

DC reviews Eid ul fitr arrangements, visits Eidgah Bandipora

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 HEADLINES TODAY

Waqf (Amendment) Bill to Be Tabled Before End of Budget Session: Amit Shah

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MARCH 29: Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Friday that the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, which was referred to a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) in August 2024, will be reintroduced in the ongoing session of Parliament.

With only four working days left before the budget session concludes on April 4, Shah assured that the government is committed to presenting the bill within this timeframe. Speaking at the "Times Now Summit 2025," he emphasized that the amendments are in line with constitutional principles and that there is no reason for concern.

Dismissing opposition claims, Shah accused them of misleading the Muslim community. "No rights of Muslims will be curtailed. The opposition is spreading lies," he asserted.

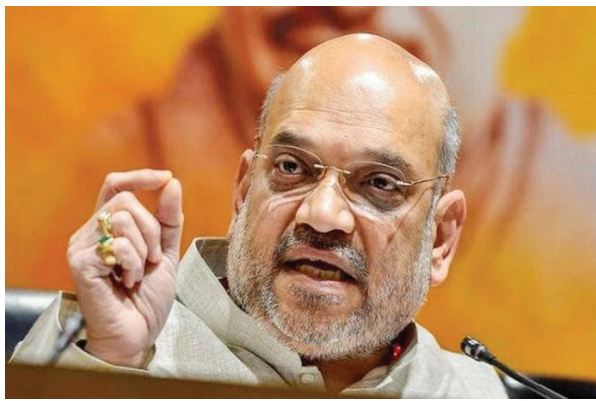
He further argued that the amendment was necessary because the original Waqf Act was a product of "appeasement politics." Shah claimed that the Congress had framed rules in the law that deviated from constitutional values, whereas the Modi government has now aligned it with the Constitution. (KNS)

J&K will get its Statehood Back : Amit Shah Without Citing any timeframe Home Minister Assured Statehood once more

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 29: Statehood in Jammu and Kashmir will be restored as promised before, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said, without giving any timeline. Jammu tourism guide Shah said at the "Times Now Summit 2025" Friday night that assembly elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir peacefully last year. "We have given the assurance that statehood will be restored. From the very beginning, we have said that statehood would be given. But it can't be disclosed when it will be given at a public forum," he said when asked about the timeline for restoration of statehood.

When Article 370 was abrogated and the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two Union territories in 2019, Shah had said in Parliament that statehood of Jammu and Kashmir would be restored at an



appropriate time. "This was the first election in Kashmir after 40 years in

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Omar led NC Govt Likely to Expand Cabinet After Eid: Sources

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: The Omar Abdullah led government in Jammu and Kashmir is likely to expand its cabinet after Eid-ul-fitr.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Amid ongoing anti-terror operation in Kathua, GOC Sachdeva visits Basantgarh

Inspects route used by terrorists to move towards Chenab valley

HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 29: Amid the ongoing anti-terror operation in the Kathua district General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Jammu-based White Knight Corps, Lieutenant General Navin Sachdeva visited Basantgarh area



in Udhampur district. According to the details available with the news agency—"reviewed the security situation in Udhampur and visited Basantgarh, which falls on the route used by terrorists earlier to move

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Need More Steps To Improve Security Situation In J&K, Says CM Omar Abdullah Pays homage to Kathua encounter martyrs, stands in solidarity with families

HT News Network



JAMMU, MAR 29: Shifting of army personnel from Jammu to Ladakh to counter Chinese incursions allowed terrorists to exploit the situation, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Saturday, asserting more steps were needed to improve the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu travel packages Jammu tourism guide

Abdullah was talking to reporters after visiting the bereaved families of four police personnel in Kathua, Reasi and Jammu districts. The cops were martyred in a gunfight with infiltrating terrorists in the Safiyan forest of Kathua district on Thursday.

Two Pakistani terrorists, believed to be affiliated with the proscribed Jaish-e-Mohammad, were also killed in the encounter.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

NEWS BRIEF

Waqf Board hikes salaries of Imams, Khateeb, other employees

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: The Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board on Saturday announced the hike in the monthly salaries of the Imams, Khateeb and other employees.

According to an order, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a hike of 20 per cent on last drawn pay has been announced for Imams for five-time prayers and Friday Khateeb in Jammu and Kashmir.

The order has been issued after the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

3 drug peddlers arrested: Police

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: Continuing its efforts against the menace of drug trafficking, police on Saturday said to have arrested three drug peddlers in Shopian & Sopore and recovered contraband substances from their possession. In Shopian, a Police team from Police Station Shopian at a checkpoint established at Girward Zawaora, intercepted 02 suspicious persons. They have been identified as Basharat Ali, Son of Bahadur Ali and Mohd Mushtaq Thakker, son of Ab Rashid Thakker, both residents of Dandoot, Rajouri. During the search, 739 grams of Her

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

DSEK orders change in school timing for Kashmir division

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: The Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) Saturday ordered change in school timing for Kashmir division with effect from April-01. According to the news agency—, DSEK in an order said that the schools within Srinagar municipal limits shall have a school time of 9:00 am to 3:00 pm in all government and private schools.

It also said that the educational institutes outside municipal limits of Srinagar and other areas of Kashmir province shall have timing of 09:30 am to 03:30 pm.

"The order and instructions shall

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Stop sponsoring terror: Deputy CM advises Pak Pays tributes to fallen policemen in Kathua encounter

HT News Network



Jammu, Mar 29: Advising Pakistan to stop sponsoring terrorism, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Saturday said that conspiracies being hatched from across the border are "killing our children."

Talking to reporters after the wreath laying ceremony of head constable Jagbir Singh, the Deputy Chief Minister, according to the news agency—said, "I hope good sense prevails in Pakistan so that the three-decade-long terrorism ends. Our neighbor should stop sponsoring terror." He said, "Both central or J&K governments will never want our children to be martyred. Our children are being martyred because of conspiracies hatched from across the border but they (Pakistanis) should understand that they have been killing our children for the last over 30 years and achieved nothing." Choudhary said the country which is sponsoring terrorism in J&K has destroyed itself.

Paying tributes to the fallen policemen, he said

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Four Policemen Killed in Kathua Encounter Laid to Rest with Full Honour

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 29: The last rites of four police personnel who were killed in a fierce encounter with militants in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district were performed with full honours at their respective native places. Thousands of mourners, including senior officials and political leaders, attended the ceremonies, paying tribute to their sacrifices.

The two-day gunfight in the remote Safiyan forest area resulted in the killing of two Pakistani militants. While the bodies of three policemen were recovered on Friday, the fourth was retrieved



on Saturday. The slain personnel were identified as Head Constable Jagbir Singh from Akhnoor and Selection Grade Constables Tariq Ahmad from Reasi, Balwinder Singh Chib from Kana Chak, and Jaswant Singh from Kathua.

Slogans praising the fallen policemen

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Lieutenant Governor attends 8th edition of Purvanchal Festival "Maati" in Delhi

HT News Network



JAMMU, MARCH 29: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha attended the 8th

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

128 faculty, 268 consultant posts vacant at SKIMS, DHS J&K

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MAR 29: There are 388 posts lying vacant at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura, and among them, 128 are faculty positions. As per the details obtained by the news agency—the total sanctioned faculty strength at SKIMS Soura is 293, and of that, 165 are in position while 128 are lying vacant.

Details also reveal that among the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Over 1.33 lakh tourists visit Sonamarg from Jan to Mar 10 this year

HT News Network

SONAMARG, MAR 29: Sonamarg, the picturesque hill station in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district has witnessed a remarkable surge in tourist arrivals in the first two months of 2025.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

ED seizes Rs 11 cr cash during raids in IAS officer's case

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: The Enforcement Directorate on Friday said it has seized cash worth Rs 11.64 crore after it con-



ducted fresh searches against some people being probed in a money laundering case against Bihar IAS officer Sanjeev Hans. The raids were

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Hustle bustle in markets as shoppers make last-minute purchases ahead of Eid

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 29: As Eid-ul-Fitr is nearing, the markets in Kashmir are full of shoppers with roads filled with people and a celebratory mood surrounding the atmosphere.

From shopping outlets to bakery stores, the business is picking up as people shop for the last time to welcome the celebratory occasion.

As per the information available with the news



agency— Srinagar's Lal Chowk, Polo View, and Residency Road and other markets are experiencing crowd-

ed buyers, with customers grabbing clothing, shoes, and sweets.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

'Ramadan 2025 Timeline' Kashmir sees a month of spirituality, charity & celebrations

HT News Network

Srinagar, Mar 29: With Ramadan 2025 ending, the Kashmir Valleys saw a month filled with intense spiritual fervour, acts of charity and celebratory get-togethers.

The holy month witnessed huge congregations at mosques, crowded markets and community-based initiatives for assisting the underprivileged.



According to details obtained by the news agency—, during the month, mosques in the valley, such

as Jamia Masjid, Hazratbal Srinagar and others, continued to be full of devotees for prayers, particularly at Taraweeh and Jumu'ah.

Sahil, a Downton Srinagar resident, said worship at Jamia Masjid during Ramadan is a religious experience like no other. He said there is an aura of devotion and togetherness.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

Scientists at IIM labs discover leads for vital medicines from 'Bhang' 'Cannabis can yield miracle drugs to beat anxiety, pains etc

HT News Network

JAMMU, MAR 29: Scientists at a pioneer research institute in Jammu have got some leads for important drugs from the prohibited Bhang (cannabis/marijuana) which may help to beat cancer pains apart from curing epilepsy and proving beneficial in treating many more ailments.

Sources at Council of Industrial and Scientific Research-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIM)-a prominent research institute in Jammu informed that the drug can only be put to human use after manufacturing under Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) conditions followed by certain mandatory clinical trials, which in this case requires special permission or licensing from

certain quarters.

Scientists spearheading this research at Medicinal Chemistry Research Group of CSIR-IIM informed that important parameters for the drug like animal experimentation have also been successfully accomplished along with extraction process including chemical standardisation and markers quantification.

Others associated with this work informed that further progress on the drug now hinges on securing necessary approvals for the transportation of scientific materials for GMP batch manufacturing and Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) safety, toxicological and formulation studies.

When contacted, IIM Director, Dr. Zabeer Ahmed informed: "We have applied to the Excise Department of J&K Government



for the mandatory approval to transport the research material and the GMP batch manufacturing for the clinical trials

and the Excise Department has also framed the rules in this regard."

He further said that the

Excise Department has put up the file with the Finance Department.

Sources informed that the

file is presently with the Finance Department of J&K Government.

The IIM Director also said that once the Finance Department clears the file, they (IIM) will then go for GMP based manufacturing and transportation of the cannabis research material to different sites for necessary GLP regulatory toxicity and safety studies.

It is pertinent to mention here that in India, the use of Bhang has been reported for over 2,000 years but severe Sections of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985 stalled all the research and development efforts in this area.

However, some recent researches have confirmed that most of the psychoactive properties in Bhang come from a compound known in scientific

terms as Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) but it also has potential therapeutic value when used in controlled dosage and concentration.

Scientific reports have indicated discovery of another major compound from Cannabis called Cannabidiol (CBD) and it is totally devoid of psychoactive properties and possesses remarkable therapeutic activities.

On the basis of their research work, the scientists at IIM labs claimed that some compounds are present in cannabis, which if explored well, can be the miracle drugs for pain management in cancer and rheumatic conditions, reducing nausea and vomiting, suppressing seizure activity, combating anxiety, depression, psychotic disorders and neurodegenerative disorders.

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

WAQF BOARD

approval by the Chairperson Waqf Board. As per the order, the revised salaries for Skilled employees is Rs 18,000 while semi-skilled and unskilled will get Rs 16,000 and Rs 15,000 respectively.

Furthermore, the revised Fixed Traveling Allowance (FTA) for Junior Engineers is enhanced from Rs 500 to Rs 3500 and for Supervisors from Rs 300 to Rs 2500.

The revised salary, wages and honorarium shall take effect from 01-03-2025—

HM

which there was no re-polling in any place. Not a single tear gas or bullet was fired. Sixty per cent people exercised their franchise, this is a huge change," he said. (Agencies)

CM

A massive search operation is underway to track and neutralise other members of the group.

"Visited the families of our bravehearts — Balvinder Singh, Tariq Ahmad, Jaswant Singh and Jagbir Singh — who laid down their lives in the line of duty during the Kathua encounter. Their sacrifice is etched in our hearts forever. We stand with their families in this hour of grief," according to a post on the X handle of the Chief Minister's Office.

Talking to reporters after visiting the home of selection grade constable Tariq Ahmad, the chief minister said encounters and terror attacks were nothing new and had been happening in the Jammu region for the past three to four years.

