else elected".

Addressing an event in Miami, Trump said: "... US\$ 21 million for voter turnout in India. Why do we need to spend US\$ 21 million for voter turnout in India? Wow... I guess they (the Biden administration) were trying to get somebody else elected. We have got to tell the Indian government... This is a total breakthrough."

Citing examples about where the USAID money was going before he became President, Trump said: "...US\$ 21 million for Indian elections, and US\$ 29 million to strengthen the political landscape in Bangladesh... Asia is doing well, we don't need to give them money."

Bhutanese PM Tshering Tobgay on India visit attended SOUL conclave, met PM Modi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 22 (UNI)

Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay was on an official visit to India from February 20-21 to participate in the inaugural Leadership Conclave of the School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL), which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

During the visit, Prime Minister Tobgay had a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw; Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju; Minister of State for External Affairs Pabi-



tra Margherita and other senior officials of Government of India called on the Prime Minister of Bhutan, a statement said.

India and Bhutan enjoy exemplary ties of friendship and cooperation, based on trust, goodwill

and mutual understanding at all levels.

The visit of the Prime Minister of Bhutan is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and Bhutan, a hallmark of the special partnership.

8 workers trapped in SLBC tunnel as its roof collapses in Telangana

AGENCIES

HYDERABAD, FEB 22 (UNI)

At least eight workers were trapped in the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel and three others seriously injured after its roof collapsed on a three meter stretch near Domalipenta in Nagarkurnool district of Telangana on Saturday.

The incident took place at the 14th-kilometer mark of the left tunnel, where ongoing construction work had started just four days ago.

Around 50 workers were present in the tunnel during the first shift when the roof collapsed at approximately 0830 hours. While 42 workers managed to escape, eight others were trapped in the tunnel.

Officials from the irrigation department and police



have launched rescue operations to locate and save the workers.

Gurjeet Singh (Punjab), Sanneet Singh (Jammu & Kashmir), Srinivasulu (UP), Manoj Rubena (UP), Sandeep (Jharkhand), Santosh (Jharkhand), and Jatka Hiran (Jharkhand), are among those trapped.

Three others who sustained serious injuries have been rescued and taken to nearby Genco hospital for treatment.

State Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with senior officials, visited the site to assess the situation and oversee rescue efforts.

The SLBC tunnel project is crucial for providing irrigation and drinking water to Nalgonda district through a tunnel connecting the Srisailem backwaters.

Further investigation is underway to determine the cause of the roof collapse, official sources said.

Lakhimpur no longer a backward district: Yogi

AGENCIES

LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP), FEB 22 (UNI)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 373 projects worth Rs 1,622 crore at Rajendra Giri Memorial Stadium in Lakhimpur Kheri district.

The CM also launched the 'Chhoti Kashi' Gola Gokarannath Shiva Temple Corridor, declaring that Lakhimpur Kheri is no longer backward and said that its fertile land now yields gold.

He recalled Lakhimpur Kheri's underdevelopment at independence which was plagued by malaria and poor accessibility despite Dudhwa National Park. "Now, an Airstrip in Palia is set to become a full-fledged Airport, and flood prevention measures are underway," he said.

Assuring no regulatory hurdles, Yogi emphasised the double-engine government's vision to boost spiritual and eco-tourism, creating ample jobs. "With its fertile land yielding 'gold', Lakhimpur Kheri is on the path to transformation," he said.

He emphasised that Lakhimpur Kheri has progressed beyond its status as a backward district. "Nearly Rs 4,500 crore worth of projects have been inaugurated and launched in this district. These include the Gola Gokarannath Temple Corridor and the country's first PLA plant (bio-plastic manufacturing) set up by Balrampur Chini Mills Limited," he said.

The CM said, "Lakhimpur now boasts not just Dudhwa National Park but also a new medical college. Numerous development projects will ease the lives of the people and create new employment



opportunities. This progress has been made possible through the guidance of PM Modi, government support, and the dedication of public representatives," he said.

He addressed Lakhimpur Kheri's past connectivity challenges, particularly the uncertainty surrounding the Bahraich-Mailani railway line. He assured that the government would allocate necessary funds to enhance tourism through improved rail connectivity, expressing confidence in Indian Railways' positive initiatives to boost tourism.

Besides, he lauded the Tharu tribal women's efforts in preserving their culture and producing handicrafts, which have been recognised under the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme. He said that even the PM has acknowledged their efforts.

