

Status of registrations on JK Samadhan portal reviewed at Kulgam Eid-ul-Fitr P|07

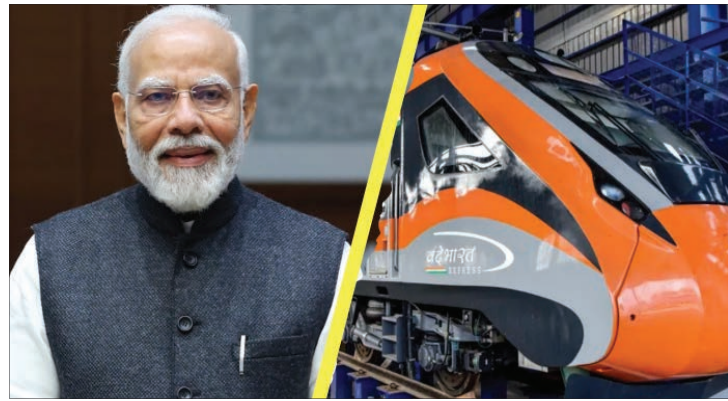


# Wait is finally over: PM to flag off train from Katra to Baramulla on April 19

- Modi to visit highest rail bridge, address rally at holy town
- Train to start operations from Jammu in August

HT News Network

**JAMMU, MAR 27:** Wait of several years for connecting Kashmir with train will be over on April 19 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off first train to the Valley from holy town of Katra, the base camp of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji shrine in the presence of Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr Jitendra Singh, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah among others. Follow the Daily Excelsior channel on WhatsApp. This will end wait of several decades for direct train to Kashmir as presently the train services are operational between Sangaldan to Baramulla and from across the



country to Katra. With trial runs successful and clearances from all channels for safety and security of train and passengers, Modi today gave his nod for flagging off first train to Kashmir on April 19. When contacted, Dr Jitendra Singh

confirmed that the Prime Minister will inaugurate train services to the Valley from Katra on April 19. Official sources told the Excelsior that Narendra Modi will land at Udhampur Army airport from New Delhi in the morning of April

19 and then fly to world's highest railway bridge over river Chenab in Reasi district. He will inspect the bridge which has become an engineering marvel not only in India but across the world. The Railways officials will brief him on construction of the bridge and other aspects. Modi will then reach to Katra and flag off the train. Later, he will address a rally in the holy town before returning to New Delhi from Udhampur Army airport. As per the sources, initially the train will run from Katra to Baramulla. However, after completion of expansion work at Jammu Railway Station including increase in number of platforms, the train to Valley will start operations from

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# 2 Militants Killed, 5 Security Personnel Injured In Encounter In J&K's Kathua

HT News Network

**JAMMU, MAR 27:** A fierce gun battle in a remote forested area of Kathua district has left two terrorists dead and five security personnel injured as the security forces intensified their operation to neutralise an infiltrating group of about five militants, officials said on Thursday. It was not immediately clear whether it was the same group that had been evading an earlier cordon in Sanyal forest of Kathua region or another batch of freshly infiltrated terrorists. The encounter triggered intense firing and explosions, the officials said. The gunfight, centred near Jakhole village in the Ghati Juthana area of Rajbagh, involved a group of approx-



imately five terrorists and an initial exchange of gunfire resulted in injuries to Special Police Officer Bharat Chalotra, who sustained facial wounds. He was treated at a Kathua hospital before being transferred to Government Medical College Hospital in Jammu, where his condition was stated to be stable. The officials said that two terrorists were killed in the

onslaught led by the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and assisted by the Army, the BSF and CRPF. Adding to the tension, three security personnel, including a Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), were reportedly trapped near the gunfight's location, adjacent to a rivulet concealed by dense foliage. The officials said a clear picture would emerge only after the ongoing encounter ended. It may be mentioned that a group of terrorists were intercepted by the SOG in the Hiranagar sector of Kathua district on Sunday evening. Despite a massive search operation, the terrorists managed to escape

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## Chief Minister Omar Abdullah extends greetings on Shab-i-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida

HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MARCH 26:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has extended his greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasions of Shab-i-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida. In his message, the Chief Minister highlighted the spiritual significance of Shab-i-Qadr, the blessed night when the Holy Quran was revealed, and Jumat-ul-Vida, the last Friday of Ramadan, which holds great importance for the Muslim community.

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## L G Greets People on Shab-e-Qadr & Jumat-ul-Vida

HT News Network

**JAMMU, MARCH 27:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has extended his greetings to the people on the eve of Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida. In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said, "On the auspicious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida, I convey my hearty greetings and felicitations to all and wish them health, happiness and prosperity. May the Almighty accept all our prayers and continue to guide us on the path of compassion, love and harmony".

## Javed Rana greets people on Shab-e-Qadr & Jumat-ul-Vida

HT News Network

**JAMMU, MARCH 27:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forests, and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana extended his greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida. In his message, Javed Rana prayed for betterment of the people and hoped that the occasions would bring Allah's blessings to all.

He said that the occasions hold enormous religious and spiritual significance for the Muslim community. Extending his greetings, Javed Rana said that Shab-e-Qadr is a night of spiritual renewal and a chance to ask for Allah's blessings, kindness, and guidance. "Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida have enormous significance in our lives because it serves as a reminder for Muslims to live lives that are filled with righteousness, compassion, and unity."

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## 2 More Hurriyat Groups Denounce Separatism, Repose Faith In Modi-Led Bharat: Amit Shah

HT News Network

**NEW DELHI, MAR 27:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said two more constituents of the Jammu and Kashmir-based Hurriyat Conference have denounced separatism and reposed their faith in the new Bharat built by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This development comes a couple of days after similar announcements made by two other affiliates of the separatists' conglomerate. On Tuesday, Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM) and the Jammu and



Kashmir Democratic Political Movement (JKDPM) announced the severing of all ties with separatism. Shah said under the Modi government, separatism is breathing its last and the triumph of unity is echoing across Kashmir. "Another great news

from Kashmir Valley. Two more groups affiliated with the Hurriyat, namely J&K Tahreeqi Isteqlal and J&K Tahreek-I-Istiqamat, have discarded separatism and reposed their trust in the new Bharat built by PM Shri @narendramodi Ji," Shah wrote on X.

In a statement, J&K Tehreeqi Isteqlal chairman Gulam Nabi Sofi said he and his organisation disassociated from the All Parties Hurriyat Conference or any other group with the relevant ideology. "We continued our

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Road Projects Worth Rs Two Lakh Crore Being Implemented In Jammu And Kashmir : Gadkari

HT News Network

**New Delhi, Mar 27:** Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the road infrastructure projects worth Rs two lakh crore are being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir, which will boost the connectivity in the region.

Replying to supplementaries during question hour in the Lok Sabha, Nitin Gadkari said, "The government is working in converting 25,000 km National Highways into four lanes from two lanes in the next two years." He informed that around



70 per cent of the work of Asia's longest tunnel - Zojila Tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir has been completed.

He added that the project which will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar and Ladakh is being constructed at a cost of over 5500 crore rupees. Zojila Tunnel Project con-

sists of construction of a tunnel of more than 13 kilometers and approaching roads to a tunnel of length over 17 kilometers, totaling a total length of over 30 kilometers.

Speaking about the other road infrastructure in union territory, he said that 105 tunnels are also being built in Jammu and Kashmir to further improve the connectivity.

The Minister informed that the work related to 22 tunnels have been completed and another 14 tunnels are being constructed by the Border Road Organisation in Jammu

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Cyber Cell J&K Police recovers 1,89,238/- from online financial frauds

**Srinagar March 27:** Cyber Cell of Police District Awantipora has successfully resolved several cases of online financial fraud, recovering a total of ₹1,89,238/-

Multiple complaints were received involving fraudulent schemes amounting to ₹1,89,238/- These scams involved fake investment opportunities where victims were promised high returns for additional deposits.

Acting swiftly, the Cyber Cell of Police District Awantipora collected evidence and necessary information from the victims. Using advanced cyber means, they managed to freeze the fraudulent transactions. An amount of ₹1,89,238/- was held and recovered and thereof it was successfully credited back to the victims.

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## Javed Dar extends Shab-e-Qadr Jumat-ul-Vida greetings

HT NEWS NETWORK

**Srinagar, Mar 27 :** The Minister for Agriculture Production and Rural Development Departments, Javed Ahmad Dar today extended his hearty greetings to the people on the auspicious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida.

Highlighting the spiritual significance of these sacred days in Islamic history, the Minister emphasized their deep reverence for the Muslim Ummah. He noted that on Shab-e-Qadr, the Holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) as a divine guide for humanity. The night is observed with prayers, seeking Allah's forgiveness, blessings, and infinite mercy.

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## Sakeena Itoo greets people on auspicious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Juma-tul-Vida

HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MARCH 27:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo has extended her warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr and Juma-tul-Vida. In her greetings, Sakeena said that this blessed night of Shab-e-Qadr is a pious occasion to introspect in our lives and seek forgiveness from Almighty Allah. She added that this night is for reflection and repentance, seeking Allah's mercy and reflecting on one's deeds. While greeting people eve of Juma-tul-Vida.

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# IGP Kashmir Reviews Security Arrangements Ahead of Upcoming Festivals and Amarnath Yatra

HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, MAR 27:** Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V.K. Birdi-IPS, chaired a joint security review meeting today at PCR Kashmir to evaluate and finalize security arrangements for the upcoming major events in the Kashmir Valley.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from J&K Police, intelligence agencies, and various security forces. Key participants included IG CRPF Srinagar Shri Pawan Kumar Sharma, DIG CKR



Rajiv Pandey-IPS, DIG CRPF KOS, Srinagar, DIG ITBP, JD IB, SSP Srinagar, SSP Traffic City Srinagar,

SSP CID CIK, SSP Security Kashmir, SSP SDRF, SSP APCR, Dy. Director Fire & Emergency, with all District SSSP from the Kashmir Zone joining virtually.

The meeting primarily focused on reviewing security arrangements in anticipation of the upcoming festivals, particularly Eid-ul-Fitr, and the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY). Discussions centered on safeguarding public security, ensuring law and order, and ensuring the smooth execution of these large-scale events.

With Eid-ul-Fitr approaching,

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# "Renowned Writer Rama Pandey's 'Saptarni' Unveiled at Jammu"

**HT News Network**

JAMMU, MARCH 27: Renowned Hindi writer and artist Rama Pandey's latest literary offering, "Saptarni", a captivating collection of stories, has been released here today. The book, a compilation of seven enthralling tales, was unveiled by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Education, Shantmanu, here at PS Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar. The event witnessed a mesmerizing narration by Rama Pandey herself, as she presented her story "Darakht-e-Azad Hind", leaving the audience

enthralled. It was a saga of deep spiritual and emotional ties between an elderly woman and an ancient neem tree. Rama's vocal storytelling and her masterful twist at the end left the entire crowd simply spellbound especially Shantmanu who insisted that Rama should turn them into audio books. On the occasion, writer and director Rama Pandey said, "It has always been my resolve to raise those questions in Indian society through films, theatre and books, on which no one talks about. "Sapt-Parni" is a collection of 7 short stories in Hindi which explore the complexities of modern society with a blend



of sensitivity, mystery and drama. The remaining stories are no less extraordinary, each a testament to Rama Ji's impeccable style, evocative diction

and storytelling finesse. They do not merely narrate; they resonate, linger and stir the soul. "Sapt Parni" is another fine

addition to Rama Ji's Book shelf which already has her other great literary expressions in the form of Lallan MS, Maha Nagar Vienna, Giraftari, Guhar

and Suno Kahani. A trailblazer in media and arts, Rama Pandey holds the distinction of being Rajasthan's first female media professional, with an illustrious career spanning Doordarshan, BBC London, film and television. Her latest work, published by Vani Prakashan, has already garnered acclaim with one of its stories, "Truck No. 1220", set to be adapted into a film. The ceremony was graced by Vijay Bakaya, Former Chief Secretary, who lauded the book's narrative depth. Shantmanu proposed integrating these stories into college curricula through audio-visual presentations.

Secretary J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, Harvinder Kour, also announced plans for a discussion forum on the book among Jammu's literary circles. The event was attended by Najmus Saqib, former IAS, Indu Chib, Chairman SSB, Principal Professor S.S. Parihar and Professor Hemla Agarwal, members from Hindi Sahitya Mandal, literature lovers, staff and students of the college. Dr. Liaqat Jafri, Urdu poet conducted the proceedings while vote of thanks was extended by Dr. Sugandha Sharma, HoD Botney.

## Div Com Kashmir extends warm greetings on Shab-e-Qadir, Jumat-ul-Vida

**HT News Network**



Srinagar, March 27: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri extended his warm greetings on the auspicious religious occasions of Shab-e-Qadir and Jumat-ul-Vida to the people. On the occasion, he prayed for communal harmony & brotherhood among different communities and prosperity in the region. Meanwhile, he directed all Deputy Commissioners to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential services including electricity and water supply to facilitate the general public.

## DC Srinagar greets people on Shab-e-Qadr and Jummat Ul Vida

**HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat has felicitated people on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Qadr, also known as Lylat-ul-Qadr, the holy night when people congregate to pray to Almighty Allah seeking his forgiveness. The DC also greeted people on the occasion of Jummat Ul Vida the last Friday of the Ramadan ul Mubarak 1446 Hijri. Dr. Bilal prayed for betterment of the people and expressed hope that the holy night would bring Allah's blessings. He also prayed that the auspicious occasion would strengthen the bonds of communal harmony and brotherhood and be a harbinger of peace and prosperity.



## Govt to assess possibility of Eid prayers at Eidgah: Dr Andrabi

**HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 27 (: Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board, Dr Darakhshan Andrabi on Thursday said the government will evaluate the possibility of holding Eid-ul-Fitr prayers at Eidgah in Srinagar while taking into account various factors, including weather conditions. Speaking to the media, Dr Andrabi, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said she has completed her assigned responsibilities, and the final decision now lies with the government. "The sky is overcast, and there are multiple considerations that need to be reviewed before a decision is made," she said. The Waqf Board chairperson further added that necessary arrangements are being put in place for congregational prayers on Juma-tul-Vida and Lailat-ul-Qadr. However, regarding Eid prayers at Eidgah, she said the government will take a final call after assessing all aspects. Notably, the historic Eidgah in Srinagar has traditionally hosted large congregational prayers during Eid. However, in recent years, these gatherings have been disrupted due to factors like security concerns and adverse weather conditions—(KNO)

## Kashmir faces water crisis as groundwater depletes, spring discharge drops sharply

**HT News Network**

Srinagar, Mar 27 : Concerns over water scarcity in Kashmir, driven by declining groundwater levels, receding glaciers and depleting springs affecting water availability across the region, are evident in the data presented in the Lok Sabha. While the government has stated that there is no widespread water crisis, reports confirm that several springs have dried up, causing drinking water shortages in specific areas. According to the data available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the recent precipitation has helped recharge some natural water sources, improving availability in certain areas. However, the long-term trends indicate significant declines in water reserves, raising concerns over sustainability. It also said that a comparison of spring discharge rates between November 2023 and November 2024 shows a sharp decline in several key locations. In Baramulla's Colony Bagh area, the discharge rate has dropped by over 74%, while Srinagar's Cheshmashahi spring recorded a nearly 10% decrease. Similarly, in Kulgam's Parigam Bala, spring discharge fell by over 42%, indicating stress on the region's water sources, it added. However, some areas, such as Ganderbal, have seen an improvement in spring discharge. In Tengpora Giraj, Ganderbal, the discharge rate tripled, while in Gohbal, the water output increased by 20%. These variations highlight localised differences in water availability, with some districts experiencing severe depletion while others show temporary recovery.

### CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

**CM**

He urged the people to use these sacred moments for prayers, self-reflection and seeking divine blessings for peace, prosperity and brotherhood. "May these blessed occasions bring harmony, prosperity and well-being to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Let us pray for peace, unity and the progress of our society and strengthen the bonds of compassion and togetherness," CM Abdullah said. The Chief Minister also called upon the people to remember the underprivileged and extend help to those in need, emphasizing the values of kindness and generosity that define the spirit of Ramadan. He expressed hope that the prayers and the blessings of these holy occasions would inspire everyone to work towards a more just, inclusive, and peaceful society.

**RANA**

These are occasions that hold a special place in our hearts and we should try to perform as many good deeds as possible," he said. He also prayed that the auspicious occasions would strengthen the bonds of communal harmony and brotherhood and be a harbinger of peace and prosperity in J&K.

**DAR**

Similarly, Jumat-ul-Vida, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, holds great importance for Muslims. It is a day of devotion, reflection, and solidarity with the oppressed and underprivileged. The Minister prayed for peace, harmony, and brotherhood among all communities in Jammu and Kashmir, urging people to uphold the values of compassion and unity.