"Even in Reasi district, there was an attack on a passenger bus (ferrying pilgrims last year). There were attacks in Jammu city. The reason behind this is that when the Chinese army made an incursion into Ladakh, we needed an army to counter them," Abdullah said.

"We could not remove the army from the valley and so the troops stationed in Jammu were sent to Ladakh, as a result of which there was a shortage somewhere. Now, that shortage is being slowly overcome," he added.

Assuring that the compensation cases of the fallen policemen would be taken up by the home department when offices reopened after Eid next week, he said "we should try not to have such incidents".

CABINET

Sources told news agency JKNS that Omar Abdullah cabinet will give expansion to its cabinet and four more leaders of NC are likely to get ministries.

They said that Altaf Ahmad Wani Kaloo MLA Pahalgam, Nazir Gurezi, Mir Saifullah, Justice Hassnain Masoodi are likely to get a cabinet birth, sources revealed.

Currently there are five ministers in the cabinet of Omar Abdullah that include Surinder Choudhary, Sakina Itoo, Javed Dar, Javid Rana and Satish Sharma.

REST

ing the funeral processions. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah led the wreath-laying ceremony for Jagbir Singh, while BJP MP Jugal Kishore Sharma and other leaders attended the funerals, emphasizing the need to eliminate militancy.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Rayees Mohammad Bhat reiterated the police force's commitment to continuing the fight against Pakistan-backed militancy, vowing to bring it to its logical conclusion. MP Sharma claimed that militancy was in its final phase and would

soon be uprooted. (CNS)

MARKET

Polo View, and Residency Road and other markets are experiencing crowded buyers, with customers grabbing clothing, shoes, and sweets.

Henna, bangles, and decorative vendors have pitched their stalls, further enhancing the festive fervour.

Amina, a customer at Lal Chowk Srinagar said, Eid is not complete without shopping and children's gifts. "We have been shopping for the last few days, but the actual rush is witnessed in the last hour," she added.

Likewise, sweet and bakery shops also have an excessive response, and individuals are purchasing special delicacies for the same. "Eid is about traditional sweets here. Bakery goods demand has surged," Bashir Ahmad, an owner of a bakery shop in Srinagar, said.

Further, traffic congestion has increased in business centers, with the government deploying extra staff to handle the traffic. "We request people to adhere to the traffic rules so that movement remains smooth in this festive season," said a traffic department official—

SONAMARG

A total of 1,33,854 visitors explored the snow-clad beauty of Sonamarg between January 1 and March 10, marking a strong revival in the region's tourism sector.

As per the details obtained by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), January alone saw 55,934 tourists, including 1,114 foreign and an equal number of domestic travellers. The momentum continued in February, with 57,186 visitors, including 2,019 foreign travellers and 1,565 locals. In just the first 10 days of March, 20,734 tourists flocked to Sonamarg.

By comparison, Sonamarg welcomed nearly 8 lakh tourists in all of 2024. These early numbers indicate an excellent start to the year, especially considering the traditionally challenging winter months that kept the area largely inaccessible in previous years.

The surge in visitors is due to the Sonamarg tunnel, which has made the region accessible year-round. Previously, heavy snowfall would isolate the area for months, but now, uninterrupted access is drawing more tourists, benefiting hoteliers, travel agents, and local businesses.

This increase in tourist activity is seen as a hopeful sign not only for Sonamarg but for the wider revival of winter tourism across Kashmir. As infrastructure improves and travel becomes easier, experts predict a sustained boost to the region's economy and the tourism sector in the coming years.

Sonamarg Development Authority CEO Gh Mohd Bhat told KNO, "Sonamarg has immense natural potential with its snow-covered mountains, and the inauguration of the Sonamarg Tunnel this year has brought significant benefits to both locals and hoteliers."

"We are optimistic that this year will break all previous records in terms of tourist arrivals. All necessary arrangements have been made to ensure a smooth experience for visitors. We are also working on several future projects to further develop Sonamarg as a premier tourist destination," he added—

ED

launched on Thursday at seven locations in Patna.

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The federal probe agency said in a statement that it searched the premises of Tarini Das, Chief Engineer of Bihar Construction Department (BCD); Mumukshu Chaudhary,

joint secretary in Bihar Government's Finance Department; and Umesh Kumar Singh, Executive Engineer of Urban Development and Housing Dept. (UDHD) among others.

Raids were also conducted against Ayaz Ahmed, Deputy Project Director of Bihar Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (BUIDCO); Sagar Jaiswal, DGM (Projects) of Bihar Medical Services and Infrastructure Corporation Ltd. (BMSICL); Vikash Jha, DGM of BMSICL; and Saket Kumar, Executive Engineer in the Bihar Construction Department (BCD).

It claimed that these officials were the "recipients" of bribe money to give "favourable" outcomes in several tenders as well as clearance of bills of various contractors including that of a Patna-based contractor named Rishu Shree.

None of the officials or their legal representatives could be contacted for their response on the ED action and the charges made against them.

The searches led to the seizure of about Rs 11.64 crore cash, a number of property documents, some papers pertaining to sharing of "bribe money" along with various other "incriminating" documents and digital evidences, the ED said.

It, however, did not say how much cash and documents was seized from whose premises.

The money laundering case against Hans, a 1997-batch bureaucrat who last served as the Principal Secretary of the Bihar Energy Department, stems from a special vigilance unit FIR of Bihar Police.

The ED has alleged that Hans "earned illicit money by indulging in corrupt practices while holding various prime postings in Bihar Government and also during his Central deputations during 2018-2023." (PTI)

SKIMS

16 medical officers at the institute, just two are in position while 14 are lying vacant. Furthermore, among 776 paramedical staff, 530 are in position and 246 are lying vacant.

Meanwhile, an official told KNO that out of 128 vacant faculty positions, 13 have been referred to JKPCS, while 115 are under consideration for revival/concurrence. He said that 14 medical officer posts have been referred to JKPCS, while among 246 vacant paramedical staff positions, 21 have been sent to JKSSB, and 225 are under review for revival/concurrence.

As per the details available with KNO, there are 11 senior consultants and 131 consultant positions lying vacant in all hospitals of the Directorate of Health Services, Jammu. In the Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir, the number of consultant posts lying vacant includes 42 in district hospitals and 84 in sub-district hospitals. Three hundred thirty-seven posts of medical officers are lying vacant in hospitals of DHSJ while 254 posts of medical officers are lying vacant in DHSK.

Details also reveal that 67 posts of dental surgeons are lying vacant at DHSJ while 26 posts of dental surgeons are lying vacant at DHSK. It also reveals that 997 posts of paramedics are lying vacant in district hospitals, sub-district hospitals, and primary health centres of DHSJ, while 1,447 posts of paramedics are lying vacant in DHSK.

Health Minister Sakina Itoo recently mentioned in the Assembly that in November 2024, 365 selectees were appointed as medical officers in the J&K Health & Family Welfare (Gazetted) Services, and these medical officers have been posted in far-flung/peripheral health institutes across J&K to strengthen medical/health care facilities at the grass-roots level.

The department is also in the process of operating the waitlist for 91 selectee medical officers, whose services will also be utilised in underserved areas across J&K. "Besides,

181 posts of medical officers are still to be received from the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission. Upon receiving the selections, the selectee doctors will be posted at health institutions experiencing staff shortages," the minister said.

He added that 292 vacancies in the non-gazetted/paramedical category from the Directorate of Family Welfare, Maternity and Child Health (MCH) and Immunization, and 290 vacancies in the Directorate of Health Services, Jammu have also been referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB)—

DRUGS

oin-like substance was recovered from their possession. Further investigation is underway to unearth the forward and backward linkages of the individuals, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

Similarly in Sopore, a police team led by Incharge Police Post Fruit Mandi under the supervision of SDPO Sopore and SHO Police Station Sopore, during patrolling at Reban, intercepted a suspicious person namely Shakir Ahmad Khan son of Gulam Nabi Khan resident of Reban. During the search, police party was able to recover 103 grams of charas like substance from his possession.

All the accused persons have been arrested and cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and further investigation has been initiated, police said.

"Police remain committed to eradicating drug abuse and trafficking from the district. Public is urged to cooperate and report any suspicious activity to the nearest Police Station or dial 112," the statement reads—

DESK

be adhered to strictly by all the concerned institutions. Any deviation in this regard shall be viewed seriously," DSEK said—

DYCM

their sacrifice has plunged the whole of J&K into grief even as they belonged to different communities — one is a Muslim and three Hindus.

"Our brotherhood is strong and nobody can break it whatever the efforts," he added—

LG

edition of Purvanchal Festival "Maati", in Delhi today.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations to the Maati Trust and everyone associated with the prestigious event for providing an excellent platform to share ideas, culture and arts of Purvanchal.

He said the last seven editions of this festival underline the vibrancy of Purvanchal's rich art and culture and its intellectual traditions.

The Lieutenant Governor said, "Purvanchal has strengthened our diverse culture and preserved our traditional values.

I believe the region of Purvanchal is anchored in the abiding values of our spiritual ethos. For thousands of years, the language diversity and Purvanchal's literature shaped our perspectives on culture and it gave new ideas and influenced the cultural canvas all over the world.

Linguistic diversity flourished in Purvanchal and it filled the cultural void in the society. It has shaped our outlook, given rise to new ideas, strengthened unity in society amidst diversity and has succeeded in influencing the cultural landscape across the world".

The Lieutenant Governor paid homage to the freedom fighters, writers, artists, Industrialists and prominent personalities of Purvanchal who worked with dedication to build a modern India and illuminated people's lives with their intellectual and creative efforts.

"The values that Purvanchal has given to humanity can never be erased. Many of our ancestors who are no longer in this world have left behind a rich legacy for the society which can ensure a secure future for generations to come.

There are thousands of great stars in the sky of Purvanchal. There is nothing more sacred and precious than their creations and their ideals. The Maati Trust and their associates have a huge responsibility to preserve and promote this sacred legacy," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that the future generation should be connected with linguistic richness and cultural diversity.

"The young generation should be connected with those traditions which have served as a source of emotional bonding, peace, ideals and inspiration for thousands of years," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the Maati Trust for its commendable efforts in roping in around 51,000 educational institutions for scholarships, jobs, startups, entrepreneurship for the youth and promotion of culture through a proposed cultural centre.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also felicitated and congratulated the achievers of Purvanchal who were conferred with the 'Maati Samman'.

RAMADAN

Worshippers also practised fasting and engaging in religious activities, affirming the importance of religion and congregation.

Street Iftars became an important part of Ramadan this year, as locals and volunteers provided meals at hospitals, busy street corners and near mosques. NGOs and volunteers increased food distribution activities, providing patients and hospital attendants with Iftar and Suhoor food. Masjid Bilal in Srinagar also followed its usual practice of arranging large Iftar get-togethers, bringing people into a closer fold.

A volunteer said they were distributing Iftar meals daily in the vicinity of hospitals and mosques. "It is heartwarming to see people congregating to support needy people," he added.

Markets experienced a rush, with consumers flooding shops to buy Ramadan necessities, festive wear and dry fruits. Restaurants and hotels experienced an upsurge in reservations as families and friends came together to enjoy special "Iftar buffets", savouring traditional Wazwan and other mouth-watering dishes. At the same time, the ancient tradition of Sahar Khans—drummers going door to door to wake individuals for Suhoor—also continued, keeping Kashmir's cultural heritage alive. While Ramadan ushered in a festive atmosphere, there was a palpable rise in street begging seen throughout Srinagar and other districts. Most people going about seeking alms were spotted outside mosques and in business centres, leading to debate on the increasing socio-economic issues of the region.

GOC

from Kathua to Chenab valley after infiltrating the border," officials said.

The GOC was accompanied by Major General APS Bal, the GOC of Counter Insurgency Force-Delta (CIF-D), they said.