Yogi credited the region's public representatives for actively participating in development initiatives. "From building a medical college and developing an airstrip into an Airport to enhancing eco-tourism at Dudhwa National Park, setting up a PLA plant, and constructing the Gola Gokarannath Corridor, each initiative reflects their dedication," he said.

He expressed optimism that Lakhimpur Kheri would soon become one

of the most developed districts in the state.

The CM highlighted the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh as a testament to UP's organisational prowess, with nearly 60 crore devotees participating in the sacred bathing ritual between January 13 and February 22.

He criticised detractors attempting to tarnish the state's reputation and emphasised that development fosters job creation and self-reliance, laying the foundation for a developed India. "The successful Maha Kumbh has, according to him, silenced critics opposing progress and innovation," he said.

Yogi directed the administration to ensure proper rehabilitation for those displaced by the Gola Gokarannath Corridor development. "Families losing homes are to be provided with suitable housing, and shop owners are to receive organised commercial spaces. The government's goal is to enhance the region's beauty and improve residents' lives without leaving anyone without shelter or livelihood," he said.

Before the event, he offered prayers at the Gola Gokarannath Shiva Temple, extending Maha Shivaratri greetings and expressing gratitude for contributing to the temple's development. He requested citizens to include him in their Shivaratri prayers.

Believed Air India would improve under Tatas, but was mistaken, says Agri Minister

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 22 (UNI)

Miffed over getting a broken seat on an Air India flight, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday called out the airline's poor passenger service and said that he wrongly believed that the carrier under Tatas would scale new heights.

"My impression was that Air India's service would have improved after Tata took over the management, but it turned out to be my misconception," the minister wrote in a seven-paragraph post on X.

Narrating his harrowing experience, Chouhan said that he was booked on an Air India flight (AI436)



today and was allotted seat number 8C, which was broken and therefore uncomfortable to sit.

"When I asked the airline staff why the seat was allotted to me if it was bad, they told me that the management had been informed earlier that this seat was not good and its ticket should not be sold. There is not just one such seat but many more," he said.

Chouhan, a four-time chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, said that his co-passengers requested him to change his seat, but he preferred to complete the journey by sitting on the seat allotted to him.

"I don't care about discomfort in sitting, but it is unethical to make passengers sit on bad and uncomfortable seats after charging them the full amount. Isn't this cheating the passengers?" he asked.

"Will the Air India management take steps to ensure that no passenger faces such inconvenience in future, or will it continue to take advantage of the passengers' compulsion to reach their destination early?" he further asked, putting the airline in dock.

Afghan deputy PM leaves for Uzbekistan to boost multiple ties

AGENCIES

KABUL, FEB 22 (UNI)

Afghan interim government's Acting Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, left Kabul for Uzbekistan, aiming to enhance bilateral

relations in various sectors, the office of the acting deputy prime minister for economic affairs said in a statement on Saturday.

Leading a high-ranking delegation, Baradar would meet Uzbek officials to discuss issues in an effort to enhance political, econom-

ic, trade and transit relations between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, the statement clarified.

During the two-day visit, the delegation seeks to capture the attention of Uzbek investors for the purpose of encouraging investment in Afghanistan, it said.

EPIDEMIC OF HYPERTENSION



DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO
FELLOW, INTERNATIONAL DIABETES FEDERATION (BELGIUM)

Hypertension is emerging as a global epidemic and the most common non-communicable cardiovascular disorder -- affecting approximately 1.28 billion adults (mostly aged 30-79 years) globally, as per recent data by World Health Organization (WHO).

As per the same data, an estimated 46% of adult population with hypertension are unaware that they have the condition, while larger proportion remains undiagnosed, untreated, or inadequately treated for the condition -- thus posing a major risk factor for development of adverse cardiovascular events, such as heart

disease, stroke, and kidney failure, as well as vision problems, disability and premature mortality.

Most people with hypertension do not feel any symptoms, though very high blood pressures can cause headaches, blurred vision, chest pain and other symptoms. However, checking one's blood pressure levels is the best way to know if one has it and seek doctor consultation for its early detection, control and treatment, besides prevention.

The modifiable risk factors that could increase the potential risks of high blood pressure include adoption of unhealthy routines like eating poorly, being overweight or obese, exercising less, deprived sleep or leaning more heavily on substances such as alcohol, smoking and drug abuse including taking stress; while as non-modifiable risk factors include a family history of hypertension, age over 65 years and co-existing diseases such as diabetes or kidney disease.