**HM**

struggle despite all odds but neither All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) (G) nor APHC (M) has been able to meet the expectations of the common masses. They failed at every step to represent the people's aspirations and sentiments. I have long ago severed my ties with separatist ideology and today I officially denounce it," he said. Sofi also said he is a true and committed citizen of India and believes in the Indian Constitution. "Neither in the past I have been associ-

ated with any act that is detrimental to the interests of India nor do I or my organisation intend to be a part of any group or forum which will work or has been working against India in future," he said. In a separate statement, J-K Tehreek-I-Istiqamat chairman Ghulam Nabi War too said he and his party are no longer associated with the APHC (G) or (M) or any other ideology that works against the interests of India. War said the Hurriyat had lost ground and was unable to meet the expectations of the people of J-K. "They failed at every step to represent the people's aspirations and sentiments. I have long ago severed my ties with separatist ideology and today, I officially sever my connections from it," he said. (Agencies)

**ROADS**

and Kashmir. Earlier, Congress MP Manish Tewari moved an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha to discuss concerns regarding alleged aberrations in the higher judiciary. In the notice, he alleged that aberrations in the judiciary have raised concerns within the legal community and among citizens across the country. However, Lok Sabha Chairman Om Birla rejected the adjournment notices, saying Opposition MPs had sought a discussion on 'unusual activities' in the judiciary. (AGENCIES)

**LG**

person said. Accompanied by a relative, Renu Sharma, sister of bus conductor Arjun Sharma, received the letter from the Lieutenant Governor at Raj Bhawan here. The LG assured the family would receive all possible assistance and support from the J-K administration. Nine people were killed and 41 injured when terrorists opened fire on a 53-seater bus, which was en route from the Shiv Khori temple to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra on June 9 last year. The attack caused the bus carrying pilgrims to veer off the road and fall into a deep gorge near Teryath village here. Arjun, a resident of Reasi, was the conductor of the bus.

**MODI**

Jammu, most likely in July-August. "There will be no direct train from Delhi or any other part to Kashmir. The passengers will have to de-board at Katra and change the train. Later, the same process will shift to Jammu," the sources said but added that details are expected to be announced within the next few days. Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan visited Jammu few days back and reviewed launch of train service to Kashmir with particular reference to all security aspects. The same day the Chairman Railways Board and Director General RPF had also reviewed various aspects of the situation before launch of train to the Valley, at Katra. Several trials of train from Katra to Baramulla including that of Vande Bharat have been successful and now security issues have also been taken into account, the sources said. Out of the total 272-kilometer, Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, 209 kilometer was commissioned in phases with the first phase of the 118-kilometre Qazigund-Baramulla section commissioned in October 2009, followed by 18-kilometre Banihal-Qazigund in June 2013, 25-kilometre Udhampur-Katra in July 2014 and 48.1-kilometre long Banihal-Sangaldan stretch in February, last year. The work on the 46-kilometre Sangaldan-Reasi section was also completed in June last year, leaving a total of 17 kilometer stretch between Reasi and Katra which was also completed nearly three months back leading to start of different trials of trains including that of Vande Bharat. The project involved a cost of Rs 41,000 crore On January 4, a successful trial run of an electric train was successfully conducted on the Katra-Banihal section. The Railways have conducted series of trials over the past few months on various segments of the track, including the two major milestones of the Anji Khad and Chenab bridges. Kashmir will get a new specially designed Vande Bharat Express Train. This new semi-high-speed train will connect Katra and Srinagar. The new semi-high-speed train connecting Katra and Srinagar will be the third such train in J&K. The Vande Bharat Express Train between Katra and Srinagar has been specially designed with anti-freezing features. Manufactured by Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF), this new Vande Bharat train can operate smoothly in extremely cold conditions, i.e. as low as -20 degrees Celsius. To ensure comfort for passengers and drivers, the train is equipped with advanced heating systems.

The Vande Bharat train for Kashmir valley has several safety features including CCTV cameras, and Emergency Talk Back Unit, among others. The train is not equipped with bulletproof windows but does feature shatterproof windows.

**MILITANTS**

the initial cordon, the officials said, adding it is assumed that the same could have been possibly spotted near Jakhole, approximately 30 kilometers from the initial encounter site. The terrorists were moving through the forest area when a police party headed by a SDPO moved in after getting specific information, the officials said, adding they came under heavy firing resulting in the gunfight. Reinforcements from the police, army, and CRPF were immediately deployed to the area. The quiet village Saffain in Kathua district was shattered by the relentless sounds of gunfire, grenades, and rocket fire as a fierce exchange raged throughout the day, punctuated by a series of powerful explosions. Earlier, a group of terrorists was intercepted on Sunday evening within a 'dhok', a local term for an enclosure in a nursery, in Sanyal village near the International Border with Pakistan. A subsequent massive search operation, involving the police, army, NSG, BSF, and CRPF, utilised advanced technical and surveillance equipment, including helicopters, UAVs, drones, bulletproof vehicles, and sniffer dogs. The search teams discovered evidence on Monday, including four loaded magazines of M4 carbine, two grenades, a bulletproof jacket, sleeping bags, tracksuits, food packets, and materials for constructing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) near the Hiranagar encounter site. Police believe the terrorists infiltrated on Saturday, possibly via a ravine route or a newly constructed tunnel from across the border. Director General of Police, Nalin Prabhat, and Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, have been overseeing the anti-terrorist operation from Kathua for the past four days, the officials said. (Agencies)

**CYBER POLICE**

Police urges public to remain cautious against online scams, fake SMS credit messages, and installing unauthorized applications. Be cautious of video calls from unknown numbers and sharing personal information

online.

**IGP**

which typically sees large congregations for night prayers and other religious observations at mosques across the Kashmir Valley, IGP Kashmir issued clear directives for effective crowd control management. He emphasized the need for adequate security measures to prevent overcrowding, ensure public safety, and maintain the orderly conduct of events across the valley. Specific instructions were given to control entry and exit points, deploy personnel at strategic locations, and collaborate with local community leaders for seamless event coordination. Officers were instructed to enhance vigilance, conduct random checks at sensitive locations, and increase security patrols to mitigate any potential threats during the festivals. In addition to preparations for the festivals, the meeting also focused on the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, which attracts thousands of pilgrims each year. IGP Kashmir underscored the importance of meticulous planning, with a particular focus on logistical arrangements, route security, and emergency response protocols. Throughout the meeting, IGP Kashmir emphasized the need for seamless coordination between various security agencies to address the complex security challenges posed by these major events. The J&K Police remain fully committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of both the public and pilgrims during these significant occasions. (KNS)

**GOVT**

households under the PM's Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and 10 kilograms of free ration per person for the families falling in this category. In his budget speech, the CM also announced increasing pensions for over 10 lakh elderly, widows, divorcees, and specially-abled individuals. As per CM's budget speech announcement, monthly pensions will now be Rs 1,250 for those below 60 years, Rs 1,500 for those aged 60-80, and Rs 2,000 for individuals above 80 years. The Marriage Assistance Scheme for AAY category girls has also seen an increase, with financial aid enhancing to Rs 75000 from Rs 50000—(KNO)





# SMC gears-up for major religious festivities with special arrangements across Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 26: In preparation for the upcoming religious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, Navratra and Eid-ul-Fitr, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has launched a series of special measures to ensure cleanliness, sanitation, and smooth pedestrian and vehicular movement across the city. Commissioner, SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed has directed officials to implement extensive sanitation and facility management efforts at all major religious sites, ensuring a hygienic and organized environment for devotees. SMC will uphold high sanitation standards at key religious locations, including Hazratbal, Jenab Sahib Soura, Dastgeer Sahib Khanyar, Imam Bargah Zadibal, Shahi Hamdan Sahib, Makhdoom Sahib, and prominent temples such as Sharika Devi Temple, Durga Nag Temple, and Purashar Mandir. To accommodate the increased number of devotees, mobile toilet vans will be installed at prominent religious places, remaining operational until the culmination of the festivals.



The Commissioner directed SMC's Encroachment Wing to conduct massive anti-encroachment drives to ensure smooth pedestrian and vehicular movement throughout the city. SMC's Electric Wing was directed to ensure the proper functioning of street

lights, particularly in and around religious sites. Dedicated repair teams will remain on standby to promptly address any lighting issues. SMC will deploy a dog-catching squad during Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, and Eid-ul-Fitr at Hazratbal to prevent stray animals from entering the Asar

Sharief premises. Additionally, sanitation workers will be deployed to maintain cleanliness throughout the area. SMC will conduct special sanitation drives to ensure all religious sites remain clean and hygienic ahead of the festivities. SMC is committed to a clean and hassle-free celebration with these measures in place; it reaffirms its commitment to providing a clean, well-managed, and safe environment for citizens observing these significant religious events. The Commissioner has directed all officials to execute these measures promptly and effectively, ensuring a seamless experience for devotees across Srinagar. For grievances, updates, or additional information, citizens can reach SMC's 24x7 Control Room through the following helplines: 18001807038, 0194-2474499, 0194-2470465. SMC will conduct special sanitation drives to ensure all religious sites remain clean and hygienic ahead of the festivities. SMC is committed to a clean and hassle-free celebration with these measures in place; it reaffirms its commitment to providing a clean, well-managed, and safe environment for citizens observing these significant religious events.

## Hakeem Yaseen extends warm greetings on Shab-e-Qadr, prays for peace in Kashmir

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 27: Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, President of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and former minister, has extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the sacred occasion of Shab-e-Qadr. In his message, Hakeem Yaseen emphasized the immense spiritual significance of this blessed night, which is believed to be the night of divine mercy and forgiveness. He urged people to dedicate the occasion to sincere prayers, seeking peace, stability, and prosperity for Jammu and Kashmir. "Shab-e-Qadr is a night of divine blessings, a time for deep introspection and supplication. Let us collectively pray for an end to suffering, for peace to prevail, and for harmony to be restored in our beloved Kashmir," he said. Hakeem Yaseen further called upon the people to uphold the values of compassion, brotherhood, and unity, especially in these challenging times. He expressed hope that the prayers of this sacred night would bring solace to those in distress and usher in a future of progress and tranquility for the region. "May this blessed night illuminate our hearts with faith, strengthen our resolve for unity, and bring lasting peace to Jammu and Kashmir," he added.



## Take people welfare schemes to needy population: Sat Sharma tells party leaders.

Sat Sharma, Ashok Koul holds meeting with former District President Kashmir.

HT News Network

Srinagar 27, March 2025: Sat Sharma (CA), President, J&K BJP and Ashok Koul, General Secretary (Organization), J&K BJP convened a review meeting with the former BJP District Presidents of Kashmir region in Srinagar. J&K BJP Vice-President Sofi Yousuf, Publicity Secretary Kashmir Arif Raja, senior leader Mudassar Wani were also present in the meeting, which focused on strengthening the party's grassroots presence across the region. Sat Sharma, while addressing the meeting, emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to bolster the BJP's foundation and expand its influence in Jammu & Kashmir. He said that the party is committed to address local concerns and to build a stronger connection with the people. While Sat Sharma enumerated the public welfare works undertaken for the welfare of the poor, needy and the oppressed under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union government, he further asked them to take such pro-people schemes to the needy population with the collab-



orative efforts to yield the maximum results. While this exercise will aid the needy persons, this will further improve the rapport of the party and its activists among the general masses. Ashok Koul, in his address, asked the senior leaders of party to form a strong connection between the senior leadership and the ground level activists while inducting the new entrants into appropriate place into the organization to benefit the party and the people. He prompted the former District Presidents to share the organizational, and the local population

related issues. District Presidents shared valuable insights and feedback from their respective districts, offering perspectives on how to enhance the party's organizational structure and outreach at the local level. Ashok Koul, in his address, asked the senior leaders of party to form a strong connection between the senior leadership and the ground level activists while inducting the new entrants into appropriate place into the organization to benefit the party and the people.

## Director H&P Deptt reviews ongoing works in Kashmir division; asks for expeditious completion

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 27: Director, Hospitality & Protocol Department, Jammu & Kashmir, Ashwani Khajuria, conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing projects in the Kashmir division, with emphasis on completion of pending work in the Additional Block of Circuit House, Srinagar. During the review, the Director expressed serious concern over project delays and issued strict directives to the executing agencies, emphasizing the completion of the work well before April 20, 2025. He instructed the officials to eliminate bottlenecks, expedite progress and uphold the highest standards of quality and efficiency. Among others present were Joint Director H&P Kashmir, Fayaz Ahmad Fayaz, Deputy Director & Assistant Director Hospitality & Protocol Kashmir; Executive Engineer, R&B Division Dalgate and representatives from R&B Electric Division, Mechanical and Hospital Division and other functionaries.



Highlighting the strategic importance of the Additional Block, the Director stressed that its timely completion is critical for accommodating the dignitaries and officials, particularly during high profile government engagements. He emphasized regular progress reviews and close monitoring of the project, cautioning that any further delay or lapse will be dealt with strictly. During the visit, the Director inspected

key guest houses and facilities, assessing the progress on renovation, up-gradation and housekeeping initiatives. Special attention was given to improving boarding and lodging services in line with modern hospitality standards. Reaffirming the commitment of the Hospitality & Protocol Department to excellence, the Director reiterated that all establishments under its jurisdiction must reflect the highest standards of profes-

sionalism and service delivery. The review also included discussion on enhancing coordination with allied departments to streamline services and address any operational challenges. During the review, the Director expressed serious concern over project delays and issued strict directives to the executing agencies, emphasizing the completion of the work well before April 20, 2025. He instructed the officials to eliminate bottlenecks, expedite progress and uphold the highest standards of quality and efficiency. Among others present were Joint Director H&P Kashmir, Fayaz Ahmad Fayaz, Deputy Director & Assistant Director Hospitality & Protocol Kashmir; Executive Engineer, R&B Division Dalgate and representatives from R&B Electric Division, Mechanical and Hospital Division and other functionaries. Highlighting the strategic importance of the Additional Block, the Director stressed that its timely completion is critical for accommodating the dignitaries and officials, particularly during high profile government engagements.

## CUKashmir holds 'Cyber Concave 2025'

HT News Network

Ganderbal, Mar 26: The Code Squad, in collaboration with the Cybersecurity Club at the Department of Information Technology, Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir), hosted "Cyber Concave 2025," a technology event aimed at fostering cybersecurity awareness and hands-on learning, on March 25-26. The event brought together students, faculty, and industry experts through technical lectures, interactive sessions, and competitions focused on cybersecurity and related domains. In his address, Coordinator, Dr. Yash Paul, emphasized the growing significance of cybersecurity and the need for students to develop expertise in the field. The inaugural session featured lectures by: Er. Akeel Ajaz Malik on "Cybersecurity Essentials: Threats, Defense, and Future Trends", Er. Mubarak Ahmad on "Shaping the Future of Personal and Enterprise Network Security". These sessions provided participants with a strong foundation in cybersecurity challenges and emerging technologies.

## Deputy Chief Minister Extends Warm Greetings on Shab-e-Qadr and Juma-tul-Vida

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 27: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary has extended his heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the sacred occasions of Shab-e-Qadr and Juma-tul-Vida. In his message, the Deputy Chief Minister highlighted the spiritual significance of Shab-e-Qadr, a night of divine blessings, reflection, and seeking forgiveness from Almighty Allah. He urged people to use this sacred occasion to introspect, strengthen their faith, and pray for peace, harmony, and prosperity in the region. While extending greetings on Juma-tul-Vida, the last Friday of Ramadhan, Surinder Choudhary emphasized the importance of prayer, charity, and kindness. He encouraged the people to help those in need, as acts of generosity are immensely rewarded during this holy month.

## Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card Crosses 2 Million Milestone, Strengthens Market Presence

HT News Network

Srinagar: In a major achievement, the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card has surpassed the 2 million mark in cards issued, reinforcing its status as one of India's most popular rewards credit cards. Launched in August 2022, the card has witnessed rapid adoption due to its seamless rewards ecosystem, transparent benefits, and strong value proposition for everyday spending. The card has emerged as a leading choice among Indian consumers, capturing over 13% of the net new credit cards issued in the third quarter of the financial year 2024-25, according to RBI data. Its widespread popularity is driven by the extensive privileges it offers across categories such as groceries, fuel, fashion, electronics, travel, and financial services. One of the key features contributing to its success is its seamless integration with UPI payments. With over 12 million UPI transactions processed every month, the card records spending of more than Rs 800 crore in this segment alone. Additionally, spending patterns indicate that groceries, fuel, and utilities account for nearly 30% of total transactions, establishing the Tata Neu HDFC Bank Credit Card as a top-of-the-wallet choice for many customers. The card's appeal extends to a diverse range of users, including students, homemakers, retirees, and self-employed individuals, thanks to an option that allows customers to avail of the card against a fixed deposit. High-value purchases in premium categories such as electronics and jewellery further reflect the strong trust and preference among discerning.