"GOC White Knight Corps and GOC CIF-D visited Basantgarh to assess the ongoing security situation in the region. The GOC appreciated the troops for their unwavering



Eid-ul-Fitr: All Preparations in Place for Smooth Eid Prayers Across Valley: Waqf Board Chairperson

Says, Largest Gathering Expected at Dargah Hazratbal; Decision on Eid Prayers at Eidgah Lies With Admin

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 29: As the golden hues of Eid ul Fitr painted the skies of Kashmir, a wave of joy and relief swept through the homes of hundreds of Dailywagers of the Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board. For years, many of them had toiled tirelessly, their dedication unwavering despite meager salaries that barely sustained their families. But this Eid, their prayers were answered in an extraordinary way. Dr. Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, the dynamic Chairperson of the J&K Waqf Board, made a historic announcement that would change lives forever. In a move hailed as revolutionary, she ordered a massive pay revision, ensuring that



no employee under the Board's umbrella would be left struggling in financial hardship. A Lifeline for Dailywagers For decades, Dailywager employees—skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled—had been working with salaries as low as 3,000 per month, a

pittance in today's times. But Dr. Andrabi's decision brought them long-overdue justice. Their wages were now fixed at 18,000, 16,000, and 15,000 respectively—a staggering 200% to 400% increase. Mohammad Shafi, a caretaker at a Waqf-run shrine,

couldn't hold back his tears when he heard the news. "For 20 years, I worked with a salary that didn't even cover my children's school fees. Today, Dr. Andrabi has given us dignity," he said, clutching the official order in his trembling hands. The benefits didn't stop there. Regular employees, imams, khateeb, and pensioners saw a 20% hike in their salaries, while the teaching faculty at the Waqf-managed Bibi Halima College of Nursing & Medical Technology received a 15% raise. Even those with additional duties were granted special allowances, and the Engineering Wing staff would now receive a monthly Traveling Allowance of 3,000. Behind this monumental decision was Dr. Andrabi's relentless drive to strengthen.

ADC Srinagar visits Sharika Devi Temple, oversees arrangements for upcoming Navratra festival

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 29: On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Srinagar, Dr. Khalid Hussain Malik on Saturday visited Sharika Devi Temple in the District to oversee arrangements being made on the eve of Navreh, a festival celebrated on new Year as per Hindu calendar and beginning of Navratra celebrations. During his visit, the ADC was accompanied by the members of Kashmir Pandit community and senior Officers from District Administration. At Sharika Devi Temple atop Hari Parbat, Badamwari the ADC took a detailed stock of the arrangements being made for the devotees. While interacting with the management Committee of



the Sharika Devi Temple, the ADC took first hand appraisal of the arrangements made available at the venue to facilitate the visiting devotees particularly on the occasion of Navratra. The ADC gave on spot directions to the PDD and PHE Departments to ensure uninterrupted supplies of Power and water. He also instructed the Health Department to ensure health facilities at the Temple on the festival eve.

Similarly, SMC authorities were asked to deploy sufficient personnel for sanitation and cleaning measures at both the venues. During his visit, the ADC was accompanied by the members of Kashmir Pandit community and senior Officers from District Administration. At Sharika Devi Temple atop Hari Parbat, Badamwari the ADC took a detailed stock of the arrangements being made for the devotees.

Quran and Islamic Calligraphy Art Exhibition Held at Tebyan Quranic Research Institute, Srinagar

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 29 – The Tebyan Quranic Research Institute at Saida Kadal, Hassanabad, Srinagar, has inaugurated a grand Quran and Islamic Calligraphy Art Exhibition showcasing the rich heritage of Islamic calligraphy and the artistic expressions of Kashmiri artists. The exhibition, which runs from March 24th to March 30th, has drawn significant attention from scholars, artists, and admirers of Quranic art. The event was organised by Hujjat-ul-Islam Wal Muslimeen Jenab Aga Syed Abid Hussain, Chairman of the Institute, who highlighted the importance of Quranic calligraphy in preserving the spiritual and artistic essence of Islamic culture. Prominent social worker of Kashmir Syed Aijaz Kashani, along with renowned educationist Salim Mir and social worker Amjid Rizvi, visited the exhibition. Syed Aijaz Kashani while speaking on the occasion, emphasizing the need to promote and preserve the unique artistic talent of Kashmiri calligrapher. He said the exhibition features exquisite works by many talented Kashmiri artists, showcasing their skills in traditional and modern styles of Islamic calligraphy. Their contributions have been widely appreciated by attendees, including various leading personalities from different walks of life who have visited the exhibition and lauded the efforts of the Tebyan Quranic Research Institute in organizing this cultural and religious event. The Tebyan Quranic Research Institute continues to serve as a platform for promoting Islamic art and education. Renowned Educationist and Founder of Commerce Guru academy Mr, Salim Mir said the ongoing exhibition.

Javed Rana reviews working of Forest department

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 29: Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, today convened a meeting at Jammu to review functioning of the Forest Department. He reviewed the department's activities and discussed various aspects of forest management, including conservation efforts, Ek Ped Maa ke Naam, Protection measures, community engagement, sustainable development and Community Social Responsibility. PCCF Chief, Suresh Kumar Gupta, gave a brief on the department's activities and highlighted the achievements of the forest department. During the meeting, physical and financial progress on key flagship schemes was also reviewed. While reviewing the forest protection measures, Rana said that forest fire prevention and management mechanisms have gained added significance due to the adverse climatic conditions. He emphasised the need of initiating innovative mitigation measures on this account. The Minister stressed on raising



awareness and ensuring coordination among various wings of the Forest Department for achieving tangible progress. He also emphasised the active involvement of locals in Forest Fire Control operations. Maintaining that steps need to be taken to strengthen forest dependent communities and tribal engagement, Rana instructed to swiftly address the pending claims under the Forest Rights Act, filed by forest dwellers. He also had a detailed assessment of traditional as well as modern ways in which forest department provides services to the people dependent on forest resources. He directed for optimum utilisation of available resources for revenue generation and sustainable liveli-

hoods created through eco-tourism and forest recreation. While reviewing the Greening Jammu and Kashmir initiative, Rana said that it should be carried out for increasing forest cover as per the National Forest Policy. The Minister also directed for fast-tracking the green clearances for projects of significant public interest and aggressive compensatory afforestation without exceptions. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on Human Resource (HR) management in various wings of Forest Department. Javed Rana urged upon the PCCF to maintain accountability and transparency, ensuring administrative efficiency and timely resolution of employee related matters.

Legal Metrology Enforcement seizes Underweight Cooking Oil Stock in Srinagar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 29: Acting on complaints regarding the sale of underweight cooking oil in Srinagar, the Legal Metrology Enforcement Srinagar conducted extensive inspections across the city. During an inspection in Batmaloo, the department's enforcement unit detected significant discrepancies in the net weight of pre-packaged edible oil containers. A case was registered against a leading manufacturer and packer of edible oil after standard weighing equipment confirmed a shortage exceeding the permissible error limit prescribed under the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules. As a result, the department seized the available stock and notified the concerned wholesaler in Batmaloo. Legal proceedings under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 are underway against all responsible parties. It is pertinent to mention that the quantity was measured in presence of the consumers which gathered at the location and the actions of the department were appreciated by them. The consumers were apprised about their rights regarding the accuracy of the quantity contained in the packages and their responsibility in checking the same by using the certified weights and measurement which must be available with every trader.

Mohd Ashraf Mir urges Govt to release contractors' payments before Eid

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 29: Apni Party Provincial President Mohammad Ashraf Mir on Saturday expressed deep concern over the non-release of pending bills for contractors and urged the government to ensure the immediate release of contractors' payments in view of Eid-ul-Fitr. In his statement, Mir said, "Many contractors who have already completed their work on government projects are being forced to run from pillar to post due to the non-release of their pending payments. Unfortunately, most of these contractors had borrowed money to complete their allotted work, assuming their payments would be released promptly upon project completion. However, they are now facing hardship due to the delay in payment." He further said, "I urge the government to ensure the release of their pending payments so they can celebrate Eid with peace of mind."

MMU Condemns Curbs on Religious Freedoms

HT News Network

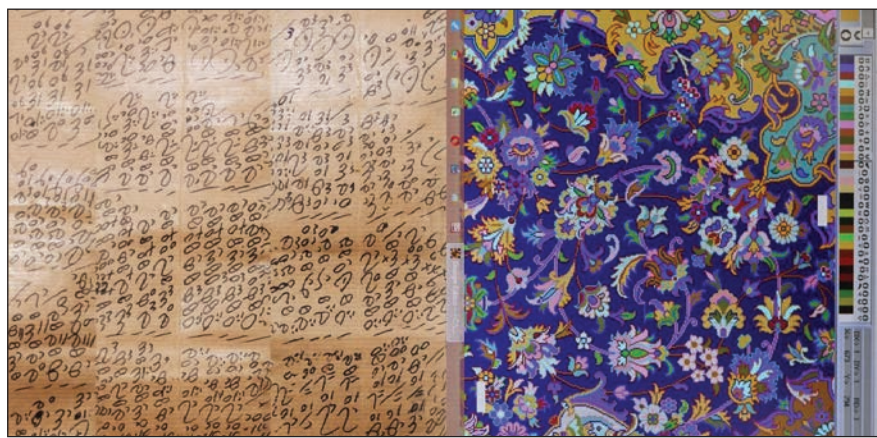
Srinagar, Mar 29: The Muthahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU), the largest representative body of Ulema, Imams, and religious organizations in Jammu & Kashmir, has strongly condemned the authorities' decision to disallow Shab-e-Qadr and Jumat-ul-Vida congregational prayers at the historic Jama Masjid Srinagar and the house arrest of its Ameer, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. In a statement, the MMU expressed deep resentment over what it termed as a deliberate attempt to curb religious freedoms in the region. It lamented that while congregational prayers were allowed worldwide, including in conflict zones, authorities in Kashmir imposed restrictions.

Blending tradition with technology, IICT digitizes 560 old carpet designs

Work underway for conversion of remaining designs with NABARD funding

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, MARCH 29: In order to prevent loss of treasure trove of yore and safeguard cultural heritage, the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, has successfully digitized 560 carpet designs in the Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), here. An estimated 1000 traditional carpet designs, each characterized by unique patterns, sizes and knots, are historically documented in manually written talim papers, which provide coded instructions for colour selection and knot counts for carpet weaving. In a statement issued here today, Director IICT, Srinagar, Zubair Ahmad, stated that a major portion of traditional designs have been preserved in soft form. "These designs can now be accessed, printed and adapted to modern market trends by modifying motifs, patterns, colours and sizes," he added. Identifying digitization



of traditional designs as a major challenge, Director IICT said a substantial portion of these invaluable traditional designs, written by skilled Naqash, had deteriorated over a period of time due to various reasons. In order to speed up the conversion of remaining traditional designs into digital format, IICT has received approval

from NABARD under off-farm sector funding for proceeding ahead with the digitization of remaining old carpet designs, ensuring their conservation for future generations. Zubair Ahmad urged the business stakeholders in carpet craft to approach IICT for accessing the digitized copies of these

traditional designs, which can be interspersed with modern contemporary designs to meet the prevalent market requirement. An estimated 1000 traditional carpet designs, each characterized by unique patterns, sizes and knots, are historically documented in manually written talim papers, which provide coded instructions for colour selection and knot counts for carpet weaving. In a statement issued here today, Director IICT, Srinagar, Zubair Ahmad, stated that a major portion of traditional designs have been preserved in soft form. "These designs can now be accessed, printed and adapted to modern market trends by modifying motifs, patterns, colours and sizes," he added. Identifying digitization of traditional designs as a major challenge, Director IICT said a substantial portion of these invaluable traditional designs, written by skilled Naqash, had deteriorated over a period of time due to various reasons.

EDITORIAL

HADP leads to revolution in agriculture sector

The Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) has led to a revolution in the agriculture sector. More and more people are taking up the agriculture sector as a viable means of income and as such are contributing towards the household income. Like commercial floriculture, commercial agriculture has also taken roots in the Kashmir valley. Agriculture has progressed by leaps and bounds over the past few years with people reaping the benefits.

The silver lining in this whole scenario is that women have taken up agriculture as their profession and more and more female agripreneurs are coming to the fore. Success stories of female agriculturalists are emanating from the different parts of the Kashmir and Jammu regions. Since agriculture has turned into a full-fledged round the year activity vegetables are available to the people in the Kashmir valley.

Not long ago the Kashmir valley would face a scarcity of the vegetables during the winter more so when the Srinagar-Jammu national highway would get closed on account of inclement weather. Things have changed in the recent past with the green houses heralding a new revolution in the agriculture sector. Almost all types of vegetables are available to the people round the year and the people are heaving a sigh of relief.

The availability of green vegetables during the winter season has led to less dependence on dried vegetables and the dried vegetables are considered as delicacies by the people. Since some of the doctors have voiced concern over the usage of dried vegetables it is important that necessary caution is followed while using such vegetables. In such a scenario the availability of green vegetables has come as a welcome relief.

Over the years the Department of Agriculture has taken many innovative measures so as to motivate the existing farmers to adopt the new techniques so that there is an increase in the production. It is due to these measures that the young generation has also been motivated to take up agriculture as a full time means of employment. This is a great step since the younger generation is not running after government jobs.