Therefore, primarily addressing the modifiable risk factors can significantly lower the chances of developing hypertension. Maintaining a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly,

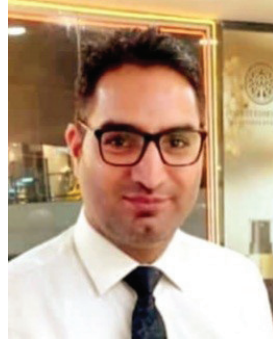
taking less salt in diet, getting adequate sleep, avoiding smoking and alcohol consumption; and monitoring your cholesterol and triglyceride levels and keeping them under control are crucial hallmarks in prevention of hypertension in general and heart diseases in particular.

Moreover, the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) eating plan is a healthy diet plan which is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein and low-fat dairy products. Besides that it is also low in sodium, saturated fat, total fat, and cholesterol. So, focus on to consume more fruits and vegetables each day, choose whole grains over refined grains, and opt for protein-rich sources such as poultry, fish, beans, and nuts. As adopting the DASH diet in one's life has been shown to lower blood pressure and hence reduce the risk of hypertension.

More to say, people should also avoid unnecessary stress in their lives by following a good health routine as research has shown that the depression including stress could increase a person's risk for developing hypertension.

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Dr Tasaduk launches Diabetes Education Program



In view of rising epidemic of diabetes, Kashmir-based medic cum noted columnist Dr Tasaduk Hussain Itoo launched diabetes education program to create diabetes awareness among masses and listen to queries from diabetic patients and guide them to ensure proper screening, prevention and treatment of their conditions.

In a statement issued, Dr Tasaduk said that diabetes is emerging as a major public health concern,



and it is crucial to adopt screening and prevention strategies to early detect and control it to prevent complications; that is why diabetes education is key for the prevention of diabetes.

A diabetes education program is an initiative and a structured program that aims to educate indi-

viduals with diabetes, their families, and caregivers about the management and self-care of diabetes. The program typically covers topics such as -- understanding diabetes; nutrition and meal planning; exercise and physical activity; medication management; blood glucose monitoring; compli-

cation prevention; and lifestyle modifications.

Pertinently, Dr Itoo is a Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF Fellow, Belgium) and further affiliated with prestigious organizations including, American College of Physicians (USA), Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI).

Greener anaesthesia may protect patients, environment: Lancet

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Using less polluting inhaled anaesthetic agents, referred to as greener anaesthesia, may help reduce harmful emissions by 50 per cent in one year without impacting patient safety or outcomes, according to a study, published in the journal Lancet Planetary Health, on Friday.

The healthcare sector contributes significantly to overall carbon emissions via hospital waste, single-use plastics, transportation, and food service.

About 3 per cent of these hospital-related emissions stem from inhaled agents used during anaesthesia, said the team from the University of Michigan, who urged to replace them with greener options.

"Inhaled anaesthetics is a natural area to pursue reductions in emissions because, as greenhouse



gases, they are so disproportionately bad for the environment," said Douglas Colquhoun, Assistant Professor of anaesthesiology at the Michigan Medical School.

"We've shown that small changes in our practice

lead to big changes for the environment and, importantly, no changes for the patients," he added.

The study compared the output of carbon dioxide (CO2) equivalents, traditionally used to measure the effect of

greenhouse gases on the environment, as well as the amount of anaesthetic used. They also analysed patient outcomes such as post-surgery nausea and vomiting, pain scores, unintended awareness, and recall of the surgery.

Separately, the researchers encouraged providers to reduce the use of nitrous oxide (which is 270 times more potent than carbon dioxide at warming the environment), as well as increase the use of sevoflurane -- the least environmentally harmful ether -- instead of isoflurane.

These changes were associated with an average decrease of more than 14 kg per case in CO2 equivalents.

There were no changes were found in the measured depth of anaesthesia, pain scores, or post-operative nausea and vomiting, the team said.

Lifestyle and Environmental factors affect health and ageing more than genes: Study

AGENCIES
LONDON [UK]

A new study led by researchers from Oxford Population Health has shown that a variety of environmental factors, including lifestyle choices (such as smoking and physical activity) and living conditions, have a more significant impact on health and premature death than our genes.

The study, which analysed data from nearly half a million UK Biobank participants, examined the influence of 164 environmental factors and genetic risk scores for 22 major diseases on ageing, age-related diseases, and premature death. The findings were published today in Nature Medicine.

As per the key findings, the environmental factors explained 17% of the variation in risk of death, compared to less than 2% explained by genetic predisposition (as per the



present).