## Commissioner SMC extends heartfelt greetings on Shab-e-Qadr

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 27: In a warm and uplifting message to the citizens of Srinagar, Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed, has extended his heartfelt greetings on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Qadr, also known as the Night of Power. This sacred night serves as a profound moment for reflection, prayer, and spiritual renewal. Dr. Owais emphasized the extraordinary significance of Shab-e-Qadr, highlighting its value as a night that surpasses a thousand months in blessings. "Shab-e-Qadr is not just a night of individual devotion; it is a time for collective worship and unity," he stated, adding, "Let us use this occasion to come together as a community, fostering a spirit of peace and harmony." In a bid to enhance the spiritual experience for residents, Dr. Owais has initiated vital measures to ensure a clean and serene environment throughout Srinagar.



## EDITORIAL

**Implement Minimum Wages Act without any further delay**

For the past many weeks the issue of regularization of the daily wagers has been hitting the headlines of the newspapers and other media outlets. The issue has also been exploited by the leaders of the opposition parties according to their own agenda. The issue is a humanitarian one and needs to be seen through that prism alone. Politics apart, the daily wagers need a compassionate treatment from the people irrespective of their standing in the society.

Regularization is a long drawn process and it may take some time for the government to get this process completed. By that time the government can take a step that would satiate the feelings and aspirations of the thousands of daily wagers. The union territory government can at least implement the Minimum Wages Act and cover the daily wagers under the same. Once reasonable wages are paid to the daily wagers they would feel confident about the same and get a feeling that the government is worried about them.

The union territory government has already constituted a committee headed by chief secretary Atal Dulloo to look into the matter of regularization of daily wagers. The committee has been tasked to complete the assignment within six months. One can hope that the committee completes the job within the stipulated time frame and the process of regularization reaches the logical conclusion. Since the daily wagers are finding it difficult to make the two ends meet bracketing them under the Minimum Wages Act would ensure that they get a reasonable monthly income.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Chaudhary triggered a controversy a few days back when he said that some of the daily wagers having allegiance to Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) are instigating the others to carry out protests against the government. He said that since the government has already constituted a committee in this regard there is no need to create fuss about the same. A daily wager is a daily wager irrespective of the ideology being pursued by them.

The BJP legislators have been targeting the government over this issue and saying that the people at helm are not doing anything in this regard. The BJP was in power along with Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for three and half years between 2015 and 2018. The issue was burning at that time too and during this period no headway whatsoever was made about the regularization of thousands of daily wagers.

**How the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 addresses concerns & Issues**

BY HARSH RANJAN  
SENIOR JOURNALIST

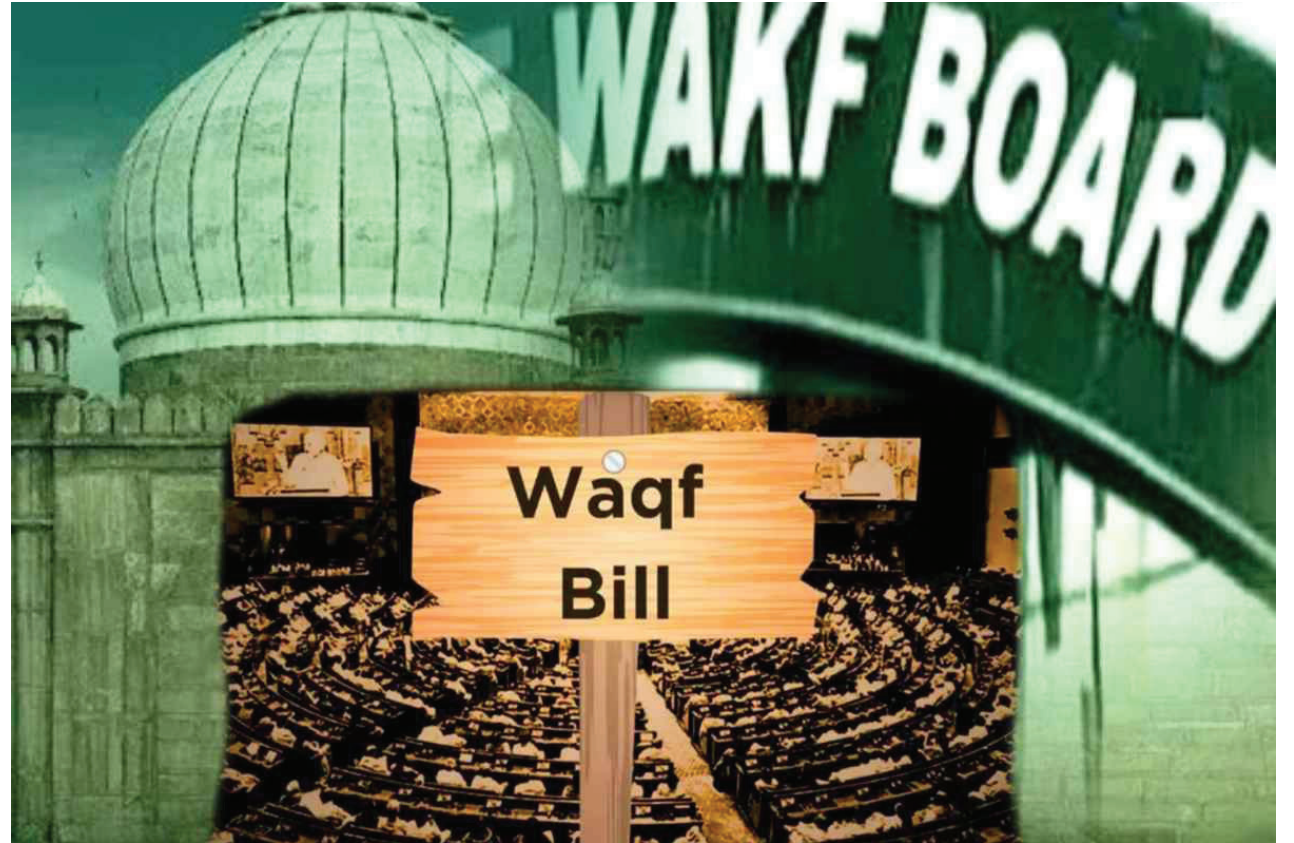
Waqf properties are meant for the welfare of the community, be it for education, healthcare, or religious purposes. However, cases of land grabbing, fraudulent claims, and misuse by politically connected Muslim individuals have raised concerns among common, poor Muslims, particularly women. Instead of serving the poor, these properties have often been used for private benefits.

Though amendment in Waqf had been done a number of times but it had failed to address the genuine concerns of common Muslims. The new Waqf Amendment 2024 Bill ensures that Waqf properties are protected and used as intended.

The new Bill is a significant legislative step aimed at addressing the longstanding issues of mismanagement, corruption, and encroachment in Waqf properties. The proposed amendments focus on enhancing transparency, ensuring legal ownership, and establishing a robust mechanism for accountability and governance within the Waqf Boards.

One of the primary concerns in Waqf property management has been the lack of proper identification and digitization. The Bill facilitates the effective implementation of Sections 54 and 55, which deal with the prevention of encroachments. To ensure the protection of Waqf properties, it mandates the identification and digitization of all such assets, along with expeditious disposal of litigation related to disputed properties. This digital record-keeping will curb unauthorized claims and fraudulent transactions, ensuring that Waqf assets are used for their intended charitable and religious purposes.

The existing definition of Waqf, as revised in 2013, allowed any person to dedicate property as Waqf, leading to numerous fraudulent claims. The Amendment Bill restores the pre-2013 position by requiring that only a person of Islamic faith who is the legal owner of the property can dedicate it as Waqf with an addition that he must have been practicing Islam for at least five years. This measure will prevent dubious dedications and ensure that



only genuine religious endowments are recognized.

Ownership verification is a critical aspect of the reforms. The proposed Section 3A mandates that no person can create a Waqf unless they are the lawful owner of the property. This provision will eliminate cases where properties were falsely claimed as Waqf despite the original owner lacking legal title.

Another key reform is the removal of the "Waqf by user" provision, which previously allowed properties to be designated as Waqf based on long-term usage. This provision had led to several cases where properties, including government-owned assets, were wrongly classified as Waqf. Under the Amendment, only properties with a formal Waqf deed will be recognized as Waqf, preventing unauthorized claims. However, existing registered Waqf properties under "Waqf by user" will be protected unless they are in dispute or government-owned, striking a balance between community interests and public property rights.

To prevent wrongful appropriation of properties by Waqf Boards, the Bill explicitly states that trusts established by Muslims for purposes similar to Waqf but regulated under other statutory provisions will not be treated as Waqf properties. This clarification will prevent undue interference by Waqf Boards in the administration of independent Muslim charitable trusts.

The Bill also addresses administra-

tive inefficiencies within Waqf Boards. A major issue has been the failure to digitize records and upload them on the WAMSI portal. The Amendment mandates that all Waqf properties be registered online within six months, ensuring greater transparency and ease of access.

Another pressing concern has been the wrongful declaration of government properties as Waqf, as seen in the cases of 123 Waqf properties in Delhi and disputes involving the Surat Municipal Corporation. To counter this, Section 3C provides that any government property previously or currently declared as Waqf shall not be considered Waqf unless verified by a designated officer. This officer, appointed by the State Government, will conduct an inquiry and ensure that government assets are protected.

The Bill also proposes transferring the responsibility of pending Waqf surveys to the jurisdiction of the Collector, who will follow state revenue laws to complete the process. This reform will ensure that Waqf property surveys are conducted more efficiently and without bias.

State Waqf Boards have been criticized for their lack of accountability, misuse of power, and collusion with external parties. To address these issues, the Bill mandates that State Waqf Boards hold monthly meetings, ensuring regular oversight and decision-making. Additionally, any application for Waqf registration will be forwarded to the Collector for verification, ensuring fairness in

the process and preventing arbitrary decisions by Waqf Boards.

Further, the Bill rationalizes the exclusive power of Waqf Boards to declare any property as Waqf by omitting Section 40, which previously allowed such declarations without thorough scrutiny. To enhance the integrity of Waqf management, new provisions introduce stricter disqualification criteria for Mutawallis (custodians of Waqf properties) involved in malpractices.

To provide better legal recourse for stakeholders, the Bill includes an appellate mechanism under Section 83(9), ensuring that tribunal decisions can be challenged, thereby strengthening judicial remedies. Moreover, the applicability of the Limitation Act to Waqf disputes will prevent indefinite litigation, fostering timely resolution of conflicts.

Finally, the Bill proposes the removal of Section 108A, which previously granted overriding authority over other laws. This ensures a more uniform and legally sound approach to Waqf governance.

Overall, the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024, introduces much-needed reforms to curb corruption, prevent unauthorized claims, and ensure efficient management of Waqf properties. By emphasizing transparency, legal ownership verification, and administrative accountability, the Bill seeks to restore the credibility of Waqf Boards while protecting the interests of both the Muslim community and the larger public.

**Senseless justice?; Insensitive, inhuman decisions that repeatedly shake the society**

PRIYANKA SAURABHI

Can our justice system become more sensitive in cases of sexual crimes? Or will such insensitive, inhumane verdicts continue to shock society again and again?

On March 17, the Allahabad High Court gave a verdict that surprised everyone from the legal corridors to the general public. The case was of an attempt to rape a minor girl, but while granting bail to the accused, the court made some comments that created a ruckus. The matter heated up very quickly, and the Supreme Court had to intervene. The Supreme Court took immediate action and banned the controversial comments of the High Court and sought a response from the UP government and the central government. Now this case has become even more interesting because it is not just a legal battle but has also become a matter of social consciousness.

**What was the root of the controversy?**

The High Court's decision said that holding the victim's private parts and trying to open the string does not fall under the definition of 'attempt to rape'. This statement proved to be like adding fuel to the fire! Legal experts, social workers and the general public raised questions

on this. Many people termed it as weakening the strict laws made against sexual crimes. The High Court's comment in this case registered under the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act was not only shocking, but it also indicated that perhaps some changes are needed in the judiciary.

**The need for reform in the judiciary**

This is not the first case when a decision of the judiciary has created controversy. Earlier also, many such decisions have come to the fore, which have raised questions on the sensitivity of the justice system in cases related to sexual violence. Sometimes it takes years for the victims to get justice, and in many cases the decisions are so weak that the criminals take advantage of it. Legal experts believe that the judiciary needs to be more aware and sensitive in cases of sexual crimes. It is not enough to just follow the sections written in the law books, but it is also important to see what impact they have on society.

**Supreme Court counterattacks**

The Supreme Court took the High Court's decision seriously and found that such comments can give a wrong message to the society. This can also set a wrong precedent in other cases in the future. In such a situation, the apex court immediately banned the controversial comments of the High Court.

Apart from this, notices were also issued to the UP government and the central government to present their views on this issue. Now it will be interesting to see what stand the governments take on this issue.

**Protest from the streets to social media**

This matter was not limited to the court only. Women's rights organisations, lawyers and social activists called it unjust. From Twitter to the streets, this decision was strongly opposed. Hashtags like #JusticeForVictims and #JudiciaryReform started trending. People said that such decisions can demoralise the victims of sexual violence and can encourage the criminals. Women's organisations also

protested strongly on this issue and demanded that the judiciary should be more cautious in such cases. Many experts say that such decisions can create an atmosphere of fear in the society regarding the safety of women and children.

**What does the law say?**

There are strict provisions against sexual crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the POCSO Act. These have clear provisions for punishment, but many times the courts' interpretation works to give relief to the culprits in these cases. Experts believe that the POCSO Act needs to be amended to make it more effective so that strict and quick justice can be provided in such cases. The government should also consider this seriously and take steps to remove such legal flaws. Now everyone's eyes are fixed on the next hearing of the Supreme Court. Will the High Court's decision be completely reversed? Will the accused's bail be cancelled? Or will the Supreme Court issue a new guideline? This matter is not limited to just a legal battle, but

it has also become a test of the functioning and sensitivity of the Indian judicial system.

**A lesson for society**

This entire incident raises a big question - can our justice system become more sensitive in cases of sexual crimes? Or will such insensitive, inhumane decisions keep on shocking the society again and again? It is important that the justice system takes decisions not only on legal aspects but also on social and moral grounds so that the victims get justice and a strong message is sent to the criminals. Law should not be just words recorded in books, but it should become the voice of the victims. Apart from this, the government and the judiciary will have to work together to ensure that the culprits in cases related to sexual violence get strict punishment and the victims get justice as soon as possible. Until this happens, such controversial decisions will keep on shocking the society, and the victims will keep on losing faith in the justice system.



# The Cost of Dreams: Youth Between Hope and Despair

KAMRAN HAMID BHAT  
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In this world of pain, oppression, the torments of life, and the endless blows of fate, sometimes the heart wonders:

Why is there so much suffering in this world? And is there no one who can ease this pain?

I was leaving my university campus, my thoughts entangled in the weight of books, deadlines, and the pain of unrequited love—a charmer whose thoughts and memories nestled in the deep layers of my heart—and the endless corridors of a future I was free to chase. The air hummed with the chatter of students and corporate employees, the shuffle of shoes against the pavement, and the occasional burst of laughter from a group of students making their way home. The world felt vast and open, like an unwritten story waiting for me to claim my place in its pages.

But then, at the bus stop, while waiting for my bus, I saw them. And suddenly, the vastness of my world shrank into a single moment—a moment I can never unsee.

I saw a father, helpless and without any support, lying on the harsh grills of a bus stand. In deep restlessness, he held his child close to his heart, making sure the little one wouldn't fall. His grip was not one of peace but of necessity, as if his very bones were the only shield he could offer against a world that had already turned its back. His child was wailing in helpless agony, and tears streamed down his face as if the entire city would drown in his grief and perish in sorrow.

His grip was not of peace but of necessity, as if his bones alone could form a shield against a world that had already turned its back. His feet, cracked and caked in

dried mud, bore wounds—open, unhealed cuts that narrated silent stories of suffering, of roads walked barefoot, of battles fought against a life that had only been taken and never given. Seeing this, my heart leapt, and my eyes immediately welled up. I stood frozen. My hands, still clutching books filled with knowledge, suddenly felt heavy in my grasp.

Whether it is love or the ways of the world, why is there so much inequality in this life?

I used to think that inequality existed only in love, but now I see it is woven into the very fabric of this world.

Because I have seen people in love—there is always one who longs more, fights harder, holds on tighter.

Love is never truly equal; there is always one who gives more while the other receives. (As I said, there is no equality in love either.)