It is high time that more and more youngsters take a plunge in the agriculture sector so that they turn out to be successful entrepreneurs. This will ensure that more and more people are willing to set up their own ventures rather than going after government jobs or menial jobs. This would give a new dimension to the economic progress scenario of the Kashmir valley.

The Transformative Power of Education
Addressing Ethical, Structural, and Societal Challenges in Modern Pedagogy

DR MOHIUDIN ZORE KASHMIRI*

1. Introduction

Education has long been recognized as a catalyst for individual and collective progress, transcending the mere transfer of knowledge to encompass the cultivation of ethical values and critical thinking. Philosophers like John Dewey argued that education is the bedrock of democracy, fostering informed citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to society (Dewey 87). Literary figures, from Shakespeare to Rabindranath Tagore, have historically served as moral guides, embedding universal truths into their works to inspire empathy and resilience (Freire 45). However, the 21st century, characterized by rapid technological advancement and materialism, has introduced complex challenges to these ideals. This paper examines the erosion of humanistic values in modern societies, critiques systemic inadequacies in educational frameworks—particularly in conflict-affected regions like Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)—and proposes reforms to realign education with its ethical and transformative potential.

2. Materialism and the Erosion of Human Values

The paradox of the digital age lies in its capacity to connect individuals globally while deepening social fragmentation. Urbanization and consumerism have shifted societal priorities toward economic achievement, often at the expense of communal bonds. Émile Durkheim's concept of anomie—a state of normlessness arising from rapid social change—aptly describes the alienation prevalent in modern societies (Durkheim 155). Families, once the cornerstone of social cohesion, now grapple with disloyalty and intergenerational discord. Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism and exam fraud, and professional corruption, including bribery in public services, further illustrate this moral decline (Transparency International 23). A UNESCO report underscores this trend, noting a 40% decline in empathy among adolescents in hyper-connected societies between 2010 and 2020 (UNESCO, Global Education Monitoring Report 12). The Urdu poet Firaq Gorakhpuri's lament that modern life resembles "a sick man's night" poignantly captures this existential crisis (Khan 78). To counteract these trends, education systems must reassert their role in nurturing virtues like integrity, justice, and compassion.

3. Ethical Education: A Path to Societal Reform

Ethical education transcends rote moral instruction, encouraging learners to critically engage with societal inequities. Finland's education model, lauded globally, integrates ethics through community service projects and student-led dialogues, fostering civic responsibility (Sahlberg 112). Similarly, Japan's Course of Study for Ethics emphasizes collective welfare and environmental stewardship (Government of Japan 34). In J&K, where cultural and religious diversity often fuels tension, localized ethical curricula could draw on Sufi poetry or Kashmiri folklore to promote harmony. For instance, the works of Lal Ded, a 14th-century mystic poet, emphasize universal love and tolerance—values that resonate across communities (Wani 92). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's advocacy for "value-based education" aligns with this approach, urging schools to integrate modules on empathy, gender equality, and sustainability (Government of India 19).

4. Systemic Challenges in Jammu and Kashmir's Education Sector

4.1 Infrastructure Deficits and Accessibility

J&K's education system grapples with chronic infrastructural neglect. A 2021 survey by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) revealed that 30% of rural schools lack electricity, 45% lack functional toilets, and 60% operate without libraries (JKBOSE 8). Land scarcity exacerbates these issues; many schools, particularly in urban areas like Srinagar, occupy cramped buildings without playgrounds or laboratories. A viable solution involves repurposing underutilized state land, such as urban SDA plots and rural grazing fields, for school expansion. However, bureaucratic delays and interdepartmental conflicts often stall such initiatives (Bhat 56).

4.2 Corruption and Erosion of Meritocracy

Corruption permeates J&K's education sector, distorting teacher recruitment and student admissions. Wealthy families often secure seats in professional colleges through donations, sidelining meritorious candidates (Transparency International 45). In higher education, instances of fraudulent degrees and bribes-for-grades schemes undermine institutional credibility. Strengthening oversight bodies like the JKBOSE and implementing standardized entrance exams, akin to India's NEET and JEE, could restore meritocracy (Government of India 27).

4.3 Curriculum Relevance and Pedagogical Stagnation

J&K's outdated curricula fail to equip students with skills relevant to contemporary economies. While the NEP 2020 advocates for vocational training, most schools lack the resources to implement courses in agriculture, technology, or handicrafts—sectors critical to J&K's economy (OECD 89). Revising syllabi to include local crafts like Pashmina weaving or saffron cultivation could

align education with regional economic needs while preserving cultural heritage (Wani 104).

5. The Digital Divide: COVID-19 and the Rise of Online Education

The pandemic underscored the stark inequities in digital access. In urban centers like Jammu, 70% of students transitioned smoothly to online learning, while rural areas like Kupwara saw 60% of students drop out due to poor internet connectivity (Azim Premji University 15). The shift to virtual classrooms also eroded teacher-student interactions, with many educators relying on pre-recorded lectures and "readymade notes" (Dhawan 34). A hybrid model blending traditional instruction with digital tools—such as virtual labs and online guest lectures—could bridge this gap. However, this requires substantial investment in rural broadband infrastructure and teacher training programs focused on digital pedagogy (UNESCO, Global Education Monitoring Report 45).

6. Private vs. Public Education: Toward Collaborative Solutions

Critics often vilify private schools for perpetuating elitism, yet they fill critical gaps left by underfunded public institutions. Kerala's education model offers a balanced approach: private schools partner with the state to improve infrastructure while adhering to fee regulations (Government of Kerala 22). In J&K, similar collaborations could enhance access to quality education. For example, private institutions in Srinagar could share resources like science labs with neighbouring government schools, fostering equity without privatization (Sahlberg 135).

7. Recommendations for Holistic Reform

- Teacher Training and Professional Development
- Implement mandatory workshops on innovative pedagogies, drawing on Finland's model of teacher autonomy (Darling-Hammond 78).
- Incentivize educators in rural areas through housing allowances and career advancement opportunities.
- Curriculum Modernization
- Integrate STEM education with vocational training, emphasizing sectors like renewable energy and tourism (OECD 102).
- Incorporate regional history and multicultural literature to foster social cohesion.
- Infrastructure Investment
- Utilize public-private partnerships to construct schools on repurposed state land.
- Equip classrooms with digital tools and ensure reliable electricity and internet access.
- Ethical Governance
- Appoint educationists—rather than bureaucrats—to administrative roles.
- Establish anti-corruption task forces to audit admissions and recruitment processes.

8. Conclusion

Education remains humanity's

most potent tool for societal transformation. By addressing infrastructural deficits, combating corruption, and recentering ethics in curricula, regions like J&K can cultivate a generation of empathetic, critically engaged citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic, while disruptive, offers an opportunity to reimagine education as a hybrid, inclusive endeavor. As Firaq Gorakhpuri's verse reminds us, the remedy to modernity's malaise lies not in rejecting progress but in harmonizing it with timeless human values.

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The knock of the terrible Kaliyuga
Human relationships are in danger due to moral degradation

DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

In today's time, when we look at newspapers and social media, we find news of crime, deception, violence, and moral degradation all around. It seems that society has entered the influence of the dark Kali Yuga. Lack of trust in family relationships, decline in moral values, and blind race for material pleasures have weakened human sensibilities. Morality, the importance of relationships, and human sensibilities are gradually weak-

ening in society. Incidents of murder, betrayal, selfishness, greed, and moral degradation are increasing continuously. Seeing this, it seems that society is moving towards a dark period. It is heart-wrenching to hear that a son can murder his own parents so ruthlessly. Such crimes show how much mental balance, morality, and family values have declined in society. It is heart-wrenching to hear that a son can murder his own parents so ruthlessly. Such crimes show how much mental balance, morality, and family values have declined in society. The way moral degradation is increasing in society, it not only indicates the number of crimes but also the breakdown of family and social fabric.

The importance of relationships in society is gradually

decreasing, and there can be many reasons for this. Earlier, where there was closeness, trust, and sacrifice in relationships, now selfishness, greed, and show-off have taken their place. Nowadays selfishness and greed are dominating even among parents, siblings, husbands and wives, and friends. The family, which used to be the center of love and cooperation earlier, is now becoming a victim of quarrels and mutual differences. Incidents like murder, rape, robbery, and fraud are increasing over small matters. Even family members are putting each other's lives in danger. People are trying to achieve wealth and success by any means, leaving morality and honesty even if they have to exploit someone for that. Earlier people used to have patience in life and toler-

ate difficulties, but nowadays anger and impatience have dominated people. Small disputes have started taking violent forms. Religion is becoming a means of mere show-off, while the value of morality and honesty is decreasing. People teach others moral lessons but do not follow the right path themselves. Earlier there used to be joint families where there was guidance from the elders. But now, in the name of personal freedom and modernity, family values are declining. People are becoming mentally unstable due to financial pressure, tension in relationships, and conflict of personal desires, due to which they make wrong decisions. Violence, crime, and immorality have been made normal on the Internet. People take extreme steps without think-

ing. Children are being taught less about the difference between right and wrong in schools and families. Greed, jealousy, and personal selfishness are increasing. Criminals know that there will be a delay in getting punishment, or they will find a way to escape, due to which the number of crimes is increasing.

Looking at the incidents happening in the society, it seems that we have entered the era of extreme Kali Yuga. Where earlier importance was given to relationships, love, respect, and morality, now selfishness, greed, anger, and violence are becoming dominant. Looking at the increasing crimes in society, it seems that humanity, tolerance, and love are slowly vanishing. But if the family, society, and the government take the right steps

together, then this decline can be stopped. To revive family values, parents should spend time with children, give them moral education, and explain the difference between right and wrong. Problems related to stress, depression, and anger should not be ignored. Therapy and counseling should be adopted if needed. Criminals should be given strict punishment, and the legal process should be fast so that the criminals remain afraid. Positive stories and content related to morality should be promoted, which inspires good values in the society. Emphasis should be laid on moral education, empathy, and social values in schools. We all have to fulfill our responsibility to maintain morality and humanity in society. This is not only the work of the government or the law, but

every person needs to bring about change at his own level.

Even in this time of extreme Kaliyug, if we keep our actions in the right direction, then this darkness can be reduced a little. To maintain morality and humanity in society, we have to start from ourselves. We cannot only blame the government and law and order, but we also have to bring changes in our personal and social lives. Even in this time of extreme Kaliyug, if we keep our actions in the right direction, then the renaissance of goodness in society is possible. We have to decide whether we want to get lost in this darkness or want to bring a new ray of light with our efforts.

Dr. Satyawan Saurabh, Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist

A Silent Eid: When Festivities Meet Financial Hardships

NAWAZ IBN AHAD

The twilight of Eid, once heralding joy and togetherness, now unfolds in an air of solemnity, where festivity whispers in hushed tones and streets that once pulsed with excitement now stand eerily bereft of mirth. The fragrance of freshly baked sweets, the rustling of new garments, and the laughter of eager children have all succumbed to the weight of economic despair. A celebration once woven with the golden threads of unity and abundance now lies shadowed beneath the dark clouds of financial adversity, leaving behind the echoes of an era when prosperity kissed the brows of all.

For those burdened by the ruthless grip of financial hardship, Eid, which once symbolized exuberance and renewal, has become a mere reminder of what was lost. Families who, in days gone by, would indulge in shopping sprees, now traverse the marketplace with weary steps, their hands empty, their eyes holding back unshed tears. Parents, whose deepest desire is to witness their children revel in the delight of new clothes and sweet delicacies, now grapple with the piercing pain of helplessness. The fabric merchants, the confectioners, the perfumers, and the jewellers, all stand with forlorn gazes upon deserted pathways, where once throngs of eager shoppers painted the streets in colors of jubilation.

In a world dictated by monetary resilience, the ebb and flow of financial currents have left many drowning in despair. Inflation has surged like an unrelenting tide, sweeping away the affordability of even the most modest luxuries. The staggering cost of living, cou-

pled with the specter of unemployment, has left households gasping for relief. Eid, which once served as an oasis of happiness amidst life's arid struggles, now feels like a cruel mirage to those shackled by economic woes. The scent of new garments has been replaced by the musty reminiscence of past celebrations, and the eager anticipation of the crescent moon has dimmed under the weight of unmet expectations.

The marketplaces, once a mosaic of gleeful chatter and bustling transactions, now resemble barren landscapes, where merchants sit in despondent silence, their hopes diminishing with each passing hour. The weight of unsold stock bears heavily upon their shoulders, their once-thriving businesses now reduced to silent pleas for survival. The soft glow of lanterns adorning their shops fails to cast away the gloom of unfulfilled sales. Even the festal banners fluttering in the wind seem to lament the absence of those who once thronged to these very streets with joyous hearts and open wallets.