Of the 25 independent environmental factors identified, smoking, socioeconomic status, physical activity, and living conditions had the most impact on mortality and biological ageing. Smoking was associated with 21 diseases; socioeconomic factors, such as household income, home ownership, and employment status, were associated with 19 diseases; and physical activity was associated with 17 diseases.

The early life exposures, including body weight at 10 years and maternal smoking around birth, were shown to influence ageing and risk of premature death 30-80 years later.

Environmental exposures had a greater effect on diseases of the lung, heart and liver, while genetic risk dominated for dementia and breast cancer.

Professor Cornelia van Duijn, St Cross Professor of Epidemiology at Oxford Population Health and

senior author of the paper, said "Our research demonstrates the profound health impact of exposures that can be changed either by individuals or through policies to improve socioeconomic conditions, reduce smoking, or promote physical activity.

The research shows that whilst many of the individual exposures identified played a small part in premature death, the combined effect of these multiple exposures together over the life course (referred to as the exposome) explained a large proportion of premature mortality variation. The insights from this study pave the way for integrated strategies to improve the health of ageing populations by identifying key combinations of environmental factors that shape the risk of premature death and many common age-related diseases simultaneously.

Blood pressure drug could be safer alternative for treating ADHD symptoms: Study

AGENCIES
ENGLAND [UK]

A blood pressure medication may be a safer choice for treating symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, according to a study. Repurposing amlodipine, a commonly used blood pressure medicine, could help manage (ADHD) symptoms

According to an international study published in Neuropsychopharmacology, involving the University of Surrey, researchers tested five potential drugs in rats bred to exhibit ADHD-like symptoms. Among them, only amlodipine, a common blood pressure medication, significantly reduced hyperactivity.

To confirm its effects the team tested amlodipine in zebrafish, an important model for studying brain function sharing about 70% of genes with humans. The results showed that amlodipine also reduced hyperactiv-



ity and impulsivity--core symptoms of ADHD--in these fish. Further analysis of the fish revealed that amlodipine crosses the blood-brain barrier for the first time, meaning it can directly influence brain function.

The researchers then turned to human genetic data and found that, remarkably, ADHD is linked to the same calcium channels in the brain

as the targets for amlodipine. This suggests a potential target brain pathway for treatments. Finally, an analysis of UK-wide patient data showed that people taking amlodipine reported fewer mood swings and less risk-taking behaviour, further supporting its potential as a new ADHD treatment.

Dr Matthew Parker, co-author of the study from the University of Surrey,

said, "Repurposing amlodipine, a well-established blood pressure medication, offers a promising and swift pathway to address ADHD symptoms. Our research indicates that, due to its existing approval and safety profile, amlodipine could be rapidly redeployed as a treatment option for ADHD, potentially providing relief to patients sooner than developing new medications."

Current ADHD medications are effective but come with significant side effects: from appetite loss, high blood pressure, headaches and sleep disturbance and carry a risk of misuse. Amlodipine, which is already widely used and well-tolerated, could offer a new, safer treatment option for ADHD.

Around 25% of patients do not respond well to any current ADHD medication, highlighting the urgent need for new treatment options.

Air pollution may be higher inside your home than outdoors: Study

AGENCIES
BIRMINGHAM [UK]

A new study reveals that people may be exposed to unhealthy levels of airborne pollutants inside their homes, even if the outdoor air quality is good.

Researchers at the University of Birmingham used low-cost sensors and innovative techniques over a two-week period to compare particulate matter (PM) in three homes. They discovered that pollution levels in each house were higher and more variable than outdoor levels. The researchers found significant differences in PM levels between the three homes, with one home exceeding the World Health Organisation (WHO) 24-hour PM2.5 limit on nine days.

This highlights the importance of monitoring indoor air quality at a household-specific level.

Published in Scientific Reports, this is the



second paper published by McCall MacBain Clean Air Fellows studying the philanthropically funded Master's degree in Air Pollution Management and Control at the University of Birmingham.

Co-author and Clean Air Fellow Catrin Rathbone commented: "Our study shows the need to monitor indoor air pollution, as people can have unhealthy air at home even if outdoor air is

good. PM levels varied significantly between homes, indicating that monitoring just one location isn't enough."

The team note that factors such as household location, ventilation, and occupancy patterns influenced particle levels - demonstrating the complexity of indoor air quality.

Co-author and Clean Air Fellow Owain Rose commented: "With more

time spent working from home, understanding the factors that affect air quality within households is increasingly important. The methods we used accurately modelled indoor PM levels, helping to improve exposure estimates at a low cost."