What knowledge prepares you for this inequality, this suffering in this cruel world?

What dream is worth chasing if it means leaving people like him behind?

Are we truly young when we mistake youth for something that can be hoarded—when we build fortresses around our ambitions, forgetting that youth was never meant to be stored but spilt recklessly, like ink on forgotten pages? We tell ourselves we are too young to change the world, too caught up in the tides of our own existence to turn back and extend a hand.

But what, then, do we make of those whose youth has been stolen before they ever had a chance to grasp it?

Where do the youth live? Is it in the carefree laughter of children running barefoot through the fields? In the plucking of flowers,

Is this what it means to grow up? To look away? To let the world decide whose youth is worth preserving and whose is worth stealing?

the exchange of whispered secrets between siblings, the easy innocence of a life untouched by hardship?

Or is it here—bleeding into the cracked pavement, cradled in the weary arms of a father who has long forgotten what it means to be young?

If youth is meant to be free, why do I see it chained to pain?

Why do I see it gasping for breath in the arms of a man who should have been running, leaping, dreaming—but instead has only enough strength left to be a shelter?

Hands too small to bear such burdens, stained with the filth of streets where childhood should never belong. Blisters carve stories into their veins, wounds whisper louder than their voices—long silenced by the indifference of the world.

Where I live, there are many wanderers around me who have no permanent place to call home.

Sometimes, when I pass by them on the streets, I see nothing in their eyes—just an empty, aching silence.

O my heart, have you seen their eyes? Those hollow wells where

dreams drown before they ever have the chance to ripple?

There is nothing in their eyes—I have looked closely, and I have seen it for myself.

Those eyes are empty, utterly vacant.

They do not hold the weight of tomorrow, nor the warmth of love for another.

They do not dream, nor do they deceive.

They are not burdened with hope, nor tainted by hypocrisy.

They are simply hollow—eyes that have seen too much, yet hold nothing at all.

Do you not feel the weight of their hunger, the ache pressed into their ribs like an iron brand of fate?

We walk past them with pockets full of coins, never realizing that to them,

Wealth is not a fleeting game but the cruellest joke.

The coins we let slip from our fingers—careless, thoughtless—

Mean the difference between hunger and survival,

Between another night on the cold pavement and the distant hope of warmth.

Push love beyond the tongue—

let it spill like rain on their barren

days. Let their cheeks rise, if only for a moment, like mountain smiles that defy the storm of a world that has left them behind.

And yet, Why do we watch in silence?

Why do we stare at how they tame their hair with fingers stiff from suffering,

When even the slightest whisper of cruelty cuts through their fragile hope?

We build mansions to guard our insecurities.

We hoard wealth for days we may never live to see.

We call ourselves wise for planning futures so far ahead that we forget to live in the now.

But here, beneath the flickering streetlights of a forgotten night,

A father holds his entire world in his arms—

Not in ambition, not in hope, But in sheer, aching survival.

Is this what it means to grow up? To look away?

To let the world decide whose youth is worth preserving and whose is worth stealing?

We are told that to survive, we must be strong.

That to succeed, we must be ruthless.

But if strength means turning a blind eye,

If success means stepping over those who have already been trampled,

Then what is it worth? My heart became the dart for the silent grief in that moment.

I thought of the books in my bag, the dreams I carried so freely,

While this man held his world in his arms—

Not in ambition, not in hope, But in the desperate act of holding on.

And then, I wondered—was the

world's fiery tongue not enough, Burning through his days, scorching his skin with indifference?

Would fate strike again, aiming at the softest chamber of his heart—

The child he held so tightly, the only warmth in his cold reality?

Are we ever truly young when we let ourselves be numbed by the suffering around us?

When we convince ourselves that someone else will help, someone else will save, someone else will care?

Are we ever truly young when our hands remain idle,

When our voices remain silent, When our hearts refuse to break for the broken?

Tell me—do we rise by walking past them?

Or do we rise by bending down, by lifting another?

Dedicated to a world that glorifies youth yet steals it too soon.

To the children who trade playgrounds for factory floors.

To the daughters who barter their dreams for safety.

To the sons who learn too young that a full stomach is a privilege, not a right.

To the fathers who become walls of flesh when the world offers no shelter.

To the mothers who swallow their hunger so their children can eat.

This is for the youth spent not in laughter, but in survival.

For the ones who should be running free but are instead shackled by the weight of an unjust world.

May your sheltering arms be stronger than the storms that rage against you.

The writer is a 1st-year student at the Jain University, Bangalore

## The Nazi Quest in Europe

SIDHARTH P K

The technological advancement in Europe brings forth some snippets in history's range to understand. Nazis developed an apt scientific interest in realizing the true potentials of what is today modern science. Scientist who collaborated with the Nazi party carved out some meaning to their science. The racial theories and ideologues propagated in Nazi research adds an impetus and imprint to superiority.

The German world of Nazi science boomed industrious capacity and well to do foundations. The Nazi chief program to build modernity in different spheres of life, contain uncertainty. The scientist of today closely observe the infamous Josef Mengele's experiments as pseudo.

Nazis are judgmental in the annals of history and the capricious portion of the development is not spoken. The science with theory and effect of practice, are one layer and it uses denominations. A history is not fully given without repetitions, reproductions and revisions.

Author is an Research Scholar, Teacher/ Poet

# Is Jammu and Kashmir Drowning in Debt? A Call for Financial Prudence

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Jammu and Kashmir's financial condition has been a topic of concern in recent years, with its debt burden increasing significantly. As of 2022-23, J&K's financial liabilities stood at Rs 1,12,797 crore, with public debt alone reaching Rs 69,617 crore. This is a sharp rise from Rs 1,01,462 crore in 2021-22, and the debt has tripled over the past decade. Furthermore, projections indicate that the debt-to-GDP ratio could reach 51% by 2024-25, raising serious concerns about the Union Territory's fiscal sustainability.

Despite these challenges, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has expressed optimism, projecting a 7.5% Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth for 2023-24. While this signals potential economic improvement, the rising debt burden underscores the urgent need for sustainable financial reforms. To ensure long-term stability, the J&K government must implement aggressive and strategic measures to manage its debt, boost revenue, and create a self-sustaining economy.

### Key Strategies for Addressing Jammu and Kashmir's Financial Challenges

**Selling Off Dead Assets**  
One of the most immediate and effective ways to reduce debt is by liquidating non-performing assets (NPAs). The J&K government owns vast amounts of underutilized or idle properties that generate little to no revenue. By strategically selling or leasing these assets, the government can generate significant cash flow, which can be used to reduce outstanding liabilities.

Instead of borrowing to fund routine expenditures, future borrowing should be strictly directed towards capital expenditure—projects that contribute to long-term economic growth. This will help J&K break free from the cycle of debt accumulation for operational expenses.



### Increasing Capital Expenditure (Capex) on Innovation and Industry

While government subsidies and financial aid play a role in social welfare, indiscriminate financial assistance without a clear economic return can further strain the economy. Instead, the government should prioritize capital expenditure on projects that stimulate economic activity and job creation.

For instance, rather than providing unemployment benefits to anyone with a degree, the government should establish venture capital funds and startup incubators to support innovative business ideas. By fostering entrepreneurship and industry, J&K can expand its tax base, create more jobs, and reduce dependency on government subsidies.

Additionally, the government should attract private-sector investments through public-private partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, and technology. Encouraging investments in these sectors will help diversify the economy and create a more sustain-

able revenue model.

### Strict Tax Enforcement and Awareness

A major challenge in J&K's financial ecosystem is weak tax compliance. A very small percentage of the population pays direct taxes, and many residents view filing an Income Tax Return (ITR) as merely a way to receive a refund rather than a civic duty. This mindset must change.

The government should launch awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of tax compliance in nation-building. Local-level recognition programs, tax incentives, and penalties for non-compliance should be introduced to encourage broader participation. Digital tax administration tools should also be implemented to improve tax collection efficiency and reduce evasion.

### Strengthening the Tourism and Handicraft Sectors

Tourism and handicrafts are the backbone of J&K's economy, yet these sectors remain underutilized.

The government must take aggressive steps to modernize infrastructure, improve connectivity, and promote J&K as a year-round tourist destination. Special economic zones (SEZs) for handicrafts and textile exports should be established to boost local industries and increase revenue generation.

Additionally, the government should support artisans and small businesses in marketing their products globally through e-commerce platforms. This will help increase exports and bring in much-needed foreign exchange.

### Rationalizing Government Expenditure

The J&K government must adopt a more disciplined approach to financial management. A detailed audit of government spending should be conducted to eliminate wasteful expenditures and identify areas where costs can be reduced. Subsidy reforms should be implemented to ensure that financial assistance is targeted only at those who truly need it, rather than being

distributed indiscriminately. Digital governance and e-administration should be leveraged to improve efficiency, reduce bureaucratic costs, and curb corruption. By streamlining governance, the government can improve service delivery while simultaneously cutting down operational expenses.

### Diversifying Revenue Sources

Over-reliance on central grants is not a sustainable long-term solution. J&K must explore alternative revenue sources such as:

**Renewable Energy Projects:** Given its geographical advantages, J&K has immense potential in hydro and solar power generation. Investment in these sectors can create revenue streams and reduce dependency on external financial support.

**Mineral Resource Utilization:** The region is rich in minerals like sapphire, limestone, and gypsum. A structured mining policy can ensure responsible extraction while contributing to the state's revenue.

**IT and Knowledge Economy:** Developing IT hubs and promoting education-based industries can attract investment and create high-paying jobs, reducing reliance on traditional sectors.

### Conclusion: A Sustainable Financial Future for J&K

Jammu and Kashmir's rising debt levels highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive financial reform strategy. While economic growth projections provide a glimmer of hope, debt sustainability requires aggressive policy actions. By selling off non-performing assets, prioritizing capital expenditure on growth-oriented sectors, strengthening tax enforcement, and diversifying revenue sources, J&K can create a financially stable and self-sufficient economy.

The road to fiscal stability will not be easy, but with disciplined financial management and bold economic reforms, Jammu and Kashmir can secure a prosperous future for its people.



# Sub-District Hospital Tral: Deprived of Modern Medical Facilities, Thousands Left Helpless

Tral - A land where nature's beauty shines in every corner, yet its people remain deprived of a functional healthcare system. The only major medical facility in the region, the Sub-District Hospital Tral, which was supposed to be a beacon of hope, is drowning in a sea of despair. Serving 116 villages and a population of hundreds of thousands, this healthcare center, on paper, holds the status of a Community Health Center (CHC). How-

ever, the ground reality tells a different story—one of dilapidated infrastructure, outdated equipment, and an acute shortage of staff, making it resemble nothing more than an old, neglected rural dispensary. Essential diagnostic services such as MRI, CT scan, a blood bank, and even basic laboratory facilities are nonexistent.

The absence of specialist doctors, a severe lack of paramedical staff, and inadequate emergency services have forced the people of Tral into a distressing ordeal. Even for minor treatments, they are compelled to trav-



el to Srinagar or other cities, bearing the heavy burden of financial costs, time loss, and agonizing journeys—pushing the average patient to their limits. For years, pleas have been made, protests have erupted, and demands have echoed, yet all have seemingly disappeared into the depths of government files, unheard and unacknowledged. The maternal and child healthcare facilities are also severely lacking, exposing hundreds of women to unnecessary risks each year. The time has come for the

government to reassess its priorities and grant the people of Tral their long-denied fundamental right—a fully functional, well-equipped, and modern healthcare center. If, once again, mere promises and hollow assurances are given, this will no longer remain just a story of a failing hospital—it will mark the death of public trust in the system. The question now is: Will the government wake up from its slumber? Or will the people of Tral continue to be the face of helplessness?

## DC orders immediate suspension of Aadhaar Operators involved in forgery cases in Rajouri

HT News Network

Jammu 27-03-2025 A Mega awareness camp was organised by Department of Animal husbandry here to address the growing unemployment and its containment through employment generation schemes of Animals husbandry department.

At the onset of the programme Director Animal Husbandry Department Jammu Dr Parvinder Singh Sudan conducted a plantation drive giving message to all the farmers "Plant trees, Sow happiness".

Later on Farmers were briefed about the various departmental schemes under holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) regarding Roadmap for dairy development, Roadmap for poultry development, development of fodder development in UT of J&k further, Departmental Schemes of sheep husbandry was also briefed to the farmers by officers of Animal Husbandry and Sheep husbandry Jammu.

Sh.kulbushan Khajuria a progressive farmer thanked Director and



CAHO Jammu for transforming the district from milk deficit to exporting milk to Punjab Moga. He request a mela or mandi for purchase of animals (cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat and poultry) at district level so that we can sale our animals duly maintained and reared under Satellite heifer rearing units established in district Jammu under Holistic Agriculture development programme.

While addressing the Gathering and Dr. Sudan emphasized Animal

husbandry and farmers are counterpart of each other, Department can't do anything without the support of the all the progressive farmers. Director informed the gathering that 20 High genetic merit Bulls are about to be imported for J&K from USA and we in future will be able to produce our own sex sorted semen Said Dr Sudan.

Director also emphasized the need for going towards milk value addition so that milk produced don't go in vain and farmers economy will be enhanced with sky touching heights.

The camp seen the presence and deliberations by eminent personalities including

- Saleem Patigaroo, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO), Jammu
- \* Sh. Sandeep Singh Chib, President, J&K Dairy Association
- \* Sh. Tajinder Singh, Member, Kisan Advisory Board, Jammu
- \* Sh. Kulbushan Khajuria, Progressive Farmer
- \* Sh. Captain Rajinder Singh, Progressive Dairy Farmer
- \* Sh. Avtar Singh, Sarpanch, Chatha

## NSS IUST organizes Traffic Awareness Programme

HT News Network

Awantipora, March 27: The National Service Scheme (NSS), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), in collaboration with the J&K Traffic Police, organized a Traffic Awareness Programme today to sensitize students about various traffic-related issues. Mr. Javaid Ahmad Moori, Traffic Police Officer Shopian Pulwama served as the key resource person and provided a detailed overview of traffic laws and regulations essential for safe driving. He extensively discussed contemporary challenges in traffic management on NH-44, highlighting the need for responsible road behavior. The event featured expert sessions on road safety and responsible driving, an interactive session with Traffic Police officials, and an awareness rally



where NSS volunteers actively distributed informative pamphlets. The programme emphasized the importance of helmets, seat belts, and pedestrian safety. The event was attended by Dr. Kaiser Giri (Dean E&T, IUST), Dr. Ruman Bashir (Controller of Examinations, IUST), Dr. Sheikh Jameel (Senior Proctor), Dr. Iqbal Qureshi (Deputy Registrar, Estates), and Dr. Mubashir Assistant Director

of Sports, along with students, officers from the Transport Department, and ancillary staff. In his remarks, Dr. Tariq Ahmad Ganaie, NSS Coordinator, underscored the significance of sensitizing youth about traffic norms, stating that such initiatives play a crucial role in promoting responsible civic behavior. The programme concluded with the participants taking an oath to adhere to traffic safety.

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR  
Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.  
Ground Water Division Srinagar  
Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.  
E-mail: - pnegwd@yahoo.com. Tel./Fax No: - 0194-2411285

### Extension Notice 10<sup>th</sup>.

Subject: 1. Construction of Bore Well for Halwadi District Bandipora.  
2. Construction of Bore Well at Chapran District Bandipora.

Reference: This office e-NIT No. 48-35-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2024-25, issued vide endorsement No: 35-PHE/GWDS/24-25/Corrs./9291-9301, dated: 18-12-2024. Bearing Tender ID No. 2024\_PHE\_268425\_1 & 2.

Due to "Poor Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 27-03-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM are extended as per the details given below: -

S.No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Period of submission of bids	08-04-2025 Up-to 11:00 AM
2.	Date of opening of tenders	09-04-2025 03.00 PM

NOTE:  
All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endstt: nos.

DIPK-13473/24  
Dated: 27-03-2025

Executive Engineer  
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.  
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

### اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ میرے بینک اکاؤنٹ زیر نمبر 0122040100006937 برائے پہلے میرا نام فردوس احمد سیخ انراج ہوا ہے جب کہ میرا اصل نام مطابق ادھار کارڈ فردوس احمد موحی ہے اب اس کی بجائے کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہوتو ہر سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر مزاحمتیں کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہتر  
فردوس احمد موحی ولد عبدال سلام موحی

### اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ میرے بینک اکاؤنٹ برائے پہلے میرا نام فردوس احمد سیخ انراج ہوا ہے جبکہ میرا اصل نام مطابق ادھار کارڈ حسین اختر ہے اب اس کی بجائے کرانی مطلوب ہے کسی کو کوئی عذر ہوتو ہر سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر مزاحمتیں کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

المستہتر  
Haseena Akther  
C/O Rayez Ahmad Rather  
R/O Laripora pahlagam

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have Changed my name from Jawahira to JALLA BANO and in future & will be known as JALLA BANO. As I have to change the Same in my Passport also.