Conversations with traders unfold like a sorrowful symphony, each voice echoing the same melancholic refrain. "The streets are empty; we wait, but they do not come," utters an elderly shopkeeper, his wrinkled hands clutching fabric that remains untouched. "In all my years, I have never seen an Eid so lifeless," laments another, his gaze wandering across the desolate marketplace. The confectioner, once accustomed to long queues of eager buyers, now watches trays of sweets grow stale under the burden of unsold hope. The aroma of Eid has been subdued, replaced by the cold air of uncertainty.

The reasons behind this down-



turn are as relentless as they are unforgiving. The soaring inflation has tightened its grip on household incomes, making even the simplest joys seem like distant luxuries. The specter of unemployment looms large, stripping families of their ability to partake in even the most fundamental aspects of the celebration. Wages have stagnated while prices have soared, and the ever-widening chasm between earnings and expenditures has left many drowning in an ocean of financial distress. The once-celebrated tradition of gifting, of sharing happiness in the form of new clothes and delectable feasts, has been reduced to whispers of nostalgia, as the affordability of such customs dwindles with each passing year.

Yet amidst the somber reality, hope clings to the hearts of many like a fading ember, refusing to be

extinguished. The spirit of Eid, though battered by economic tribulations, still flickers in the resilience of those who find joy in togetherness rather than material abundance. The warmth of family gatherings, the embrace of loved ones, and the sincerity of prayers transcend the weight of financial struggles. In the absence of lavish feasts and grand festivities, the essence of Eid is rediscovered in the simplest of moments—the quiet strength of a mother reassuring her children, the whispered prayers of a father seeking better days, the unbreakable bond of a community sharing whatever little they can.

For shopkeepers, the dwindling business is not merely a financial loss but a wound upon their spirits. Their livelihood, intertwined with the rhythm of festival seasons, now hangs in uncertainty. Their resilience is tested as they watch

the slow erosion of traditions they once thrived upon. Some hold onto a sliver of optimism, believing that next year will dawn brighter fortunes, that the streets will once again swell with life, and that the sighs of the struggling will be replaced with laughter. Others, however, are less hopeful, fearing that this decline is not transient but the harbinger of a lasting economic downfall.

The statistics, cold and unfeeling, lay bare the undeniable truth—sales have plummeted, purchasing power has dwindled, and the financial framework of communities has been shaken to its core. Local businesses, the backbone of many economies, face the threat of closure, their survival hanging by a fragile thread. The loss of one's livelihood is not merely a financial setback but an unraveling of years of toil and perseverance. Behind

every closed shop lies a tale of shattered dreams, of families left in uncertainty, of futures cast into the abyss of financial despair.

As Eid arrives with its celestial grace, it brings with it a poignant reminder of both loss and hope. For many, the joy that once came effortlessly is now sought through the cracks of hardship. The festivity that once lit up streets now glows only in the quiet corners of resilience. The silent prayers whispered in the solitude of the night bear the weight of countless hopes—that the coming years will mend what has been broken, that the empty streets will once again pulse with life, and that the shadows of financial struggle will be lifted by the dawn of prosperity.

In these testing times, it becomes an obligation upon us, as members of a unified community, to ensure that the spirit of Eid is not lost among those who suffer in silence. Islam teaches us the virtue of selflessness, of sharing the bounty granted to us with those who have little. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of caring for our neighbors, urging us to never let them go to sleep hungry while we have food on our table. This Eid, more than ever, should be a time of reflection, of extending a hand to those who struggle, of making sure that no home remains devoid of joy. Whether through Zakat, Sadaqah, or simple acts of kindness, we must embody the true essence of Eid by ensuring that every heart, no matter how burdened, finds a moment of relief and happiness. For in giving, we do not diminish our own blessings; rather, we multiply the beauty of this sacred occasion, turning hardship into hope and solitude into solidarity.

How to mitigate property damage due to natural catastrophe

Strong winds damaged the rooftops in the Kashmir Valley



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Amidst Ramadan ul Mubarak, gusty winds damaged the property in the valley during the late hours of 27th March. Human beings are habituated to natural catastrophe and know how to be resilient to such disasters. But unfortunately, knowing and keeping courage is not good enough for the downtrodden class of the valley.

In the Kashmir Valley, there are different seasons categorized on the basis of seasons. Valley can expect a number of natural catastrophes like avalanches, heavy snowfall, lashing rain, thunderstorms, lightning, and many more.

What comes to me is that I start writing this write-up. Actually, in the Kashmir Valley, most of the population resides in villages where, in the 21st century, people lack basic facilities like roads, emergency services like fire and emergency, health services like ambulances and nearby primary health centers, road connectivities, etc.

What I want to convey to administration in this regard is how we can mitigate such calamities.

Calamity or catastrophe is certainty and never comes before giving any sign it will be created at any moment,



even in seconds.

But one thing is very unfortunate: that we lose our properties; the underprivileged class is getting deprived of the shelters and suddenly coming under the open sky.

How to mitigate the destructions due to such a natural catastrophe in the valley.

We know, or most often the system can be created at any time. But we have to be aware and avoid unsafe construction of our homes, walls, and most importantly, rooftops. Gusty winds blow away the rooftops and can damage more assets.

It should be mandatory to construct rooftops as per the geography of the area and consultations from experienced and highly qualified architects.

Natural calamities take place mostly in upper reaches and where people construct homes without getting any consultation from concerned bodies, and such acts

cost the government administration a huge amount in relief and disturbances.

Suppose if government administration provides architect facilities on a little fee for experienced architects who can assist from beginning to end during the whole construction works, such an act may mitigate the loss of life and property of the people of the Kashmir Valley during natural calamities.

Here in Kashmir we experience such incidents regularly and have fear of lethal consequences.

It has been known for decades that the Kashmir Valley is coming under seismic zone 5; people have fear for tremendous jolts of earthquakes and make up their minds that almighty will make things better and safeguard us from such calamities.

Government administrations have to take initiatives to grant relief promptly and warn people regarding such

natural catastrophes.

Awareness programs should be conducted at the panchayat level; people should be aware of the facts so that everyone can live fearlessly, and everyone must have the knowledge of how to mitigate and how to bounce back from such calamities.

Post-2014 flash floods

During inclement weather and on rainy days like the period from March to September, even the residents of the main business hub in the heart of the Kashmir Valley fear the flood threats. Such fear may impact their business strategies, and they fear bankruptcy and mental disturbance.

We have to be habitual to living under such situations and have to be educated in such a field.

Natural catastrophe and natural vegetation.

We have a treasury of pir panjal forests; due to natural calamities, the natural vegetation was damaged on a large scale and needs alternatives like mass plantation drives. Fallen-off trees should be provided to the local underprivileged class on subsidiary costs. So that they never go for illegal deforestation activities.

Popular trees should not be planted alongside the roadside, and high-tension wires should be installed properly in all corners of the valley so that untoward incidents should be minimized and damage to property and loss of life are minimized.

May Allah safeguard us and protect us from all evil eyes. Ameen

Suragh-E-Zindagi: A Guide To Wisdom And Enlightenment



BOOK REVIEW

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'Suragh-e-Zindagi', by Abdul Salam Dar, is not just a book; it is a guiding star for every soul searching for the truth. It is a journey through the vast mysteries of life, time, space, and existence, unravelling them in the light of the Quran, Hadith, Science and Philosophy. This book doesn't merely provide answers; it awakens the heart and challenges the mind, calling upon the reader to reflect, seek, and understand.

The title Suragh-e-Zindagi (the clue of life) itself is a whisper from eternity, a call to those lost in the chaos of doubt, echoing Allama Iqbal's timeless wisdom:

"Apnay mann mein doob kar pa ja sureg-e-zindagi. Tu agar mera nahi banta na ban, apna to ban."

Dive into your own self to find the clue of life. If you do not become Mine, at least be your own.

Allama Iqbal's words are not just poetry; they are a divine command to the materialistic approach and restless heart to look within and find the hidden truth that has been there all along. The same is true for this book. The author does not shy away from the hardest questions—the ones that shake even the strongest of faiths.

This magnum opus firmly stands against the tide of doubt, answering the hair-raising questions of atheists and sceptics, including the faith-destructing arguments of Stephen Hawking. He dissects the theory of evolution, separating fact from illusion and addressing the biggest confusions of our time—confusions that have left many hearts lost in the morass of faithlessness and many minds thirsty for truth.

This book does not simply engage in debate; it restores faith. It revives the intellect. It proves that Islam is not mere ritualism; it is a living, breathing truth—an eternal reality.

Among the profound topics it explores are:

- What is life?
- What is time and space?
- The reality of Tasawuf?
- Islam beyond ritualism.
- The solid truth of Islam in light of modern scientific advancements.
- Bertrand Russell's misconceptions about faith.
- The beginning of life and the universe.

And many more relevant topics that every educated youth must know today.

Suragh-e-Zindagi is not just a book; it is a lifeline for the troubled heart, a beacon for the lost soul, and a torch that lights the path for those trapped in the darkness of doubt. It is proof that truth never wavers, no matter how strong the storm of falsehood may be.

May Almighty Allah elevate the status of my Murshid, the author. May his knowledge continue to illuminate countless hearts, and may his wisdom be a source of guidance for generations to come. (Aameen)

J&K reaffirming its status as "Crown Jewel of Indian Tourism": Satish Sharma

Receives India Today Tourism Survey Awards 2025 in "Most Instagrammable Category"

HT News Network

NEW DELHI, MARCH 29: In yet another proud moment for Jammu and Kashmir, Gulmarg has been selected for the editor's choice award in the Most Instagrammable Category in prestigious India Today Tourism Survey and Awards 2025 event which held at New Delhi. Minister for FCS& CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Information Technology, Science and Technology, ARI and Trainings Satish Sharma, received the prestigious

award on behalf of J&K Government. He was presented the award from Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

While addressing the gathering, the Minister extended his heartfelt gratitude to India Today group for the honour. He said that he is feeling highly privileged at this prestigious platform. The Minister exhorted that it is really a proud moment to receive this prestigious award on behalf of J&K government. He asserted that Gulmarg is one of the world famous tourist destinations and has been selected for the editor choice award



in the most Instagrammable landscape category. He said that tourism is not only an industry, but it is a bridge that connects various cultures. It acts as a catalyst for economic growth and reflection of a region's rich heritage and natural splendor. He reiterated that J&K is known for its breathtaking landscape, rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality and this award is a testament to our growing tourism potential. The Minister informed that J&K has recorded an unprecedented number of tourists arrival from past two years reaffirming its status as

crown jewel of the Indian tourism. "From the pristine valleys of Kashmir to the spiritual and adventurous landscape of Jammu, our tourism sector is flourishing like never before", he added. Satish Sharma said that J&K government, under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, is keen to promote tourism. He has taken several steps to strengthen the tourism sector in different categories like infrastructure development, border and eco-tourism, cultural heritage tourism, adventure and wellness tourism.

CUKashmir 90.8 FM goes on air Lt. Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain inaugurates varsity's Community Radio Station

HT News Network

Ganderbal, Mar 29: Central University of Kashmir (CUKashmir) achieved a milestone with Chancellor, Lt. Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, inaugurating the Community Radio Station, Radio CUKashmir 90.8 FM, under the Department of Communication and Journalism (DCJ) at Tulumulla campus here on Saturday.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by Vice-Chancellor, Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Shahid Rasool, Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, Deans of Schools, Finance Officer, Heads and Coordinators of the departments, faculty members, administrative staff, scholars and students.

In the first broadcast on the CUKashmir 90.8 FM beamed across the district, Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, described the Community Radio as a transformative medium that not only supplements and promotes education among masses, but also plays a pivotal and critical role in combating the social evils, challenges and malpractices like drug abuse, corruption, rampant suicides and raises awareness about the natural disasters. "Community Radio is a medium which reaches to the unreachable," Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain remarked. Hailing the CUKashmir for launching the Community Radio, he said the forum should be used to promote the sustainable development goals as envisaged by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, in order to achieve the dream of the Viksit Bharat @ 2047. Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, further added that the Community Radio can be extremely helpful in disseminating information about the disaster management. "Kashmir being a seismic



zone and flood prone as gauged from the devastating 2005 earthquake and 2014 floods, the Community Radio should prepare awareness programmes about the disaster management and inform the people about the ways and means to protect the lives and property during the adverse situations," he added.