Researchers identified five different factors contributing to PM in indoor spaces - two relating to indoor activities, such as increased movement by residents and three linked to external factors such as a nearby restaurant's kitchen vent. They found that larger particles (PM10) tended to settle faster compared to smaller particles (PM1, PM2.5).

Researchers used Non-negative Matrix Factorization (NMF) - a powerful tool for uncovering latent patterns in data - to more accurately model indoor PM levels. Using low-cost sensors enabled them to build a more detailed picture of pollutant levels within the properties.

China loses to Saudi Arabia in U20 AFC Asian Cup quarterfinals

AGENCIES

SHENZHEN, FEB 22 (UND)

Substitute Amar Alyuhabi scored a last-minute goal as host China fell 1-0

to Saudi Arabia in the quarterfinals of the 2025 AFC U20 Asian Cup on Saturday, missing out on qualification for the 2025 FIFA U20 World Cup in Chile.

In the 95th minute, Alyuhabi fired a right-footed shot from a tight angle, beating the goalkeeper into the bottom right corner after connecting with a cross from Talal Haji.

China dominated possession with 59%, but the young squad struggled to convert chances, including a missed penalty in the second half. Head coach Dejan Djurdjevic fielded China's strongest lineup, while Saudi Arabia made a surprising decision to bench several key starters, including Rakan Alghamdi, Haji, and Ziyad Alghamdi.

Jack Draper beats Jiri Lehecka to reach Qatar Open final

AGENCIES

DOHA, FEB 22 (UND)

British number one Jack Draper reached the final of the Qatar Open with a 3-6 7-6 (7-2) 6-3 victory against Jiri Lehecka.

The Czech Republic's Lehecka took control of the opening set after breaking serve in the eighth game, before a more even second set went to a tie-break.

Draper - who defeated former Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Berrettini on Thursday - produced a near-flawless performance in the tie-break to send the match to a decider, the BBC reported.

The final set went with serve until a double fault from Lehecka gifted the 23-year-old Briton a break, with the Czech throwing his racket to the floor in frustration.

India ready to crack Pak's unpredictability code

AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 22 (UND)

India is set to take on Pakistan in a crucial ICC Champions Trophy 2025 clash at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday.

With the match slated to begin at 2:30 PM IST, cricket enthusiasts worldwide are eagerly awaiting yet another chapter in one of the most thrilling rivalries in the sport.

India, known for their consistency and adaptability, will be looking to crack Pakistan's unpredictable gameplay. While India started their campaign with a commanding six-wicket win over Bangladesh, Pakistan stumbled in their opening match, succumbing to a 60-run defeat against New Zealand.

Pakistan has already suffered a setback, with opener Fakhar Zaman ruled out due to injury, leading to Imam-ul-Haq's inclusion. The team, which has often struggled with middle-order collapses, will need to put up a strong batting performance to challenge India's disciplined bowling attack.

India, on the other hand, boasts a well-rounded squad and is expected



to rely on their spin-heavy attack, suited for the slow conditions in the UAE. Despite a recent 2-0 series loss to Sri Lanka, India's dominant 3-0 clean sweep over England has reaffirmed their strength in limited-overs cricket.

A political backdrop also looms over the tournament, as India's matches are being played in the UAE instead of Pakistan, which was originally designated as the host nation. This move has further intensified the already heated contest between the two nations.

Pakistan's instability in team management, with

the exits of Gary Kirsten and Jason Gillespie, has added to their challenges. Their opening loss to New Zealand has raised questions about their ability to handle pressure in high-stakes matches.

The Dubai pitch is expected to be slow, favouring spinners, while evening dew could provide an advantage to the chasing team. India will look to assert their dominance, while Pakistan will aim for a turnaround to keep their Champions Trophy campaign alive.

As cricket's fiercest rivalry unfolds, all eyes will be on whether India

can decode Pakistan's unpredictability or if Pakistan can defy the odds and bounce back.

Squads: Pakistan: Mohammad Rizwan (c & wk), Babar Azam, Shaheen Afridi, Imam-ul-Haq, Shadab Khan, Haris Rauf, Agha Salman, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Usama Mir, Iftikhar Ahmed.

India: Rohit Sharma (c), Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, KL Rahul (wk), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Axar Patel, Rinku Singh.

Bengaluru FC see off NorthEast United FC & climb to fourth place



AGENCIES

SHILLONG, FEB 22 (UND)

Bengaluru FC defeated NorthEast United FC by 2-0 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in the Indian Super League (ISL) match here.