JALLA BANO  
W/o Mohammad Sultan Patloo  
R/o Bagdaji Mohalla Ranawari Srinagar

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to correct the name of my son as Muzamil Muneer Mir S/o Muneer Ahmad Mir which is wrongly mentioned as Muzamil Manzoor Mir S/o Manzoor Ahmad Mir Now I want to change the name of my son. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Muneer Ahmad Mir  
Father of Muzamil Muneer Mir  
R/o Najibhat Baramulla

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to correct the name of my son as Mudasir Muneer Mir S/o Muneer Ahmad Mir which is wrongly mentioned as Mudasir Manzoor Mir S/o Manzoor Ahmad Mir Now I want to change the name of my son. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Muneer Ahmad Mir  
Father of Mudasir Muneer Mir  
R/o Najibhat Baramulla

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is being notified that my name in my Aadhar Card having Aadhar card number this 987574105762 has been wrongly mentioned as Hamna jan my real name is Hamna jahangeer.

DOB 12/03/2024  
C/o Jahangeer Ahmad Rather  
Address: KAWARIGAM HARDUTOORU, achabal anantanag, j&k 192201

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my BSC 2nd year marks card bearing registration number 24949 - 2011 Roll No 1092 session August - Separate 2013. Now I want to apply for its duplicate in this connection if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR srinagar within seven days from the date of publication after that no objection will be entertained.

Name....LATIF AHMAD LONE  
S/O GH MOHD LONE  
R/O MAMOOSA PATTAN

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on the name MOHD AKRAM DAR S/O GH QADIR DAR ..Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 0206050006626 wants to be registered on the name MOHD AKBER DAR R/O GH QADIR DAR .If anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may file his/her objection in the concerned PDD office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name...MOHD AKBAR DRA  
S/O ...GH QADIR DAR  
R/O SOIBUGH  
DISTT..... BUDGAM

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public notice that i ashiq Hussain bhat s/o mohammad ramzan R/O Kripal pora bala that my son Rouf ali bhat is born on 09-06-2014 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of date of birth certificate he she the context of bdo singpora with in period of seven days

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public through the meduim Of notice that i sywd showkat s/o Aesa shah R/o Harinara that my son namely syed Aamir shah s/o syed showkat shah r/o Harinara is born 05-12-2010 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of date of birth certificate he she the context of Bdo singpora with in period of seven days

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public notice that i afshana Bano w/o ashique Hussain shugnoo R/o diver yakman pora that my both sons namely Isania zehra D-O-B is 11-07-2018 2 Danish ali 24-02-2019 3 irfan ali 02-03-2022 s/o ashique Hussain shugnoo if any body have any objection regarding issuance of D-o-b certicate he she the context of BDO singpora with in period of seven days

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public through the medium of notice that imohammad ibrahim bhat s/o asgar bhat R/o Harinara that my father asgar bhat is passed away on 17-07-2002 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of death certicate he she the context of BDO singpor with in period of seven days

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public notice that i Hamid ali Bhat s/o ghulam Hassan bhat R/o Harinara that my father Gh HassN bhat is passed away on 05-03-2003 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of death certicate He she the context of BDO sinpora with in period of seven days

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public through medium of notice that i mohammad ibrahim bhat and Hamid bhat resident of Harinara that my aunt khatooni D/o assad bhat is passed on 05-12-1983 if any body have any objection regarding issuance of death certificate he she the context the BDO singpora with in period of seven days

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR  
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR KREERI  
(Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

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

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of FURQAN FAROOQ S/O FAROOQ AHMAD DAR R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 05/03/2006 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order. In this connection, if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI



# DC Kupwara flags off two 4x4 Ambulances with ALS, School Bus for border areas of Machill, Keran

HT News Network

KUPWARA, MARCH 27: District Administration Kupwara today organized a vibrant and well attended ceremony at D. C Office Complex Kupwara here during which Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan flagged off two newly approved Ambulances with Advanced Life Support (ALS) and a School Bus for border areas of Machill and Keran to boost the health care and education sectors of these far flung blocks. On the occasion, one each Ambulance with Advanced

Life Support facility have been allotted to PHC Keran and PHC Machill to add to the existing healthcare machinery of these areas. Besides, a 20 seater School Bus have been allotted to Higher Secondary School Keran to facilitate the students. Both were the long pending demand of the local people of Keran and Machill which were resolved today by the District Administration.

Speaking at the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that the District Administration Kupwara is committed to ensure development and welfare of all regions of the district especially border and far flung



areas of Machill, Keran and Karnah. She said the Ambulances equipped

with state of the art health care technology with 4x4 gears will boost the health care support in these border areas which have tough terrain and topography. She added that such initiatives from administration will also continue in future as well with special focus on far flung border areas. Referring to the Robotic Labs, she said two Robotic (STEM) Labs one each at BHSS Kupwara and BHSS Handwara have been established by the District Administration Kupwara which will inculcate scientific and mathematical temperament among students of different classes. DC said that the Robotic Labs have

also been approved for BHSS Machill, GHSS Tangdar and BHSS Keran which will be established in coming days. It is the first of its venture in Kupwara where students will be motivated for AI learning. DDC Member Kalaroo, Mustaf Rahie; CEO Kupwara, CMO, CPO and large number of employees and people were present during the ceremony. Meanwhile, local people and senior citizens of Machill and Keran areas have expressed their gratitude towards the District Administration especially DC Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan for redressing their long pending demands.

## Javed Dar visits fire affected families in old town Baramulla, assures timely relief, rehabilitation

Farooq Rather

BARAMULLA, MARCH 27: Minister for Agricultural Production, Rural Development Department, Javed Ahmad Dar, today visited the old Town Baramulla to take stock of the situation following a devastating fire incident occurred in the intervening night of March 23. The fire resulted in destruction of 17 houses, leaving 29 families homeless. The Minister was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, Minga Sherpa and other senior officials from the district administration. During his visit, Javed Dar inspected the site of the incident and personally interacted with the affected families to understand their grievances and immediate needs. The residents and local committee members shared their concerns with the Minister and requested for immediate rehabilitation, establishment of a permanent Fire & Emergency Services station in the area and a waiver of electricity and water charges for one year to ease their financial



burden. The Minister assured the embers of the affected families that the government stands with them in this difficult time and will take all necessary measures to ensure their swift rehabilitation and recovery. Javed Dar directed the district administration to expedite assessment of losses and ensure that the affected families receive financial assistance and other support without delay. The Deputy Commissioner briefed the Minister about the prompt response of the district

administration following the incident. He informed that an immediate relief amount of Rs 10.60 lakh has already been distributed among the affected families to provide them with interim support. He apprised that directions have been issued to the concerned officers to assess the damage in accordance with the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) norms, ensuring that further compensation and assistance are provided at the earliest. The Deputy Commissioner also highlighted that temporary shelters, food supplies and other essential commodities have been arranged for the displaced families. He assured the Minister that district administration is closely coordinating with various departments and local authorities to provide continued support to the affected families until their proper rehabilitation. The Minister commended the district administration for their timely response and emphasized the need for long term measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

## DC Bandipora chairs meeting on Waste Management Plan in & around Wullar Lake

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri today convened a meeting at mini secretariat to formulate a comprehensive action plan for waste management in and around Wullar Lake. The meeting deliberated on effective strategies for preserving the ecological integrity of Wullar Lake and discussed waste management challenges, pollution control measures and sustainable solutions to ensure the cleanliness of Wullar Lake. The discussions focused on waste collection, proper disposal, community participation and coordination between departments to implement an efficient waste management system.

Qadri emphasized the need for a coordinated approach to waste management and urged all stakeholders to actively contribute to preserving Wullar Lake's natural ecosystem. DC directed concerned departments to submit detailed action plans outlining their roles and responsibilities in implementing waste



management measures. He stressed on enforcement of pollution control regulations to prevent waste accumulation around the lake besides directed the concerned to develop a sustainable waste management framework. The meeting was attended by Project Coordinator, WUCMA Owais Farooq Mir; Assistant Commissioner Development, Irfan Bahadur, District Officer, Pollution Control Board, Chief Executive Officer, MC Bandipora and other concerned. The

meeting deliberated on effective strategies for preserving the ecological integrity of Wullar Lake and discussed waste management challenges, pollution control measures and sustainable solutions to ensure the cleanliness of Wullar Lake. The discussions focused on waste collection, proper disposal, community participation and coordination between departments to implement an efficient waste management system.

## Police Organizes Awareness Programme on New Criminal Laws in Budgam

HT News Network

Srinagar March 27: Cyber Cell of Police District Awantipora has successfully resolved several cases of online financial fraud, recovering a total of 1,89,238/- Multiple complaints were received involving fraudulent schemes amounting to 1,89,238/-. These scams involved fake investment opportunities where victims were promised high returns for additional deposits. Acting swiftly, the Cyber Cell of Police District Awantipora collected evidence and necessary information from the victims. Using advanced cyber means, they managed to freeze the fraudulent transactions. An amount of 1,89,238/- was held and recovered and thereof it was successfully credited back to the victims. Police urges public to remain cautious against online scams, fake SMS credit messages, and installing unauthorized applications. Be cautious of video calls from unknown numbers and sharing personal information online.

## Police organizes medical camp on drug abuse in Awantipora

HT News Network

Awantipora March 27: As part of "Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhyan" under Civic Action Programme (CAP) 2024-25, Police in Awantipora organized a Medical Camp on drug abuse at Village Reshipora. The event aimed to provide general awareness, counselling, and support to individuals struggling with addiction. The camp was inaugurated by SDPO Awantipora and DySPDAR along with incharge Police Post Reshipora and other officers from Police Awantipora. Speaking at the event, officers emphasized the need for collective efforts to eradicate drug abuse from society. A medical team from PHC Awantipora along with paramedical staff, examined patients. Free medicines were distributed based on diagnosis. The medical team emphasized the importance of physical and mental well-being, hygiene, and preventive healthcare. They also urged the youth to avoid drug abuse. Speaking at the event, officers emphasized the need for collective efforts to eradicate drug abuse from society. A medical team from PHC Awantipora along with paramedical staff, examined patients. Free medicines were distributed based on diagnosis. The medical team emphasized the importance of physical and mental well-being, hygiene, and preventive healthcare. They also urged the youth to avoid drug abuse.

## Status of registrations on JK Samadhan portal reviewed at Kulgam

7: Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Viqar Ahmad Giri today conducted a comprehensive review of registration on JK Samadhan grievance redressal portal. During the review, the ADC assessed the status of registrations on the portal and directed all concerned departments to expedite the resolution. He emphasized a citizen-centric approach, urging officials to ensure complaints are addressed within stipulated timelines to enhance public trust. During the



meeting, the chair was apprised that around 41000 registrations have been made by different departments on Samadhan portal in the district. To enhance the system's efficiency, the ADC directed the designation of nodal officers within departments for close monitoring of grievance redressal. He also stressed the need for regular reviews to assess departmental performance in resolving public concerns. The meeting was

## Irfan Ali Shah assumes charge as Conservator of Forests, Kashmir North Circle

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 27: Irfan Ali Shah today assumed charge of Conservator of Forests (CF), Kashmir North Circle. Shah has previously served in key positions, including CF Srinagar, CF South, CF Central, and CF Working Plan. Upon taking office, Irfan Ali chaired a comprehensive review meeting with the Divisional Forest Officers of the North Circle. The meeting focused on critical forestry issues and the strategic roadmap for the region. He reviewed the current protection scenario, ongoing departmental works, and achievements under initiatives such as Ek Paed Maa Ke Naam, eco-tourism projects, FCA cases, court matters, and manpower challenges.



Emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts, Shah underscored the need for synergy with local communities, government agencies, and stakeholders to effectively safeguard the region's rich biodiversity and promote sustainable forest management. The local community and employees of the Forest Department extended a warm welcome to Irfan Ali Shah, upon assuming the charge.

## CUKashmir's Rajbhasha Cell holds workshop

HT News Network

Ganderbal, Mar 27: The Rajbhasha Cell, Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) organized a workshop on "Use of Microsoft 365 in the Implementation of Rajbhasha" in the blended mode at varsity's Green Campus here on Thursday. In his address, Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool emphasized the critical role of technology in facilitating the implementation of Rajbhasha and lauded the Cell for its efforts. He highlighted the need for proficiency in Hindi—both in reading and writing—and stressed the importance of achieving 100% implementation of Hindi in official communications. He expressed confidence that the workshop would further train employees and encourage increased usage of Hindi across the University. External expert, Director, Regional Languages, Microsoft, New Delhi, Mr. Balendra Sharma, congratulated the University on its commendable efforts in Rajbhasha implementation. He delivered a detailed presentation on "Use of Microsoft 365 in the Implementation of Rajbhasha," demonstrating how AI-integrated tools simplify Hindi usage in official



tasks. He commended the University's progress, noting that over 70 per cent of its employees are proficient in Hindi and actively implementing it in their official tasks. Speaking on the occasion, Finance Officer, Dr. Arif Khan, appreciated the collective efforts toward Rajbhasha implementation. He stressed the importance of IT tools in education and administration, stating that they transform hard work into smart work, thereby enhancing efficiency. Hindi Adhikari, Dr. Sakeena Akhtar, provided an overview about the workshop's objectives, highlighting that 70 per cent of official correspondence at the University is currently conducted in Hindi, with ongoing efforts to achieve full implementation. She said the event aimed at leveraging

technology to enhance the effective implementation of Hindi in official communication. The workshop featured multiple technical sessions conducted by Rajbhasha officials, focusing on the application of Microsoft 365 in enhancing Hindi usage across University operations. Dr. Tariq Ahmad Shah, Sr Asst Librarian proposed the vote of thanks.

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## District Administration Kishtwar hosts Iftar

■ HT News Network



KISHTWAR, MARCH 27: The District Administration Kishtwar organised an Iftar party to celebrate the spiritual bliss of the holy month of Ramadan, signifying peace, harmony and brotherhood.

The event, held here at the TRC, was hosted by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan. The Iftar Party provided a momentous opportunity to individuals from different walks of life, including government functionaries from the District Administration, Army, Police, CRPF, Retired Officers, prominent Citizens from Civil Society, media personnel and employees from different departments, to come together and share a meal.

The Iftar Party aimed to foster a sense of unity, camaraderie, and togetherness among the district administration and the citizens of Kishtwar in the holy month of Ramadan. The DC extended warm wishes to all present and underscored the profound significance of Ramadan in promoting peace, compassion, and goodwill within society.

He highlighted the importance of such events in bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and faiths in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. This collective moment of reflection reinforced the administration's commitment to inclusivity, unity, and working together for the betterment of the district.

## GDC Doda hosts interaction of NCC Cadets with Group Commander

■ HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 27: Government Degree College (GDC) Doda hosted an interactive session where Brig. D.N. Pandey, Group Commander, NCC Group Headquarters Jammu, and Col. M.K. Sharma, Commanding Officer, 10JK Battalion NCC Bhalra Bhaderwah had a hearty talk with the NCC cadets of the Institution.

The guests were warmly welcomed by the College Principal Dr. Javed Iqbal and Associate NCC Officer (ANO) Lt. Dr. Jaswant Singh with the presentation of a bouquet of flowers.

## TEACHERS FORUM GREETES PEOPLE ON THE EVE OF SHAB-E-QADR, JUMAT-UL-VIDA

■ HT News Network

Srinagar :-Jammu Kashmir Teachers Forum extends warm greetings to people on the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Qadr & Jumat-ul-vida. In his greeting message, the Chairman Mr. Mohammad Shafi Rather, said that Shab-e-Qadr promotes harmony in the society and inspires people to carry forward the virtues of truthfulness, honesty, generosity & empathy. Mr. Rather appealed the people to pray wholeheartedly during the night for peace, prosperity and mutual brotherhood. He said the blessed night, during which the holy Quran was revealed, was an occasion for us to introspect our lives and seek Allah's forgiveness, generosity and guidance. In a similar message, Provincial president Kashmir Mr. Bhat Javid greeted the people on the blessed occasion.

# DC reviews progress of dev projects, implementation of Welfare Schemes in Rajouri

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma today chaired a meeting to assess the physical and financial progress of the development projects and implementation of different welfare schemes in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the ongoing construction of Tehsil office (Niabat) buildings at Kangri, Rajal, and Manjakote, emphasizing the need for timely completion. He directed the concerned officers to expedite the work while maintaining quality standards.