In his broadcast, Vice Chancellor, Prof. A Ravinder Nath, said, the inauguration of Radio CUKashmir 90.8 FM marks the beginning of a new era in community-driven broadcasting at the CUKashmir. "As the radio waves of CUKashmir begin to resonate across the region, they carry with them the promise of empowerment, education, awareness, and meaningful engagement for all," Prof. A Ravinder Nath said. He asked the DCJ to focus on disseminating information about various initiatives launched by the Government of India including the Swachh Bharat, Swasth Bharat and issues pertaining to climate change and environmental degradation. "The awareness programmes broadcast through the channel should further improve the quality of life of the people across the district," he added. Prof. A Ravinder Nath, said the university is committed to provide zero-

carbon campus to its students and is making strenuous efforts for the same. Calling communication as the foundation of progress in the contemporary era, he further added that it connects people, drives change, and empowers societies, making it an indispensable tool for personal, professional, and global development.

A recorded message from Dr. R. Sreedher, Former Director of CEMCA, was also played on the occasion, wherein he congratulated the university for launching the Community Radio. "Radio CUKashmir 90.8 FM is not just a frequency; it will be a voice for the people. It will serve as a powerful platform for local communities to share stories, ideas, and knowledge." Dr. Sreedher further asked the DCJ to continuously discuss the prevalent health issues and promote cultural events.

DAA and Dean School of Media Studies, Prof. Shahid Rasool, who conducted the first on air programme, said the channel will provide a suitable platform for the people, especially youth, of the district to showcase and exhibit their hidden talent. "One of the most significant advantages of community radio is its ability to preserve.

GDC Ganderbal organizes plantation drive

HT News Network

Srinagar: Government Degree College, Ganderbal organized a plantation drive in the college campus on Thursday where students, faculty, and staff collaboratively planted saplings, fostering environmental awareness and a commitment to a greener future.

The plantation drive was organized by the college NSS units aimed to raise awareness about the importance of trees and encourage active participation in environmental conservation. The event was inaugurated by the Principal of the college, Prof Fouzia Fatima and she emphasized the importance of tree plantation and its impact on the environment. The NSS program officers Dr. Mansha Nisar and Dr Jamsheeda Akhter supervised the programme under the National service scheme. The plantation drive is a process where a large number of trees or seedlings are planted for land reclamation or landscaping. Dr Jamsheeda during the plant drive in the college campus said that planting large numbers of trees helps to purify the polluted air that we breathe in. Plants play a big role in our ecosystem by maintaining a balance among all the elements that are present in nature. Planting more trees also helps to keep in check the climate conditions of a place.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public notice that i Bashir ahmad bhat s/o ab rashid bhat R/o singpora my Date of birth is 01-03-1985 now i want to obtain Dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of date of birth certificate 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 i mohammad maqbool s/o sonullah mir R/o doslipora that my daughter namely Morifat maqbool is born 09-11-2010 i want to obtain dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of dob 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 medium of notice that i asiya bano is D.o.B is 01-01-1999 and saima nazir is bob is both 01-01-1999 both daughters of nazir ahmad dar r/o Kripal pora bala matipora now i want to obtain d.o.b certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of d.o.b 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 medium of notice that i shamshada bano d/o Ab rehman malla R/o khenpeth my date of birth is 01-01-1995 now i want obtain dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of dob 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 medium of notice that i fahmeesa begum D/o ali mohd khatiyee r/o diver yakman pora now i want to obtain dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of dob certificate he she the context of Bdo singpora with in period of seven days

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is certify that my name as mentioned in aadhar card is incorrectly recorded as Afroza bano while as my name is Saba Zehra as per school records. Now i want to apply for the correction of same in aadhar card bearing number 400233472236. Any person has any objection regarding that, they will raise issue against this notice within the time period of seven days. After completion of said period, No objection will be accepted.

SABA ZEHRRA
D/o; Muzamil Ali Mir
Chair guin magam budgam

Subject: Grant of registration of the paying Guest house/ Home stay under the name and style " Darya Residency Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at Habbak Naseeb Bagh Hazratbal Srinagar.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, I Ab Rashid Wani S/o: Ali Mohammad Wani R/o: Habbak Naseeb Bagh Hazratbal Srinagar. Intends to apply in the office of Prescribed Authority of Directorate of Tourism Kashmir for registration of my proposed Paying Guest House/Home Stay under the Name & Style "Darya Residency Paying Guest House/Home Stay" Situated at near Habbak Naseeb Bagh Hazratbal Srinagar. under Tourist trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas I will submit Landownership Certificate from Concerned Tehsilidar with attest photographs of the unit through Dy. Commissioner Concerned, Rent/ Lease Deed/Partnership Deed/issued by concerned Sub-Registrar, Judicial Magistrate (if applicable NOC from the owner to the effect that the property can be used as Home Stay), Character Certificate of the applicant from the Concerned Police Station, undertaking from the owner as self declaration, Public Notice inviting objections, if any in print media, list of family members Name, Age and Photograph self attested by owner, photographs of the unit as mentioned in the application (each of exterior and individual bed rooms and bathrooms), Inspection report by the Committee shall decide whether to issue a registration to the unit or not keeping in view, the type of accommodation and amenity, aadhar card. Now before my case is processed for registration by the prescribed Authority. The matter is hereby notified for information of general Public/Organizations for objections if any and the same should reach to the office of prescribed Authority within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper of the valley. Objections received beyond the period of 7 days from the date of publication shall not be entertained and the case shall be processed under rules as per merit.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for information of general public that the (Electric bill) power connection is registered on my father's name MAQSOOD AHMAD NAJAR S/O GHULAM MOHD NAJAR ..Now this Connection bearing Consumer ID NO 212040002480 wants to be registered on my name SUMARE MAQSOOD NAJAR S/O MOHAMMAD MAQSOOD NAJAR R/O VIZER Wagoora. 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...SUMARE MAQSOOD NAJAR
S/O ...MOHAMMAD MAQSOOD NAJAR
R/O VIZER WAGOORA
DISTT..... BARAMULLA

اطلاع عام

اطلاع عام ہر خفاں وعام کو اطلاع دی جاتی کہ میرا پاس پوٹ زیر نمبر SG 3068556315423 کہیں گم ہو گیا ہے اب اس کی ڈبلکیت کا پتہ نہ مل سکا ہے اس لیے میری عمر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر اندر اپنا پوٹ افس سرٹنگ کے دفتر میں پیش کر کے عباد از معاد کو اپنی عمر قبول نہیں ہوگا گناہ مستہر

المستہر

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
وَلِدُ مُحَمَّدٍ سَفِیْعِ بِنْتِ

ساکن بنہ پورہ براہ سائنگس اچہ بل کسمیر

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar hassubmitted case file pertaining to Birth of ROMAAN AHMAD KHAN & AISHA HILAL S/O HILAL AHMAD KHAN R/O SHERPORA Tehsil TANGMARG Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 15/03/2022 & 02/09/2020 and event has been shown to be occurred at SDH KREERI 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

IN THE COURT OF CHIEF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE HANDWARA

Case No: 01/2022 CNR No: JKKWO60009512022 D.O.I.= 25.01.2022

Date of Order: 18.03.2025

In the case of:

State through Drug Inspector, Kupwara.

(Complainant)

Through. Ld. Standing counsel
Assisted by Drug Inspector Mr. Feroz Ahmad.

VIS

1. Managing Director, M/S Alive Healthcare 123, HPSIDC, District Solan 173205.
2. Shree Kameshwar Mishra Production Manager, M/S Alive Healthcare, 123, HPSIDC, Baddi District Solan 173205
3. Shmt. Shivinder Kaur Director and Competent Person M/S Greffth Life sciences Pvt. Ltd. Plot No. 237, Cabin No. 11 Floor, Hasna Industrial Park, Derabassi, District Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar. Home Address: W/o Rajat Ghai S/o Vipin Ghai, H. No. 23, Enclave Dhakoli Zirkapur, S.A.S Nagar (Mohali) Punjab-140603 Adhaar No. 633911116895.
- 4 Rajat Ghai. Director MIS Greffth Life sciences Pvt. Ltd Plot No. 237, Cabi No. 11 floor Hansa Industrial Park, Derabassi, District Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar Slo Vipin Ghai Ahaar No. 294629160886 Shree Fayaz Ul Hassan Bhat Competent person M/S Shalimar Enterprises 1 Fl. Bhat Shopping Complex, Sopore Kashmir J&K (UT).
6. Shmt. Zubaida Bano Qualified person/Proprietor, Hospital Road Iqbal Market Kupwara, Kashmir J&K UT-193222

...Accused)

Coram: Manzoor Hussain J.O Code: JK00180

PROCLAMATION U/S 82 Cr.P. C AGAINST THE ACCUSED NAMED ABOVE.

1. WHEREAS, the proceedings in the above titled complaint are pending against you in this court in which despite issuance of arrest warrant repeatedly, you did not cause your appearance.
2. WHEREAS, it has been reported by the executing agency that you are intentionally absconding from the process of law to avoid your appearance in the case during the proceedings.
3. WHEREAS, keeping in view your conduct, this court has declared you as proclaimed offender in view of section 82 of Cr. P.C.
4. Therefore, proclamation is hereby made to require you to appear before this court in the above tiled proceedings on 19.04.2025 at 10:30 am. of Issued under my hand and seal of his court today on this the 18th March 2025.

DIPK-13505/24
Date: Mar 29 2025

Chief Judicial Magistrate
Handwara

Javed Rana advocates advance steps to ensure reliable water supply in summer

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 29: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today emphasised the need for taking necessary steps in advance to ensure unhindered drinking water supply during the summer months. He said this during a meeting held with Chief Engineer, PHE, Jammu Vikas Sharma and others to deliberate on the measures to be taken for a reliable irrigation and water supply. Javed Rana discussed the problems that could arise in water supply

besides highlighting the steps to be taken before hand to tackle any water shortage issues.

He said that the people should be provided with safe drinking water and the concerned departments should prepare a comprehensive action plan on this account.

The Minister advised the officials to prepare plans after assessment of the situation at the micro level. He also asked for initiating the repair work to on borewells, wells and motors besides procurement of materials to be done, wherever necessary. He also asked them to maintain coordination and synergy for effective implementation of ground water



management interventions at district level. Regarding irrigation supply, Javed Rana said that concrete steps need to be taken to ensure a continuous and reliable irrigation water supply, enabling successful crop yields and livelihoods. He said that cleaning work on the channels and canals should also be completed forthwith, that has also been a major factor behind short supply of the irrigation water. The Chief Engineer briefed the Minister about the ground water level, reservoirs and the quantum of water

that would be required to meet the demand in the summer months. He informed that water supply is being monitored regularly and steps are afoot to ensure continuous water supply.

During the meeting, the water conservation and management through community participation and innovative strategies also came up for discussion. Javed Rana reiterated that community participation is key towards water conservation and true water security can only be achieved when every citizen contributes.

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Chairperson DDC Baramulla visits fire-affected families

HT News Network

BARAMULLA, MARCH 29: Chairperson District Development Council (DDC) Baramulla, Safina Baig, visited Mohalla Jalal Sahib Baramulla today to meet the families affected by the recent fire incident. During the visit, she interacted with the affected families, assessed the damage, and assured them of full support from the administration. Chairperson highlighted the challenging living conditions in the area, noting that 3 to 4 families are residing in a single house due to overcrowding. She emphasized the urgent need for decongestion to improve living standards and reduce the risk of such incidents in the future.



Safina Baig assured the families that, as the Chairperson of DDC Baramulla, she will take every possible step to rehabilitate them. She also stated that she will take up the matter with the district and UT administration to ensure the immediate allotment of 5 marlas of land to each affected family, along with financial and other support to help them recover.

Safina baig appealed to Lieutenant Governor UT J&K, Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister J&K, Omar Abdullah to extend their support to the affected families and help provide necessary assistance for their rehabilitation. Chairperson DDC directed the concerned authorities to expedite relief measures and ensure that the affected families receive timely

assistance. She reaffirmed the administration's commitment to supporting the families and providing the necessary resources for their recovery. Chairperson highlighted the challenging living conditions in the area, noting that 3 to 4 families are residing in a single house due to overcrowding. She emphasized the urgent need for decongestion to improve living standards and reduce the risk of such incidents in the future. Safina Baig assured the families that, as the Chairperson of DDC Baramulla, she will take every possible step to rehabilitate them. She also stated that she will take up the matter with the district and UT administration to ensure the immediate allotment.

DC reviews Eid ul fitr arrangements, visits Eidgah Bandipora

HT News Network

BANDIPORA, MARCH 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Saturday reviewed the arrangements for Eid ul fitr celebrations in the district to ensure a smooth and safe observance of the religious occasion.

As part of the review, the DC visited the Eidgah Bandipora to inspect the preparations and oversee necessary arrangements for the Eid prayers.