The Blues were efficient in their gameplay, since they held only 37.3% of the possession, but scored twice out of the four shots that they took on target on Friday night.

NorthEast United FC were arguably more industrious, making 25 crosses as compared to the 10 of the visitors, but the Gerard Zaragoza-coached side clinched the triumph eventually, moving to the fourth spot in the table with 34 points off 21 games, as the Highlanders are fifth with 32 points.

Bengaluru FC built strong momentum from the onset, holding the

ball, and making inroads into the Highlanders defence with ease. They picked the ball, circulating it from the centre to the flanks and creating spaces inside the North-East United FC defence.

The entire frontline and midfield moved in tandem with Ryan Williams landing into the centre of the box in the third minute, deviating from his usual role where he shunts out wide to deliver lateral deliveries inside the penalty area.

Alberto Noguera, coming on the back of a brace against Jamshedpur FC, pulled off a slick pass for Williams and the latter slotted it into the bottom left corner to open the scoring early on.

The home side struck back courtesy of Alaeddine Ajarai in the 18th minute, who was served a probing cross by Redeem Tlang.

Ponting showers praise on Shubman Gill in Champions Trophy win against Bangladesh

AGENCIES

DUBAI, FEB 22 (UND)

Recently crowned as the number one men's ODI batter, Opener Shubman Gill notched a scintillating century - his second in a row in ODIs - to help inspire a six-wicket win for India over Bangladesh at the ICC Champions Trophy 2025

ICC Hall of Famer Ricky Ponting believes the knock, and Gill's recent surge in ICC Rankings is indicative of the 25-year-old's brilliance in white-ball cricket.

Speaking to Sanjana Ganesan on The ICC Review podcast, Ponting heaped praise on the 25-year-old.

"He thoroughly deserves to be the number one ranked batsman in the world at the moment and it's a great sign for India that he's got his account



in ODI cricket, particularly off the quicks.

"I just think that the white ball game really suits his style of play," he said.

"One day cricket, he can come out and be nice and aggressive early on in the power play with the field up, get some boundaries away early by playing good, naturally aggressive cricketing shots,"

Ponting said. "He's not a big hitter, he's not anyone that goes out there and tries to do anything outside of the way that he can naturally play. He just scores, he scores boundaries almost at will against fast bowling, against the white ball," Ponting said.

Gill has been in a rich vein of form with the bat coming into the Champions Trophy, having closed India's recent series sweep over England as the leading run-getter.

underway early in the first game of a Champions Trophy," he said.

Ponting added that while Gill hasn't been able to deliver his best in the longest format of the game, white ball cricket best suits his style of play.

"He's been a very, very good international player for a number of years," he said.

"He hasn't sort of trans-

ferred that over into Test Match cricket yet, but his white ball cricket over the last three or four years has been outstanding. Look, he's a big game player as well. He's played

really well in IPLs over the last couple of years, obviously being captain of his franchise there,"

Ponting said.

Ponting lauded Gill's ability to find boundaries

Tripura to host 73rd edition of B N Mullik Police Football Championship from Sunday

AGENCIES

AGARTALA, FEB 22 (UND)

Tripura is all set to host the 73rd edition of the BN Mullik Memorial All India Football Police Football Championship on Sunday at U K Academy stadium here, Tripura Director General of Police Amitabh Ranjan said.

The prestigious tournament, named after B.N. Mullik, a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau, is a significant event in India's police sports calendar, bring-

ing together police teams from across the country to compete in football matches.

As many as 1500 players in 45 teams including nine women's teams will take part in the matches, which will be played at Khowai, Jirania Agartala, Jampujala and Udaipur football stadiums of the state till March 7. For the first time, Tripura is hosting such a grand tournament.

"Police forces of 25 states and four union territories will participate in

the event besides other paramilitary forces of the country. We have made elaborate arrangements for the events. Our officials have been working hard to make sure that the teams arriving from different parts of the country are accorded a warm reception," Ranjan said.

The DGP pointed out that teams from seven central forces like BSF, TSR, and CRPF will also participate in the event and demonstrate their skill. A total of 102

matches will be organized during the whole tournament where 120 matches during the championship including 21 matches for women's teams and all the knock-out matches will be played at Agartala.

All the teams have already arrived and on Sunday morning, Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha will inaugurate the championship at a grand opening ceremony at U K Academy Stadium. He said that a few matches will be played in floodlights at night.

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