Further, the progress of projects under the SAMAGRA initiative was assessed, including the Boys Hostel at Thandi Kassi, the Physics and Chemistry Lab at Laroka and the construction of three classrooms at GHSS Khawas. The DC instructed the executing agencies to ensure the projects are completed within the stipulated time frame.



A detailed review of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana was conducted, with directions issued to all Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADMs) and Tehsildars to closely monitor its implementation. The Deputy Commissioner stressed the impor-

ance of obtaining daily reports from the concerned Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs) and Junior Engineers (JEs) regarding the scheme's progress and addressing any delays in installation. Additionally, the Information Department was directed to

widely publicize success stories and beneficiary experiences through videos to encourage greater participation.

The meeting also focused on AAY (Antyodaya Anna Yojana) beneficiaries, with the DC instructing the AD FCS & CA and Tehsil Supply Officers (TSOs) to identify eligible households, remove inactive and bogus beneficiaries, and ensure thorough physical verification to maintain data integrity and transparency.

The Deputy Commissioner also took stock of the registration progress on the JK SAMADHAN Portal, allocating targets to concerned officers and directing them to achieve the set objectives efficiently.

A review of the PMAY-G (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin) survey was conducted, wherein the DC emphasized the inclusion of genuine beneficiaries and the exclusion of undeserving applicants.

Similarly, the PMAY-Urban 2.0 survey was also discussed, with directions for its effective execution.

## ACS Education releases Newsletter 'Baoli' at GCW Udhampur

■ HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 27: Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Education, Shantmanu, conducted an extensive tour of Udhampur district here today.

As part of the visit, the ACS released the maiden edition of newsletter 'Baoli' at Government Degree College for Women Udhampur. Present on the occasion were Director Colleges, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Additional Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Prem Singh, Principal of the College, Dr. Nalini Pathania, faculty members and students.

On his arrival at GCW Udhampur, Shantmanu was accorded guard of hon-



our by the NCC Cadets. While speaking on the occasion, Shantmanu congratulated the college on the release of its maiden newsletter 'Baoli'. He underscored the importance of balancing academic excellence with physical activities to ensure better mental health. He urged the students to choose their career paths

wisely, aligning them with their personal interests. During his interaction with the faculty members and students, the ACS appreciated the efforts of the college administration in ensuring high standards of education. He encouraged the students to focus on their studies while actively participating in extracurricular and developmental

activities. He stressed the importance of yoga, physical fitness to shape a successful professional future.

Director Colleges, Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, commended the Principal and faculty for their dedication in showcasing the college's initiatives through 'Baoli'. He further informed the Financial Commissioner that GCW Udhampur has been recognized as one of the leading colleges in the region.

Later, the ACS visited the Government PG Boys Degree College Udhampur, where he interacted with the Principal and faculty members to review the overall functioning of the institution.

## JSCL engages Concessionaire for Managing Advertisement of Static Ad-Panels

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 27: Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) has signed a contract agreement with M/s Creative Designers for the professional management of static advertisement panels installed across Jammu city for a period of 5 years. The agreement, signed on 26th March 2025, aims to streamline the advertisement process while enhancing revenue collection for Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) and Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC). The concessionaire was selected through a global tendering process, ensuring fair competition, transparency, and efficiency in awarding the contract.

Under this agreement, M/s Creative Designers will be responsible for the operation, maintenance, and revenue generation from these static ad panels. The initiative is expected to bring a structured approach to outdoor advertising, enhancing the city's aesthetics while maximizing its revenue potential. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Devansh Yadav holding the dual charge of Chief Executive Officer, Jammu Smart City Limited, and Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, stated: "This partnership will not only improve the management of advertisement spaces in Jammu but also contribute to the overall beautification and smart urban planning initiatives of the city."

## Beti Bachao Beti Padhao DC inaugurates up-gradation of DM's Jayshree Library at Rajouri

■ HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma today inaugurated the up-gradation of DM's Jayshree Library under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme reaffirming the administration's commitment to enhancing educational facilities for girl students in the district.

Located in the District Information Centre, the library has long been a valuable resource for students. Recognizing the need for better

infrastructure, the administration has undertaken significant upgrades to make it more accessible and conducive for learning. The newly installed facilities include CCTV cameras, air conditioning and heating systems, a first aid kit a water purifier, a vending machine, an all-in-one PC, a printer, Wi-Fi connectivity, an exhaust fan, an incinerator and other necessary items required for smooth functioning of the library. These improvements aim to bring the library on par with private institutions, offering

students a high-quality educational environment. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma encouraged students to make the best use of the enhanced facilities. He emphasized that the administration remains committed to fostering academic excellence and skill development, particularly among young girls. He further stated that these upgrades mark the beginning of a broader initiative to strengthen learning infrastructure in the district.

## One week MSME skill training course concludes at village Katera-Samba

■ HT News Network

SAMBA, MARCH 27: SKUAST Kashmir, in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra Samba, successfully conducted the one week MSME skill training programme on "Livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities through Beekeeping" here at village Katera.

Held under the entrepreneurship and skill development program of the Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), the programme was attended by twenty five participants and was conducted under the overall supervision of Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, and Nodal Officer (MSME)/ Director Research SKUAST-K, Prof. Haroon Rashid Naik. The

programme was inaugurated by Chief Scientist and Head of KVK Prof. Sanjay Khajuria. He highlighted the significance of

beekeeping as a livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunity in Jammu and Kashmir and emphasized the importance of beekeeping in generating income and employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

Dr. Sushil Kumar, Professor (Entomology) at DPMO, SKUAST-K, and Course Coordinator of the training program, enlightened participants on the potential of beekeeping as a supplementary source of income. He guided them on how to establish their own beekeeping enterprises, empowering them to become entrepreneurs and enhance their livelihoods. Dr. Saurav Gupta, Associate Professor (Entomology), and Dr. Shalini also delivered insightful lectures during the training programme highlighting how beekeeping can provide livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities to the rural masses.

# NIT Srinagar felicitates winners, runners-up of Inter-campus sports events

■ HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 27: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Thursday organized a felicitation ceremony to honor teaching and non-teaching staff who excelled in the recently held inter-campus sports events.

The event, held at the Community Room, was attended by Incharge Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Roohi Naaz, and Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman. Both felicitated the awardees and lauded their contributions.

In the Table Tennis category, nine teams participated. The winning team comprised Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Mohd Shafi Mir, and Dr. Gowhar Nabi Tantray, while Dr. Manoj Kumar

and Dr. Amandeep Singh Rehal secured the runner-up position.

In Chess, which saw participation from 21 players, Dr. Manoj Kumar emerged as the winner, with Dr. Ashok Kumar finishing as the runner-up.

The Badminton event featured competition among 11 teams. Dr. Manoj Kumar, Dr. Dinesh Kumar R, and Dr. Sandeep secured the winners' title, while Executive Engineer (Civil) Dr. Syed Mohsin Shabir, Mr. Sohail Ahmad Baba (SAS Asst.), and Er. Junaid ul Islam finished as runners-up.

In the female category, eight teams competed in Badminton. Dr. Haijiya Ahsan clinched the winner's title, while SAS Officer Kowsar Ali Mir secured the runner-up position. Similarly, in Table Tennis, Dr.



Janani I emerged victorious, with SAS Officer Kowsar Ali Mir finishing as the runner-up. In Chess, SAS Officer Kowsar Ali Mir claimed the winner's position, while Prof. Shagoofta Rasool Shah finished as the

runner-up. Dr. Srinibash Mishra, former SAS Coordinator, was also felicitated by the dignitaries for his vast contributions to the department over the past several years.

Speaking on the occasion, Incharge Director Prof. Roohi Naaz highlighted the significance of sports in fostering teamwork, discipline, and overall well-being. "Sports are an integral part of

our academic ecosystem. They help develop a spirit of healthy competition and camaraderie among participants. NIT Srinagar remains committed to encouraging sports activities at all levels. Such events not only enhance physical fitness but also promote mental resilience and strategic thinking," she said.

Institute's Registrar, Prof. Atikur Rehman, congratulated all participants and winners for their dedication and sportsmanship.

"Engaging in sports not only improves physical health but also strengthens problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities. Participation in such events contributes to the overall personality development of an individual," he added. Dr. Manoj Kumar, Coor-

ordinator, expressed gratitude for the recognition and emphasized the role of such events in fostering a competitive yet friendly atmosphere within the institute.

SAS Officer Mir Kowsar stated that sports provide a refreshing break from routine academic life and enhance teamwork and collaboration. Meanwhile, Sohail Ahmad Baba (SAS Asst.), also highlighted the importance of physical fitness and encouraged more faculty and staff members to actively participate in future sports events. SAS Officer Mir Kowsar stated that sports provide a refreshing break from routine academic life and enhance teamwork and collaboration. Meanwhile, Sohail Ahmad Baba (SAS Asst.), also highlighted the importance of physical fitness.



# 'Exemplar' – UN lauds India's progress in child mortality reduction

HT News Network

UNITED NATIONS, Mar 27: India's efforts and progress in reducing preventable child deaths has been lauded as "exemplar" by the United Nations, which cited the example of health initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, and said the country has saved millions of young lives through strategic investments in its health system. The United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation report, released Tuesday, cited the example of five "exemplar countries" in achieving child mortality reduction – India, Nepal, Senegal, Ghana and Burundi – highlighting diverse strategies that have accelerated progress in reducing preventable child deaths. The report said these countries illustrate that with "political will, evidence-based strategies and sustained investments, even resource-constrained settings fac-



ing unique challenges can achieve substantial reductions in mortality, bringing the world closer to an end to preventable child deaths". On India, the report said the country has made gains through health system investment. "Through strategic investments in its

health system, India has already saved millions of young lives and paved the way to ensure healthy lives for millions more," it said. The report highlighted that since 2000, India achieved an under-five mortality reduction of 70 per cent and a neonatal mortality reduction of 61 per cent, "driv-

en by overlapping measures to increase health coverage, enhance available interventions and develop health infrastructure and human resources", the report said. It cited the example of Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health insurance scheme which provides annual coverage of nearly USD 5,500 per family per year. It noted that every pregnant woman is entitled to free delivery (including caesarean section), and infant care provides free transport, medications, diagnostics and dietary support in public health institutions. To ensure comprehensive coverage and equitable access to health services, India has strengthened infrastructure via the establishment of maternity waiting homes, maternal and child health wings, newborn stabilisation units, sick newborn care units, mother care units and a dedicated programme for birth defect screening, the report said.

## President Trump cites India as example in executive order on overhauling American election system

HT News Network

NEW YORK, Mar 27 President Donald Trump has cited India and Brazil in his executive order to overhaul the American election system, saying the two countries are linking voter identification to a biometric database while the US relies on self-attestation for citizenship. The sweeping executive order, signed by Trump on Tuesday, states that "despite pioneering self-Government, the US now "fails to enforce basic and necessary election protections used by both developed and developing nations." "India and Brazil, for example, are tying voter identification to a biometric database, while the United States largely relies on self-attestation for citizenship," according to the order. "In tabulating votes, Germany and Canada require the use of paper ballots, counted in public by local officials, which substantially reduces the number of disputes as compared to the American patchwork of voting methods that can lead to basic chain-of-custody problems," it said. "Further, while countries like Denmark and Sweden sensibly limit mail-in voting to those unable to vote in person and do not count late-arriving votes regardless of the date of postmark, many American elections now feature mass voting by mail, with many officials accepting ballots without postmarks or those received well after Election Day," it said.

## Zelenskyy says ready to observe ceasefire against energy targets following US-brokered deal

HT News Network

KYIV, Mar 27: Ukraine is ready to proceed with a ceasefire prohibiting attacks on energy infrastructure, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, in line with a deal that was brokered by the United States during three days of negotiations with Ukrainian and Russian officials in the Saudi capital. Speaking in a video address late Tuesday, Zelenskyy said Ukraine had agreed with US negotiators "that a ceasefire for energy infrastructure can start today." But, he warned, any strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities by Moscow would draw "strong retaliation." The comments underscored the tenuous agreements that came out of the three days of separate US-Ukrainian and US-Russian talks in Riyadh. Washington said it had agreed with the warring parties to implement a pause on attacks on energy infrastructure as well as taking steps to ensure safe navigation for ships in the Black Sea. Those talks were part of a broader



effort by President Donald Trump's administration toward a limited, 30-day ceasefire that Moscow and Kyiv agreed to in principle last week, but has thus far failed to materialize as both sides continue to launch drone and rocket attacks against the other. While Zelenskyy on Tuesday thanked the US for its efforts to strike an agreement, questions remained over some key details, and a comprehensive peace deal to end the three-year war still looked distant. Russia links the Black Sea deal to sanctions relief. On Tuesday, the White House said in separate statements that the sides had "agreed to ensure safe navigation, eliminate the use of force, and prevent

the use of commercial vessels for military purposes in the Black Sea." Details of the prospective deal were not released, but it appeared to mark another attempt to ensure safe Black Sea shipping after a 2022 agreement that was brokered by the UN and Turkey but halted by Russia the next year. After the White House issued its statement Tuesday, the Kremlin warned that a potential Black Sea deal could only be implemented after sanctions against the Russian Agricultural Bank and other financial organisations involved in food and fertilizer trade are lifted and their access to the SWIFT system of international payments is ensured. Zelenskyy on Tuesday evening reacted to those demands, casting them as an example of Moscow "manipulating, twisting agreements, and lying" about the terms of the agreement. "There are absolutely clear statements that have been published by the White House, everyone can see what is stated there," Zelenskyy said. "And there is something that the Kremlin is lying about again: that supposedly the (ceasefire) in the Black Sea depends on the issue of sanctions."

## Kim Jong Un observes tests of North Korea's new reconnaissance and attack drones

HT News Network

SEOUL, Mar 27: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un observed tests of newly developed reconnaissance and attack drones this week and called for their increased production, state media said Thursday. Kim has been emphasising the development of drones and the tests were the latest display of his country's growing military capabilities. Photos released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency showed Kim observing what appeared to be a large reconnaissance drone roughly resembling Boeing's E-7 Wedgetail airborne warning and control aircraft. Other images showed exploding drones crashing into military vehicles used as targets. The agency said the test demonstrated the reconnaissance drone's ability to track multiple targets and monitor troop movements on land and at sea, poten-



tially enhancing North Korea's intelligence-gathering operations and ability to neutralise enemy threats. The report said the new exploding drones are designed for various attack missions and feature unspecified artificial intelligence capabilities. Kim expressed satisfaction with the drones' performance and approved plans to expand production, emphasising that drones and AI should be "top" priorities in efforts to advance his armed

forces and adapt them to modern warfare, KCNA said. The agency said the tests took place as Kim visited a drone technology complex and an electronic warfare research group on Tuesday and Wednesday. South Korea's Defence Ministry didn't immediately comment on the North Korean report. Kim previously inspected other demonstrations of drones that explode on impact in November and August last year. North Korea also last year accused South Korea of sending its own drones to drop anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets over the North's capital of Pyongyang and threatened to respond with force if such flights occur again. South Korea's military refused to confirm whether or not the North's claims were true. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have escalated recently as Kim continues to expand his military capabilities, which now includes various nuclear-capable weapons targeting South Korea.

## US lawmakers seek to sanction Pak Army chief for political 'persecution,' free Imran Khan

HT News Network

NEW YORK, Mar 27: Two US lawmakers have introduced a bill seeking to sanction Pakistan's Army chief General Asim Munir for engaging in the "wrongful persecution and imprisonment" of political opponents and the release of detainees including former premier Imran Khan, a media report said. The "Pakistan Democracy Act" was introduced by Republican representative from South Carolina Joe Wilson and Democratic representative from California Jimmy Panetta on Monday. The Hill reported. The bipartisan bill accuses Gen Munir of "knowingly engaging in the wrongful persecution and imprisonment of political opponents", and would place sanctions on the military chief within 180 days under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. According to the news portal, violators can be subjected to denial of entry to the US and ineligibility for US visas. It also seeks the identification of other key individuals involved in the "persecution" and the imposition of similar bans on them. The bill gives the president the power to drop the sanctions if "military rule has ended in Pakistan and rule of law and civilian-led democracy has been restored" and "all wrongfully detained political detainees have been released from detention." Wilson called the 72-year-old former leader Khan a "political prisoner", and blamed Pakistan's powerful military for his "unjust detention", according to the news portal. Khan has been implicated in dozens of cases since his government was dismissed through a no-confidence motion in 2022.