During the visit, Qadri emphasized the safety and security of attendees, maintaining cleanliness in and around the Eidgah, and providing necessary facilities for the public.

The officers accompanying DC briefed him regarding the measures in place to facilitate a seamless experience for the public.

The DC emphasized the importance of coordination between various departments, including law enforcement, health services, and other concerned to ensure that all aspects of the Eid celebrations are conducted peacefully and smoothly.



He said the District Administration has put in place all necessary arrangements including traffic management and emergency medical services, to ensure the safety and well-being of all citizens.

On the occasion, the DC also interacted with locals and representatives of the local auqaf committee seeking

their cooperation in maintaining peace and order during the festive period. He urged the public to follow the guidelines issued by the authorities for a safe, peaceful and smooth Eid celebration.

During the visit, DC was accompanied by CPO, Tehsildar Bandipora, EO MC and other concerned.

All J&K Bank Branches to Remain Open on March 30 and 31: RBI

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 29: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that all branches of Jammu and Kashmir Bank will remain open on March 30 and 31, 2025. The decision aims to facilitate year-end banking transactions for customers. The RBI directed banks to ensure smooth financial operations during the closing days of the financial year.

The move is expected to benefit businesses and individuals who need to complete their transactions before April 1. Banking officials have advised customers to utilize this opportunity for their pending work and avoid last-minute rush. ATMs and digital banking services will also remain operational.

Release pending wages, salaries, contractor bills before Eid: Tarigami urges Govt

HT News Network

Srinagar, March 29 (KNS): The government must release all pending wages of daily wagers, Anganwadi workers, contingent-paid employees, and contractor bills before Eid-ul-Fitr, said CPI(M) leader and MLA Kulgam, Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami.

Tarigami said the delay in releasing payments, including pensions, gratuities, salaries, and other dues, has caused severe financial distress to employees and workers across various sectors.

"For over six months, government employees, including daily wagers, temporary staff, Anganwadi workers, Aya workers, coxswains, and contingent-paid employees, have been struggling due to non-payment of their wages," he said.

With Eid-ul-Fitr approaching, Tarigami said it is crucial that these payments are cleared so that employees and workers can celebrate the festival with dignity and without financial hardship.

He also urged the government to immediately clear pending bills for contractors who have completed their work but are yet to receive their rightful payments.

"Any further delay in disbursing these dues will only worsen the crisis for thousands of families relying on these earnings. The authorities must act without delay and release the payments at the earliest," he added. He also urged the government to immediately clear pending bills for contractors who have completed their work but are yet to receive their rightful payments.

Distt Admin Ganderbal bids farewell to Mohammad Irshad, Naib Tehsildar on superannuation

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, MARCH 29: The District Administration Ganderbal today organized a farewell ceremony on the occasion of retirement of Mohammad Irshad (Naib Tehsildar), PA to the Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, recognizing his invaluable contributions to public service.

The event was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Jatin Kishore, along with Additional Deputy Commissioner Gulzar Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Development, and other officials.



Speaking on occasion, the Deputy Commissioner commended Mohammad Irshad for his unwavering dedication, professionalism, and commitment throughout his tenure. He lauded the retiree's contributions in serving the district administration with diligence and integrity.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue, and other officials also shared their experiences, expressing gratitude for Irshad's exemplary service and wishing him a healthy and prosperous post-retirement life.

In his farewell speech, Mohammad Irshad recounted the journey of thirty eight years of his service in the Revenue Department while working in different capacities.

The farewell ceremony concluded with a token of appreciation for the retiring officer, marking the end of an illustrious career dedicated to public service.

FSD Anantnag seizes 2172 KGs of suspected dates

HT News Network

ANANTNAG, MARCH 29: As part of its efforts to ensure the safe and quality food for the general public, Food Safety Department Anantnag raided a godown and seized 2172 kilograms of deteriorated dates belonging to various brands. The estimated market value of the seized stock is Rs. 1,300,000.

The seizure was made on the basis of a complaint about the sale of deteriorated dates.

During the raid, enforcement samples were taken from the seized stock for further analysis. These samples will be sent to an NABL-accredited laboratory for detailed

examination to determine the exact quality and safety of the dates.

The Food Safety Department remains committed to safeguarding public health and ensuring that consumers have access to safe, wholesome, and quality food products.

The department urges all traders and consumers to report any unsafe or substandard food items they may come across as part of our collective responsibility to maintain food safety standards in the district. The Food Safety Department is dedicated to taking swift and stringent action against anyone involved in the sale of unsafe or deteriorated food products to protect the health of the community.

Eid Mubarak: Chairman of Phonex Paramedical College Pulwama Extends Warm Greetings on Eid-ul-Fitr

HT News Network

Pulwama, March 29: On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, Rather Gulzar Ahmed, Chairman of Phonex Paramedical College Pulwama, extended heartfelt greetings to the people, particularly those who observed fasting throughout the sacred month of Ramadan. In his message, Rather Gulzar Ahmed highlighted the deep spiritual essence of Ramadan, emphasizing that those who fast with sincerity and devotion are truly deserving of Eid's blessings. "Ramadan is a period of self-discipline, devotion, and seeking Allah's pleasure. Eid-ul-Fitr is the divine reward for those who observe the fasts with sincerity and dedication," he stated.

He further urged the community to uphold the core values of compassion, unity, and generosity that define the essence of Eid. "Let this Eid be a reminder of our duty to help those



in need and to spread joy among our

communities," he added. The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the culmination of Ramadan, is being celebrated with immense enthusiasm across Pulwama and the Kashmir Valley, as people come together for prayers, festive meals, and the exchange of greetings.

Concluding his message, the Chairman of Phonex Paramedical College prayed for peace, prosperity, and well-being for all, hoping that this Eid brings joy and harmony to every household. On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, Rather Gulzar Ahmed, Chairman of Phonex Paramedical College Pulwama, extended heartfelt greetings to the people, particularly those who observed fasting throughout the sacred month of Ramadan.

In his message, Rather Gulzar Ahmed highlighted the deep spiritual essence of Ramadan, emphasizing that those who fast with sincerity and devotion are truly deserving of Eid's blessings.

"Ramadan is a period of self-discipline, devotion, and seeking Allah's pleasure. Eid-ul-Fitr is the divine reward for those who observe the fasts with sincerity and dedication," he stated.

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The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the culmination of Ramadan, is being celebrated with immense enthusiasm across Pulwama and the Kashmir Valley, as people come together for prayers, festive meals, and the exchange of greetings.

Concluding his message, the Chairman of Phonex Paramedical College prayed for peace, prosperity, and well-being for all, hoping that this Eid brings joy and harmony to every household.

DEO Jammu discusses electoral process strengthening measures with political reps

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 29: Deputy Commissioner Jammu Sachin Kumar Vaishya, who is also the District Election Officer, today convened a meeting with representatives of political parties.

The meeting was held as per the directions of the Election Commission of India to ensure regular engagement with political parties, explain legal framework and strengthen the electoral process.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar and Deputy District Election Officer Rameshwar Kumar were also present at the meeting.

During the interaction, the queries raised by the political party representatives were addressed. Issues raised at Electoral Registration Officer level were also deliberated upon. The meeting further served as a platform to discuss feedback and other inputs from the political parties regarding the electoral process.

The DEO emphasised the administration's commitment to conducting free, fair and transparent elections, while assuring prompt redressal of any concerns raised by the political stakeholders. Deputy Commissioner Jammu Sachin Kumar Vaishya, who is also the District Election Officer, today convened a meeting with representatives of political parties.

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9RR hosts Iftar Party at Devsar to promote harmony

Farooq Rather



Kulgam March 29 In a bid to strengthen communal harmony and foster goodwill, the 9 Rashtriya Rifles (RR) of the Indian Army organized an Iftar party at Devsar in Kulgam district.

Senior security officers, Media Persons, DDC Members, Civil administration and locals residents participated in the Iftar after praying for the peace, happiness, prosperity and good health of all the countrymen in the nation. The gathering highlighted the importance of strengthening ties between the local community, administration, and the Indian Army, reinforcing the values of peace and collective strength. Guests shared traditional Ramadan delicacies, celebrating the region's rich cultural heritage.

Lieutenant Governor Greets People on the beginning of Navratri Festival

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 29: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has greeted the people on the beginning of Chaitra Navratri festival.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor has said: "Heartiest greetings and best wishes to all on the beginning of Chaitra Navratri. I also extend my felicitations to our Kashmiri Pandit brothers and sisters who are celebrating Navreh. The sacred festival marks the victory of righteousness over evil and knowledge over ignorance. May the Navratri Festivities inspire us to tread the path of right conduct and build a vibrant society in which women are respected as equal partners in nation building. I pray to Maa Durga to shower her blessings on all. Jai Mata Di!"

Search Operation For Terrorists Extended To New Areas In J&K's Kathua

HT News Network

Jammu, Mar 29: Security forces on Saturday extended the ongoing search operation to new areas after the body of the fourth policeman and two slain terrorists were recovered from the scene of a gunfight in a remote forested area in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Body of head constable Jagbir Singh was retrieved from Ghati Juthana forest in Rajbagh and was shifted to Jammu where a wreath laying ceremony for the deceased was held near police headquarters Gulshan Ground, they said. The officials said bodies of two Pakistani terrorists, believed to be affiliated with proscribed Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit, were also recovered along with war-like stores. The encounter in the area began on Thursday morning and continued throughout the day on Friday. A total of four policemen and two recently infiltrated terrorists were killed, while the search for other members of the terrorist group is continuing for the third day on Saturday. Earlier, officials had put the death toll of terrorists at three but the Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat late Friday evening clarified that only two terrorists and four policemen were killed in the encounter. Bodies of three policemen — Balwinder Singh Chib, Jaswant Singh and Tariq Ahmed — were retrieved last evening and their wreath laying ceremony led by the DGP was held at District Police Lines Kathua before their bodies were handed over to their families.

ADC reviews arrangements for holy Navratri festival at Rajouri

HT News Network

RAJOURI, MARCH 29: Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajeev Kumar Khajuria today chaired a meeting to review the arrangements for the holy Navratri festival.

The meeting assessed all aspects crucial for smooth celebrations of festivals like security measures, maintenance of law and order, traffic management, provision of essential services like drinking water and power supply, sanitation protocols, healthcare facilities, and stringent monitoring of food quality and pricing. The meeting thoroughly scrutinised each aspect of the preparations. Emphasis was laid on ensuring close coordination among departments to put in place all required arrangements.

The Jal Shakti and Power



Development Department were specifically asked to ensure uninterrupted water and electricity supply on the festive day. Recognizing the importance of fire safety, the fire and emergency department was instructed to maintain a state of readiness, with fire tenders placed on standby during the festive day. Furthermore, the con-

cerned officer from MC Rajouri was instructed to ensure proper cleanliness in the town, underscoring the significance of hygiene during public gatherings. In light of potential health emergencies, the Health Department was directed to make all necessary medical facilities readily available to address any unforeseen situations.

Kharge, Rahul to hold meeting on J&K affairs at Delhi on Apr 4

HT News Network

JAMMU, Mar 29: All India Congress Committee (AICC) president, Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition (LOP) and former Congress president, Rahul Gandhi will hold a meeting on J&K affairs with the district heads and some other leaders of the Jammu and Kashmir at Delhi on April 4 while Congress Working Committee (CWC) session is going to be held at Ahmedabad in Gujarat on April 8-9. Jammu travel packages Jammu tourism guide Party sources told the Excelsior that all the district presidents of the Jammu and Kashmir led by JKPC president, Tariq Hameed Karra besides some other leaders will attend the crucial meeting being held at All India Congress headquarters, Indira Bhawan, New Delhi on April 4, 2025. Over, 25 to 30 leaders from Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are expected to attend the meeting. Sources further said that during the meeting Kharge and Rahul Gandhi will take feedback from the Congress leaders from the JKUT over the party affairs in various regions, subregions and districts besides political and security situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The AICC may also discuss the issue related to the strengthening of the party in various



districts and steps to be taken in this direction. The meeting may also focus on the present law and order situation, and escalation in the incidents of terrorists activities in Kathua, Udhampur and other parts of the Jammu region. JKPC president, Tariq Hameed Karra when contacted disclosed that AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and LOP Rahul Gandhi as party's country-wide exercise, will convene a meeting of district presidents from the Jammu and Kashmir on April 4. He stated that the meeting of 13 States have already been completed and remaining will be covered during coming days. Karra further revealed that about 800 districts in the country are being covered under this exercise and the feedback will be taken from the district heads and the State heads about the party affairs and other activities besides overall law and order scenario.