## Death toll from wildfires in SKorea rises to 26 – Interior Ministry

HT News Network

SEOUL, Mar 27: The death toll from ongoing wildfires in southeastern South Korea has reached 26 people, while 30 others sustained injuries, the South Korean Ministry of the Interior and Safety said on Thursday. On Wednesday, the Yonhap news agency reported 24 deaths from wildfires that began last week. "As a result of this large forest fire, as of 6:00 on March 27 [21:00 GMT on March 26], the death toll stands at 26 people, with 8 people seriously injured, and 22 people slightly injured," the ministry said in a statement. According to the latest data, 325 buildings, including 117 houses, have been damaged. Some 24,000 residents were evacuated to nearby gyms, schools and other shelters, but most of them have already returned home. There has been no information about Russian citizens injured in the wildfires so far, but the Russian Consulate General in the city of Busan has urged them to remain cautious and avoid visiting disaster areas. On Tuesday, South Korean media reported, citing forest authorities, that the Gounsa Buddhist temple, which dates back to the 7th century, was destroyed by the fire. The authorities were forced to completely block a number of highways due to smoke, while Buddhist temples located in the mountains urgently evacuated ancient relics to nearby museums. The South Korean authorities also decided to evacuate 3,500 prisoners from the areas engulfed in wildfires. (UNI)

## German, Austrian ministers break off planned Syria trip because of possible threat

HT News Network

BERLIN, Mar 27: The German and Austrian interior ministers broke off a planned trip to Syria on Thursday because of a possible threat to their delegation, German authorities said. Germany's Nancy Faeser had planned to visit Damascus with Austrian counterpart Gerhard Karner and a German military plane was supposed to fly Faeser's delegation into Syria from Jordan on Thursday morning. But her ministry said that the trip was broken off before the flight could depart from Amman "because of concrete warnings by German security authorities of a terrorist threat," German news agency dpa reported. It added that a threat to the delegation couldn't be ruled out and that it wouldn't have been responsible to travel in view of that possible threat. The trip hadn't been announced ahead of time. The two ministers had planned to speak with ministers in the interim government and with representatives of UN aid organisations. Germany in particular has been a major destination for Syrian refugees over the past decade. Last week, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock visited Damascus and reopened the German Embassy, 13 years after it was shut in the early days of Syria's civil war.

## Indian official meets Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister after WMCC talks

HT News Network

BEIJING, Mar 26: A senior Indian diplomat, who led the Indian delegation at the WMCC talks, called on Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Hong Lei and exchanged views on China-India relations and the border situation between the two countries. Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs, led the Indian delegation at the 33rd Meeting of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on China-India Border Affairs Tuesday and later called on Hong. The two sides had an exchange of views on China-India relations, the border situation between the two countries, and other issues, a Chinese Foreign Ministry press release here said. India and China Tuesday held a fresh edition of diplomatic talks in Beijing focusing on ensuring effective border management and early resumption of cross-border cooperation and exchanges including on trans-border rivers and Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra. In the meeting of WMCC, the two sides explored various measures and proposals to give effect to the decisions taken during talks between NSA Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Special Representatives (SR) dialogue in December.

# At least 24 dead as wildfires ravage southern South Korea, force 27,000 to evacuate

HT News Network

SEOUL, Mar 27: Wind-driven wildfires that were among South Korea's worst ever have ravaged the country's southern regions, killing 24 people, destroying more than 300 structures and forcing 28,800 residents to evacuate, officials said Wednesday. The death toll included a pilot who died after a helicopter crashed during efforts to

contain a blaze in the southeastern town of Uiseong, one of the hardest-hit areas. The aircraft had no other crew members. Police said that most of the dead are those in their 60s and 70s. The National Fire Agency said at least 26 people sustained varying degrees of injuries. An ancient Buddhist temple, houses, factories and vehicles were destroyed in the wildfires that have burned 17,752 hectares (43,866 acres), the government's emergency



response centre said. In a televised address, South Korea's acting President Han Duck-soo said the wildfires that began last Friday were worse than many previous ones. "Damages are snowballing," Han said. "There are concerns that we'll have wildfire damages that we've never experienced, so we have to concentrate all our capabilities to put out the wildfires in the rest of this week." Han said crews struggled to extinguish the wildfires because strong winds swept the

areas overnight. He also said about 4,650 firefighters, soldiers and other personnel were working Wednesday with the help of about 130 helicopters, adding that "a small amount" of 5-10 millimeters (0.1-0.3 inches) of rain was expected Thursday. As of Wednesday evening, firefighters were tackling at least six active wildfires, including in the southeastern coastal town of Yeongdeok, which alerted residents of the nearest village to evacuate to an indoor gymnasium.



# Serve with integrity and dedication as nation comes first: Yogi

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, MAR 27 (UNI)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said true service to the nation is not demonstrated through slogans or speeches, but by fulfilling one's responsibilities with honesty and dedication.

After distributing appointment letters to 283 newly selected medical officers and junior laboratory assistants at an event held at Lok Bhawan here, the CM urged the newly-appointed candidates to perform their duties with integrity and commitment, contributing to UP's rapid progress towards becoming a leading economic powerhouse in the country.

The candidates have been recruited by the UP Public Service Commission (UPPSC) and the UP Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UPSSSC) for the AYUSH Department and the Home Department.

On this occasion, Yogi thanked UPPSC and UPSSSC for conducting the recruitment process with integrity and aligning with the government's vision. He also congratulated all the newly appointed candidates, encouraging them to serve with dedication and uphold the values of fairness and responsibility.

Highlighting the significant achievements of the past eight years, he said that 8.3 lakh youths have been provided government jobs across UP. He said that if these appointments had not been conducted honestly and transparently, they would have been entangled in legal disputes, with no recruitment completed.

The CM said, "Over the past eight years, 1,56,000 police personnel have



been recruited and recently, the selection process for an additional 60,200 policemen has been completed. A substantial number of teachers have also been appointed, alongside recruitment in various other departments."

He stressed that including trained and skilled professionals in government service has expedited governance, transforming UP from a 'BIMARU' state into the growth engine of India's economy.

Criticising the pre-2017 state of governance, Yogi said that serious concerns had been raised regarding the functioning of recruitment bodies like UPPSC, UPSSSC and the Police Recruitment Board.

He said, "Numerous petitions were pending from the High Court to the Supreme Court and even the judiciary had questioned the practices of the then government and its commissions. At that time, UP was labeled a 'BIMARU state,' but in reality, it was the flawed system that was ailing. This indecisiveness had left every section of society in distress. However, due to the present government's commitment to efficiency, integrity and transparency, the state has now transformed into the 'New UP' of a 'New India,' poised to drive the nation's economic progress."

Addressing the newly

appointed medical officers in the AYUSH department, the CM underscored the importance of AYUSH, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, and other traditional healing systems as an integral part of India's ancient heritage.

He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for setting up a dedicated ministry to promote these practices, the positive outcomes of which are now visible. "UP has also taken significant strides in establishing an AYUSH University. Currently, the state operates 2,114 Ayurveda hospitals, 254 Unani hospitals and 1,585 Homeopathy hospitals. The construction of AYUSH hospitals in Lucknow and Pilibhit is nearing completion, while 15 districts already have 50-bed integrated AYUSH hospitals, with construction underway in three more," he said.

Yogi said, "1,034 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been set up and yoga and wellness centres introduced in 225 AYUSH hospitals."

He highlighted the immense potential of health tourism in UP, citing the state's pristine environment and abundant water resources as ideal conditions for its growth. Having already positioned UP as the nation's top destination for religious tourism, he also expressed confidence in making it a leader in health tourism.

He envisioned AYUSH hospitals and wellness centers as key drivers of this transformation. Urging the medical officers to preserve and promote India's traditional healing practices, he encouraged them to raise awareness about Ayurveda, holistic wellness and the benefits of natural farming and a balanced lifestyle.

While distributing appointment letters to 96 junior Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) laboratory assistants, Yogi emphasised the crucial role of forensic labs in enforcing the three new laws implemented in July 2024.

He highlighted that timely justice for victims and strict punishment for criminals rely heavily on strong forensic evidence. "Earlier, UP had only four FSL labs, today, that number has increased to 12, with six more under construction. The government plans to establish FSL labs at every range level and deploy two mobile forensic labs in each district. The UP State Forensic Institute has also been set up, offering diploma and degree courses to train future forensic experts," he said.

The CM assured that in the coming decade, graduates from this institute will have ample job opportunities in India and globally. Discussing employment generation alongside the preservation of faith and heritage, he praised the dedication of personnel across various departments to ensure the success of the Maha Kumbh.

He said, "The 45-day grand event attracted visitors from around the world, earning widespread appreciation. By honouring cultural and religious heritage in places like Kashi, Ayodhya, Chi-

trakoot, Gorakhpur, Naimisharanya, Mathura-Vrindavan and Sukh Tirtha, lakhs of new employment opportunities have been created."

Yogi emphasised that when a society takes pride in its heritage, the world naturally connects with it. He cited the global recognition of yoga as an example, recalling that once overlooked, yoga is now celebrated in 193 countries through World Yoga Day.

Citing the transformation of Azamgarh as an example, he said that there was a time when the youth of Azamgarh struggled to find accommodation in hotels or Dharamshalas. "Today, however, skilled technical professionals from the region are being selected for roles in FSL labs. With the setting up of Maharaja Suheldev University, the development of an airport and enhanced connectivity, Azamgarh is forging a new identity," he said.

He condemned previous governments for causing an identity crisis among the youth, emphasising that the current government was equipping them with global opportunities and restoring their sense of pride.

The CM urged the candidates to embrace their responsibilities with dedication. He reminded them that receiving an appointment letter is not a privilege to avoid duty but a commitment to serve. "One's success is directly tied to their diligence and sincerity. True service to the nation is not about slogans or speeches but about fulfilling one's responsibilities with honesty," he said.

Encouraging them to act proactively, he said, "Do not postpone for tomorrow what can be done today."

# Indian Army conducts integrated multi-domain exercise in Eastern Theatre

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 27 (UNI)

In a powerful demonstration of joint operational capability, the Indian Army conducted a tri-service integrated multi-domain warfare exercise Prachand Prahaar in the Eastern Theatre, deep in the high-altitude terrain of Arunachal Pradesh.

The three-day exercise, from March 25 to 27, brought together the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and other elements of the Armed Forces in a synergised combat drill, designed to simulate future warfare, the Indian Army said.

Carried out under the aegis of the Eastern Command, the exercise showcased the seamless integration of advanced surveillance, strike capabilities, and multi-domain operational planning. Cutting-edge platforms such as long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft, armed helicopters, UAVs, loitering munitions, and space-based assets were employed to achieve total situational awareness and rapid target engagement.

Once simulated targets were identified, they



were swiftly neutralised through coordinated strikes using fighter aircraft, long-range rocket systems, medium artillery, swarm drones, kamikaze drones, and armed helicopters—all executed in an electronically contested environment that simulated modern battlefield conditions.

Lieutenant General Ram Chander Tiwari, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Command, and Air Marshal Surat Singh, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Air Command, reviewed the exercise and commended the troops for their operational excellence and high degree of professionalism.

This integrated tri-service drill builds on the

momentum of Exercise Poorvi Prahaar held in November 2024, which focused primarily on the integrated application of aviation assets.

Exercise Prachand Prahaar has now taken that concept further by validating a fully integrated approach to surveillance, command and control, and precision firepower across the three services.

The exercise stands as a testament to the Indian Armed Forces' growing emphasis on jointness, technological superiority, and readiness to tackle multi-domain threats. It reinforces India's resolve to deter and, if necessary, decisively respond to any emerging security challenge along its strategic frontiers.

# 97 Indian fishermen are in Sri Lankan custody: Jaishankar in Rajya Sabha

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, MAR 27 (UNI)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday informed the Rajya Sabha that 97 fishermen mostly from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry were in Sri Lankan custody.

Replying to a supplementary question raised by DMK's Tiruchi Siva during the question hour, he said that, "Till yesterday there were 86 fishermen in Sri Lankan custody. Today one more trawler has been apprehended and 11 more have been captured. So, 97 fishermen are in Lankan custody."

He said that 83 fishermen were serving sentences, three are awaiting trial and 11 of them have been apprehended on Thursday (March 27).

Jaishankar said that the amendments to two Sri Lankan laws in 2018 and 2023 have introduced stricter penalties, including "stiffer sentences, bigger fines, and greater deten-



tions" and these have been posing a challenge in handling issues.

He said that many of those serving sentences are boat owners, skippers, or repeat offenders.

On putting a full stop on this issue, the Minister said "Our government has inherited a problem. This problem began in 1974, when the International Maritime Boundary line was drawn by the then Union Government with consultations with the state government and then in 1976, an exchange of letters happened where the fishing jurisdictions were

delineated. So the decision taken in 1974 and 1976 are the root cause of the situation we are facing".

He said that the government engages in periodic diplomatic discussions with the Sri Lankan authorities to secure the release of fishermen. Jaishankar stated that under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, the government is equipping boats with transponders to reduce inadvertent crossings. Additionally, efforts are being made to identify an alternative solution.

# Odisha: Railway Safety Commissioner inspects Boudh-Purunakatak rail line of Khurda Road Bolangir Rail project

AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, MAR 27 (UNI)

Commissioner of Railway Safety, Brijesh Mishra has conducted an inspection of the newly constructed rail line between Boudh and Purunakatak, a distance of 26.888 km, to review the safety aspects of the newly laid rail line of ongoing Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project.

This inspection is a crucial step towards ensuring the timely completion of the project, which is set to improve connectivity in remote and aspirational regions of Odisha.

East Coast Railway (ECoR) sources said out of the total 301 km stretch of the Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line, 240 km has been completed and commissioned and fit for train operations.

The Commissioner Railway Safety (CRS) inspected this newly laid Rail Line on March 25 and 26 and gave his sanction for commissioning of the section.

The CRS has inspected the safety parameters of the newly laid Railway Track, Signalling System, Bridges and declared the newly laid rail line section fit of the on-going 301 km Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail line project.

A team of senior Railway officials of East Coast Railway assisted CRS



during the inspection.

The Railways has been constructing the line from both the sides, i.e., from Khurda Road and Balangir for early completion of the project.

ECoR sources said Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw consistently monitors the progress of this project in Odisha and the ministry has given priority for early completion of Khurda Road Bolangir Rail Line project.

ECoR General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal has also been reviewing the status of the ongoing works regularly and instructing concerned officials to speed up the work and complete the remaining portion within

the timeline set by the Railway Board.

The engine rolling and testing for the track between Boudh and Purunakatak has already been successfully completed by the Construction Unit.

Out of the total 301 km stretch of the Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line, 240 km has been completed and commissioned and fit for train operations.

In the newly constructed stretch between Purunakatak and Champapur 9 major bridges, 2 Road Over Bridges (ROBs), 15 Road Under Bridges (RUBs), and 35 minor bridges, all essential for facilitating safe and efficient rail operations, were

completed.

The construction activities are now progressing rapidly in the remaining sections. To expedite the completion, work is being carried out from both ends simultaneously, ensuring adherence to the project's ambitious timeline.

Of the total 301 km, the remaining 62 km section between Purunakatak and Daspalla, which includes tunnel construction through dense jungle and sanctuary areas, is progressing steadily.

The completion of these tunnels is expected to be a major breakthrough for the project.

The Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line project is poised to significantly

enhance transportation and economic development, particularly in the more remote and underserved regions of Odisha.

By improving connectivity between key towns and cities, the rail line will facilitate smoother movement of train traffic, while also contributing to regional economic growth.

The project has gained close attention from the Ministry of Railways, which is committed to delivering this vital infrastructure on schedule.

The successful completion of the Boudh-Purunakatak section is a major step forward and demonstrates the dedication of Indian Railways in overcoming engineering challenges to deliver critical infrastructure in the most difficult environments.

After completion of related infrastructure and amenities, decision on running train services will be taken on the newly laid sections. Trial run has already been conducted to ensure the track's fitness for regular train operations.

As the project continues to progress, the Khurda Road-Bolangir Rail Line remains a key initiative for enhancing connectivity and creating new opportunities for economic development across Odisha.

# TN Assembly adopts resolution urging Centre to withdraw Waqf Board Bill in LS

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, MAR 27 (UNI)

Strongly reiterating his opposition to the Waqf Bard (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Thursday adopted an unanimous resolution urging the Union Government to withdraw it in toto.

The resolution, moved by Chief Minister M K Stalin, was adopted

unanimously by voice vote.

All the parties, including the principal Opposition AIADMK, supported the resolution, while the BJP opposed it by staging a walk out.

The resolution said people with all religious faiths were living with communal harmony in the country.

Observing that Constitution has guaranteed

them and given rights to follow their respective religious faiths, it said it was the duty of the elected governments to protect it.

On the contrary, the Union Government has introduced the Waqf Board (Amendment) Bill in Parliament in August 2024 to amend the 1995 Act which would cause severe damages to the Muslim community.



# SKIMS Launches Groundbreaking "Head Injury Awareness Program" to Combat Rising Incidence of Head Trauma in Kashmir

HT NEWS SERVICE SRINAGAR

Sher-I-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) on Monday announced the launch of a ground-breaking "Head Injury Awareness Program", spearheaded by its Department of Neurosurgery and Neuroanesthesia. The initiative, under the leadership of Director SKIMS & EOSG, Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Ashraf Ganie, is aimed at addressing the rising incidence of head injuries in the region through education, prevention strategies, and community engagement.

Head injuries, often caused by road accidents, falls, sports, and domestic incidents, are a leading cause of disability and mortality in Kashmir. Delayed recognition and inadequate pre-hospital care exacerbate outcomes, highlighting the critical need for public awareness. This multidisciplinary program will focus on several key areas including community education initiatives, including workshops, seminars, and door-to-door campaigns. The aim is to raise awareness about the early signs of head trauma, such as confusion, vomiting, and loss of consciousness. Besides, prevention strategies will emphasize the importance of helmet use, safe driving

practices, and child safety measures. Additionally, first responder training will be provided to police officers, teachers, and drivers, equipping them with essential emergency response skills. To further reinforce awareness, interactive sessions will be held to engage young people in safety practices and informational resources such as pamphlets, posters, and digital content in local languages will be distributed widely especially in schools and colleges.

Director of SKIMS & EOSG, Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Ashraf Ganie, highlighted the vital point that head injuries are preventable, and with timely intervention, their potentially devastating consequences can be minimized or even avoided. He emphasized the importance of early detection and prompt medical response in cases of head trauma, stressing that quick action can significantly reduce the risk of long-term complications and, in many cases, save lives. Prof. Ganie also commended the efforts of the departments, especially the Departments of Neurosurgery and Neuroanesthesia, for their leadership in launching the "Head Injury Awareness Program." He said that the initiative aligns with SKIMS' broader mission of promoting excellence



in healthcare and community service. His recognition of the collaborative efforts among multiple departments reflects a unified commitment to addressing a growing public health challenge in the region. In addition, Prof. Ganie emphasized that the long-term goal of this initiative is to bridge the gap between healthcare providers and the community.

The event was attended by several luminaries, including the Associate Dean of Academics, Medical Superintendent, faculty members from the Departments of Neurosurgery, Neuroanesthesia, and other departments, as well as police officials. The general public and students from various schools and colleges were also present, showing strong community engagement in this important cause. It was collectively echoed that raising awareness and educating the public is vital their message reinforced the idea that healthcare is a shared responsibility, where both medical professionals and citizens play a vital role in responding to emergencies and saving lives. Dr. Sarabjit Singh Chibber Head of Neurosurgery, added, "Awareness reduces long-term complications and mentioned that we urge the public to prioritize safety and seek immediate medical help for head trauma."

## South Korea to foster 27,000 talents for bio-health industry in 2025

AGENCIES SEOUL

The South Korean government will work to foster some 27,000 bio-health talents this year as part of efforts to promote growth of the industry, the health ministry said on Tuesday. The plan was announced in a bio-health innovation committee meeting as part of the government's broader initiative aimed at fostering a total of 108,000 experts in the sector by 2027, according to the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Yonhap news agency reported.

The experts will include physician-scientists and young talents with mas-



ter's or doctorate degrees in advanced technologies related to bio-health. For the goal, the government will strengthen support for cross-sectoral cooperation between private companies and academic institutions in the sector, according to the ministry. In the meeting, the government also discussed ways to streamline regulations that hinder the growth of the bio-health

industry, such as a validation guideline on medical device software, and raise the burden on high-risk clinical research projects on advanced regenerative medicine.

Earlier, the Ministry of Economy and Finance as part of the new growth engine project said it will also expand investment in bio and medical research and development projects to improve the country's response capabilities to infectious diseases.

In detail, it will support 14 vaccine development projects and 34 diagnosis and medical treatment development projects this year.

The projects will include developing virus

treatments to respond to the so-called Disease X, which refers to pathogens that can lead to another pandemic, and gene treatment technologies.

The government will also devise an innovation strategy for the biohealth cluster and push for the installation of a quantum strategy committee as part of efforts to promote the growth of new industries, the ministry said.

Moreover, the Ministry also announced the plan, at fostering new growth engines for the economy.

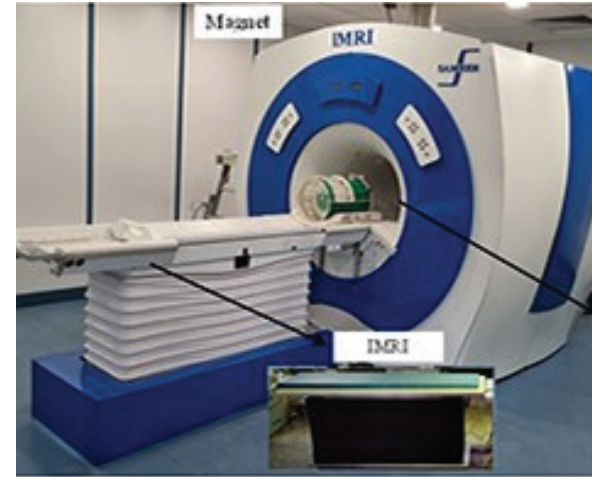
The government aims to create a cloud data center that uses homegrown artificial intelligence (AI) chips and establish a national AI computing center, it said.

## AIIMS to launch human trials on indigenous MRI machine system in Oct

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi is expected to run human trials on India's first indigenously developed MRI machine system in October.

The indigenous 1.5 Tesla MRI system for medical imaging will be built at the Indigenous Magnetic Resonance Imaging (IMRI) -- a national mission, sponsored by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) and being implemented at the Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering & Research (SAMEER), an autonomous government institution under Meity. C-DAC (Trivandrum), C-DAC (Kolkata), IUAC (New Delhi), and DSI-MIRC (Bangalore) will work as collaborating agencies to design and develop the MRI system. Meity informed that



"animal trials have been concluded".

In addition, "the subsystems development and testing of RF Power Amplifier, High power T/R switch, RF spectrometer, RF Coils, Rx. Front ends, control unit, couch, and IMRI software have been completed and integrated with the procured magnet, gradient coil, and gradient amplifier," it added. "India takes a big leap in developing frugal and

indigenous health solutions including medical devices to not just meet domestic demand but also to serve the next billion," said Sunita Verma, Group Coordinator R&D, Meity.

The MRI machine is part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between SAMEER, and AIIMS.

Under the MoU, both institutions will work collaboratively to develop

high-field/low field Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)/ Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) systems and promote research in radio frequency (RF), microwave systems, and allied areas for medical applications.

The MOU encompasses five key areas: collaborative research in medical devices development; clinical validation of indigenous 1.5 T MRI system developed by SAMEER, Mumbai; collaborative research in AI/ML for image enhancement and accelerated imaging; design and development of subsystems of high/low field MRI scanner; and development of RF subsystems for high field animal MRI scanners.

"It is important to showcase the country's capabilities, and clinicians must work closely with scientists to develop more and better medical devices," said Dr M. Srinivas, Director, AIIMS, New Delhi.

## Chinese scientists develop human-like robotic hand with smart palm-finger coordination

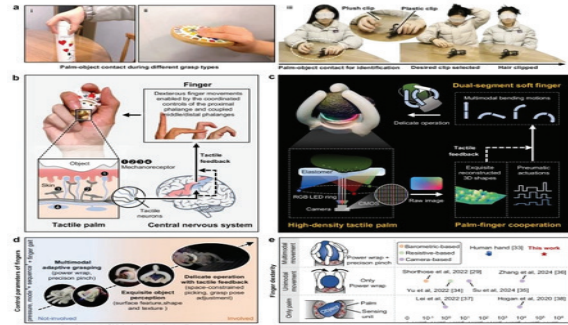
AGENCIES BEIJING

Imagine a robotic hand that coordinates its palm and fingers with human-like precision -- not only grasping objects with perfect stability but also "feeling" their 3D contours and distinguishing between different materials.

Researchers from Shanghai Jiao Tong University have made the vision a reality, solving a fundamental challenge in robotics, Xinhua news agency reported.

While soft robotic hands with sensing capabilities have shown promise, existing designs primarily focused on finger sensitivity while neglecting the palm's crucial role in manipulation.

The palm, as a large and crucial contact region providing mechanical support and sensory feed-



back, was -- up until this point -- underexplored due to limited sensing density and interaction with the fingers.

The research team overcame these limitations by developing a fully integrated system where the palm and fingers work in perfect harmony, achieving unprecedented levels of sensitivity and control.

At the heart of this advancement lies three groundbreaking features: a high-resolution tactile palm with 181,000 sens-

ing units per square centimeter (754 times more sensitive than human skin), remarkably flexible fingers capable of 204.3 degrees of bending, and intelligent coordination algorithms that enable seamless palm-finger interaction.

The palm's sophisticated visual-tactile system combines micro-cameras with multi-layer elastic sensors, while the fiber-reinforced pneumatic fingers provide both strength and delicacy with 14.6-

newton grasping force.

This integration allows the robotic hand to perform tasks with remarkable human-like capability. In demonstrations, it executed complex maneuvers like retrieving cards with perfect precision, detecting microscopic flaws in fabrics, and even pouring tea while automatically adjusting its grip to prevent spills.

The research team has enhanced the system's capabilities by integrating advanced AI technology, dramatically improving its object recognition performance. In challenging blind tests, the robotic hand demonstrated remarkable precision by identifying and retrieving specific target items from opaque bags filled with assorted small objects -- from tiny peas and sunflower seeds to larger nuts and bolts.

## Integration of PACS, Jan Aushadhi Kendras reducing medical expenses of small farmers: Centre

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

The integration of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) and Jan Aushadhi Kendras are helping small and marginal farmers reduce their medical expenses, said the government on Wednesday.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah stated PACS is empowering the farmers and boosting their productivity as well as generating employment.

"The integration of PACS and Jan Aushadhi Kendras economically empowers small and marginal farmers by reducing their medical



expenses, allowing them to allocate more resources to agricultural productivity," Shah said.

"This initiative creates employment opportunities at PACS level, and enables them to generate additional revenue," he added.

To provide generic medicines at affordable prices to

rural citizens, the Government has enabled PACS to operate Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras (PMBJK) under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana.

To establish and operate Jan Aushadhi Kendras, PACS utilise their widespread rural network of over 13 crores of

small and marginal farmers and existing infrastructure, such as land, building, and storage facilities.

"This allows them to serve as affordable medicine hubs in remote areas where such access is limited. Established trust of PACS and its relationship with rural populations further aid in ensuring the success of these Kendras," Shah said.

The scheme provides incentives to the Kendras at the rate of 20 per cent of monthly purchases made from the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMDBI), subject to a ceiling of Rs. 20,000 per month, subject to conditions of stock mandate.



# Blockbuster contest on offing in battle of legends between CSK, RCB

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, MAR 27 (UNI)

It was billed as a battle of legends, promising a blockbuster contest as five time winners and home favourites Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) face off in their second IPL contest at the iconic MA Chidambaram Stadium here tomorrow.

Both of them have started their campaign in the lucrative 18th edition on a winning note. Though albeit winning their opening matches in contrasting styles, the mood in the dug out of both the teams is definitely buoyant and upbeat and CSK and RCB will be keen to continue to sustain their winning momentum for the second win.

Both of them have one win each and RCB might have placed second in the points table as against CSK, which was in the fourth position based on nett run rate.

But the tournament is in very early stages and the nett run rate does not matter now and it only would come into the picture during the business end of the tournament that could decide which of the four teams would qualify for the play offs, which is still long distance away.



In the tournament's pipe-opener, RCB, which was yet to lay its hands on the coveted title, romped home against reigning champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) without much fuss chasing the target of 175 with the loss of just three wickets and with plenty of balls to spare at Eden Gardens.

On the other hand, the Yellow brigade at home, chasing a rather less target on a slow pitch that offered enough assistance to the spinners, made heavy weather of the target of 155 against Mumbai Indians, also five time champions, but without the services of captain Hardik Pandya and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, before crossing the finishing line at the expense of losing six wickets with a mere five balls to spare.

Despite being on a cruise mode, thanks to blistering start by opener southpaw

Rachin Ravindra and No.3 skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's scintillating half century and the stage set for a much early finish, CSK lost wickets in the middle overs.

However, the Kiwi star Rachin (65 not out) held the innings together to guide the team home, despite remaining a mute witness to wickets falling at the other end, especially due to poor shot selection that stretched the chase to the final over.

Had Mumbai Indians scored another 15 to 20 runs extra, the chase would have become even more tense.

From 78 to two in the 10th over, Gaikwad holed out to the long on fence after a pulsating 26 ball 53 that was punctuated with six fours and three sixers, setting the stage for a big win.

But loss of quick wickets of Shivam Dube, Deepak Hooda and Sam Curran

going for big shots, who in an attempt to finish off quickly and holed out in the deep, instead of rotating the strike against the spinners, caused some anxiety.

However, Rachin ensured full points that helped CSK start with a win in the company of Ravindra Jadeja.

Though the target was moderate, the fact that the contest literally went to the last mile, should be a cause of concern and the key is how to handle the middle overs-10 to 15- by rotating the strike without losing wickets, before exploding in the final five overs.

Though CSK was expected to retain the same XI as the wicket was expected to assist the spinners, they need to come out with guns blazing against an opponent, which was equally formidable.

The presence of three quality and experienced spinners--return of offie R.Ashwin back to his home team, all rounder Ravindra Jadeja and the rookie Noor Ahmed, whose four wicket haul against MI fetched him the man-of-the-match award--gives the CSK the much-needed fillip, with seamers Khaleel Ahmed, who gave crucial breakthroughs in the powerplay and left arm pacer Sam

Curran, who just bowled a solitary over but has loads of experience, bringing in the solidity to the attack.

RCB on the other hand, has a strong opening combination in Phil Salt and the experienced Virat Kohli, both of whom scored half centuries in the first match, with big hitter Devdutt Palikal, skipper Rajat Patidar and Liam Livingstone, who also bowls off spin, lending solidity in the batting front.

The presence of likes of Tim David, Jitesh Sharma and all rounder and spinner Krunal Pandya adds more strength to the batting depth with the seasoned Aussie Josh Hazlewood, Yash Dayal and Rashik Salam Dar forming a decent pace attack.

The contest promises to be close and enthralling in what considered to be a battle of equals as the winner will catapult to the top of the table.

With the dew factor unlikely to come into play as the city has been experiencing spike in mercury levels during the last couple of days, the team winning the toss has a key decision to make, whether to bowl or bat first.

A battle royale is on the cards with the crowd expected to get their money worth.

# It was an amazing innings: Moeen Ali lauds de Kock after opener carries bat in KKR's first win

AGENCIES  
GUWAHATI, MAR 27 (UNI)

In a dominant display at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium on Wednesday night, the Kolkata Knight Riders cruised to victory, chasing down the Rajasthan Royals' 151 with eight wickets and a comfortable 15 balls to spare.

For Moeen Ali, making his debut for KKR, the win was a testament to the team's warmth and collective spirit.

"I love meeting new people and being in new environments," Quinton de Kock remarked after his incredible unbeaten 97- the highest individual score for KKR in run-chases.

"It is about finding your feet within the team. Sometimes the team accepts you later, but here with KKR they have accepted me with open arms, so it feels good," he said.

Ali echoed similar sentiments, describing the performance as an 'all-round great performance, a great team win' at the post-match press conference. His own contribution was crucial, claiming two wickets while bowling

with remarkable control. "My job was to try and bowl tight as I can," he explained. "I'm used to bowling with somebody who's better than me and has more mystery," he added while praising the prowess of Varun Chakravarthy.

Ali was full of praise for de Kock, whose innings decisively sealed the match.

He called it 'an amazing innings' and noted how the South African wicket keeper made batting look effortless: "Quinton is an experienced player who

has been around for a while now. It was an amazing innings, and he made the Rajasthan Royals bowlers, especially Jofra Archer, look like they were bowling quite slow."

For Ali, the victory was particularly sweet after losing their previous game. "It's just nice to get a win within your first couple of games so you don't overthink things," he said. The pitch, which offered something for everyone, played into KKR's strengths, with Ali describing it as having 'a bit of swing, a bit of seam' and just enough spin.

Reflecting on joining a championship-winning franchise, Ali was emphatic with his words: "When you go to teams that have won the trophy, they know what they're doing. They've won it three times. Everything is calm."

With this comprehensive victory, Moeen Ali and Quinton de Kock have already shown they are perfectly at home in the Knight Riders' winning culture. The side will now fly out to Mumbai for their third match of the TATA IPL 2025, against the Mumbai Indians on March 31.



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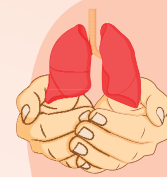


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