Adhocism dominates Hr Edu Deptt as 1012 AP posts lying vacant

HT News Network

JAMMU, Mar 29: The Higher Education Department in Jammu and Kashmir has been grappling with significant challenges as the Government continues to fail in filling over 1012 vacant posts of

Assistant Professors in degree colleges across the Union Territory. Jammu travel packages Jammu travel guide

This failure has led to the department being run on a support system, severely impacting both the academic environment and the career prospects of stu-

dents and lecturers alike. According to reliable sources, the department had referred 840 posts to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) for the recruitment of Assistant Professors, Librarians and Physical Training Instructors (PTIs).

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nel on WhatsApp notification was subsequently issued by the JKPSC to address the vacancies. So far, selections and recommendations have been made for 476 candidates and formal appointment orders have been issued to them. However, the remaining 364 vacancies are still awaiting

selections or recommendations. In addition, 150 more vacancies have emerged in the Gazetted Categories for Assistant Professors, Librarians and PTIs, which are currently under review before being referred to the JKPSC for advertisement, in line with recruitment rules.

Cambridge hosts South Asia schools conference to navigate future of learning

Jehangir Malik

SRINAGAR, Mar 29: The International Education group at Cambridge University Press & Assessment (Cambridge) hosted its second annual South Asia Cambridge Schools Conference, bringing together 400 educators, school and thought leaders from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and the Maldives. As demand for Cambridge qualifications grows across the region, the conference reinforced Cambridge's commitment to supporting schools, teachers and learners in navigating the rapidly evolving education landscape. The conference is set against the backdrop of a global demand for 44 million new teachers by 2030. In recognition of this need, Cambridge highlighted its commitment to empowering the

region's educators through new professional development programmes and qualifications, up-skilling courses, pre-service teacher training, and short-term e-learning modules to grow the region's teaching capacity.

In his opening address, Rod Smith, Group Managing Director of International Education at Cambridge, praised school leaders across the region for working with Cambridge to shape curricula and resources, and introduce new innovative programmes that prepare learners to be ready for the world. He said, "At Cambridge, we are committed to preparing learners for a fast-changing world. To achieve this, we support teachers with professional development, we're introducing digital exams to advance assessment, and we're integrating AI to enhance learning.



South Asia is becoming a hub of educational excellence, and we're proud to collaborate with schools to build new programmes such as Cambridge Early Years and Climate Quest that will shape the future of education in this region and beyond." Vinay Sharma, Senior Vice

President, International Education, South Asia, said, "Our commitment to making international education accessible while maintaining the highest standards of quality is unwavering. We empower our schools to build a strong foundation around learning, teaching and assessment. Through this con-

ference, our aim is to explore new ways in which we can work together to equip learners—not just to adapt but to excel in an era marked by rapid technological, societal, and economic shifts." Cambridge's other key initiatives for learners in India include Climate Quest for shaping climate resilience, Cam-

bridge Connect, a programme to meet the needs of national high-stakes examinations, the March exam series to align with local admission needs, Integrated Learning & Assessment for developing English as a skill, and Young Pioneers to foster an entrepreneurial mindset. Panel discussions featured eminent speakers including Mark Winterbottom, Professor of Education, University of Cambridge, Sarah Hughes, Head of Research, International Education, Cambridge, Sanjay Jain, Head of Google for Education, India, Lindsay Nadin, Director of Digital Products and Services, International Education, Dr Sue Brindley, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Abigail Barnett, Director of Cambridge 3-19 Curriculum, Aynur Ismayilli Karakoc, Senior Impact Evaluator, CUPA, Kevin Ebenezer, Director, University

Pathways and Progression, International Education, to name a few. Other key initiatives including Climate Quest, Cambridge Connect for national high-stake examinations, March exam series, Integrated Learning & Assessment for developing English as skill, Young Pioneers for entrepreneurial mindset from the region were highlighted. Sessions centred on the use of AI in the classroom, digital high-stakes examinations and career pathways of the future. Key topics discussed also included shaping mindfulness in the classroom, rethinking college-readiness for evolving career pathways, and equity in access to quality education. Several schools were recognised for their academic excellence through the Cambridge School Recognition Awards given out during the conference.

Abid Rasheed inaugurates medical camp at Ramakrishna Mission Medical Centre

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 29: Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department, Dr Sayed Abid Rasheed, inaugurated a special medical camp today at the Ramakrishna Mission Medical Centre in Udaywala, Jammu. Renowned neurologist Dr Sushil Razdan and eminent physician Dr K.K. Pandita, among other specialists and Dr. Rajni Razdan rendered their services during the camp. Dr. Abid Rasheed lauded the Ramakrishna Mission for its dedicated services in providing quality healthcare to the masses. He expressed gratitude to the distinguished doctors for volunteering their expertise in public service. During the event, Secretary Health dedicated a new eye testing machine (Auto Refractometer) to the medical centre and toured the facility to review its services. Following the inauguration, the Secretary



visited the mission complex, including the auditorium and the library for the youth. He observed that the mission's serene and spiritual environment offers an ideal setting for focussed studies and holistic intellectual development. Interacting with the students preparing for various entrance examinations, he inquired about their career aspirations. He encouraged them to remain dedi-

cated to their goals while staying connected to their cultural heritage. He advised them to make best use of the facilities provided by the Ramakrishna Mission and recommended studying the works of Swami Vivekananda, particularly his historic speech at the World Parliament of Religions. Secretary Ramakrishna Mission, Jammu, Swami Yajnadarhananda, highlighted the

organisation's commitment to the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Dev, Maa Sarada and Swami Vivekananda, emphasising the service to humanity as a form of divine worship. He also announced plans to organise such free camps monthly. The visit was attended by Swami Mahamedhananda, Swami Vijayayeshananda besides others from the RKM, who accompanied Dr Shah during his tour to the facilities. The health camp provided a range of free medical services, including consultations with Neurologists, Orthopaedist, Gynaecologist, Dental Surgeon, ENT specialist, Ophthalmologist, Allopathy Physicians, Ayurveda Physician, Physiotherapist and Clinical Psychologist. In addition to free consultations, the camp offered check ups for blood sugar, HbA1c and blood pressure, free of cost. A Full Body Check-up covering 66 parameters, including CBC, LFT, KFT, Lipid profile, BSF, Urine tests and thyroid function tests (T3, T4, TSH), was available for a nominal fee.

Water being released in Jammu Division Irrigation Canals on April 2, 2025

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 29: The Waters in irrigation canals of Jammu Division are being released on April 02, 2025, a notice issued today by the Irrigation Department stated.

"It is notified for the information of the public in general and farmers in particular that the water of Main Ranbir Canal, New Partap Canal, Kathua Canal and other Canals of Jammu province shall be released from 02-04-2025. All the concerned Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers are directed to plan their activities to ensure completion of the ongoing works well before the recharging of Canal.

The Executive Engineer of Irrigation Division No: I Jammu, Irrigation Division No: II Jammu, Irrigation Division Akhnoor and Irrigation Division Kathua are further directed to frame teams which shall move along with water in the Canal/distribution Network during the opening as it reaches their jurisdiction to ensure safe passage of water up to tail end to avoid any untoward incidence," the notice informed."

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Girls Kho-Kho competition organized at GHSS Berreru- Doda

HT News Network

DODA MARCH 29: The District Social Welfare Department, in collaboration with the Department of Youth Services and Sports today organized a Girls Kho-Kho competition at Govt. Higher Secondary School Berreru, Zone Bhalla here under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from 90 girls representing different educational institutions and Panchayats of the zone. The sports competition aimed to promote physical fitness and foster teamwork, discipline and leadership qualities among the girls. The initiative underlined the crucial role sports play in breaking gender stereotypes and motivating girls to actively participate in extracurricular activities alongside academics.

Speaking on the occasion, DYSSO Pritam Singh and Tehsil Officer from the Social Welfare Department Bhaderwah Babu Ram, highlighted the significance of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme in achieving gender equality and girls' education. They stressed the need for continued efforts to create awareness and provide platforms to girls to showcase their talent in different fields, including sports and academics.

The event concluded with the felicitation of winners and participants, encouraging them to pursue their dreams fearlessly. The organizers reaffirmed their commitment to supporting initiatives that uplift and empower girls, ensuring their holistic development in society.

ADDC reviews execution of beautification project at Rajouri airfield, adjacent road

HT News Network



RAJOURI, MARCH 29: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma, Additional District Development Commissioner Dr Raj Kumar Thapa today reviewed the progress of ongoing beautification project around the Rajouri airfield and its adjacent road here at a meeting. The Project aims at transforming the area into a visually appealing, pedestrian-friendly zone. The beautification project, a significant step towards modernising Rajouri while preserving its rich heritage, includes development of 3D murals depicting martyrs, warriors, cultural heritage, tourist places, and prominent institutions. Aesthetic enhancements and landscape development, Greenery and ornamental plantation and Well-structured footpaths to ensure safe pedestrian movement. At the outset, the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) informed that plastering work on 200 meters of walls of the project has been completed, with the remaining work progressing as scheduled. Highlighting the importance of the project, the ADDC Dr. Thapa emphasized its importance in adding to tourist attraction and beautification of the town. He directed the concerned officers to expedite the completion of the project at the earliest.

JMC Commissioner reviews slaughterhouse gate relocation, vendor zone development

HT News Network

JAMMU, MARCH 29: In response to public demand, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), Dr. Devansh Yadav today visited the slaughterhouse, Dogra Hall to assess the feasibility of shifting its gate.

The visit aimed to address concerns raised by local residents and explore potential solutions for improved accessibility and urban planning. During the visit, Dr. Yadav conducted a thorough review of the site and engaged with stakeholders to ensure that any modifications align with civic needs and regulatory guidelines. The Commissioner assured residents that their concerns would be taken into consideration while implementing necessary changes. Dr. Yadav reviewed the development of a vendor zone at Indira Chowk, a key initiative by the Municipal Corporation to provide organized space for street vendors. This project aims to enhance urban management, streamline traffic flow, and promote local businesses in a structured manner. The Jammu Municipal Corporation remains committed to fostering a well-planned and citizen-friendly urban environment. Further updates on both initiatives will be shared as progress continues. Among others, Joint Commissioner, (W), Firdous Ahmad Qazi, Health Officer JMC, Dr. Vinod Sharma, Executive Engineer, Electrical, besides other senior officers of JMC accompanied the Commissioner.

DC conducts market inspection in Doda Town Reviews traffic regulation measures ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, Navratri

HT News Network

DODA, MARCH 29: To ensure smooth public movement and maintenance of law and order during Eid-ul-Fitr and Navratri, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Harvinder Singh, conducted an extensive market inspection in Doda town today.

The inspection aimed at regulating traffic, checking market violations, ensuring compliance with Norms and improving public convenience during the festive rush. The DC Doda took immediate measures to streamline traffic management, initiated eviction of encroachments, ensuring hassle-free movement for shoppers and commuters.

During the inspection, unauthorized parking at Nehru Chowk was cleared to improve road accessibility. Roadside vendors (Rehri) and illegally parked vehicles were removed to ease congestion.

Medical shops and other commercial establishments were inspected to ensure compliance with quality and pricing standards. Instructions were given to prevent overpricing



and ensure the availability of essential commodities.

Municipal and enforcement teams were deployed to maintain vigilance against violations. Unauthorized open donations were halted to ensure transparency and accountability.

The DC urged the public to maintain peace and communal harmony dur-

ing the festive season. He emphasized the importance of disciplined market practices, strict enforcement of traffic regulations, and safeguarding public interests.

The DC was accompanied by Tehsildar, DySP Headquarters, SHO, officials from the Municipal Council, and other concerned departments.

Handicrafts Department organizes Artisans' interaction program at Ghar Bera Bhatta, Kishtwar

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 29: The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Kishtwar today organized an Artisans Interaction Program at Panchayat Ghar Bera Bhatta, Kishtwar.

The program aimed to educate artisans and weavers about various departmental schemes and encourage them to register with the department to avail benefits. Assistant Director Pardeep Shan informed participants about the departmental schemes and the registration process. He emphasized the importance of registering with the department to access various benefits, including credit link schemes and other incentives.

The program was attended by AHTO Handicrafts Rashid Agoo, Arif, Crewel embroidery artisans



Nirmala Rana and Sushma Devi, Crochet artisan. Departmental pamphlets covering all schemes were distributed among participants. The Artisans Interaction program is a significant initiative by the Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Kishtwar to reach out to artisans and weavers in the region. The program is expected to benefit a large number of artisans and weavers in

Kishtwar, enabling them to improve their livelihoods and contribute to the growth of the handicrafts and handloom sector in the region. The Artisans Interaction program is a significant initiative by the Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Kishtwar to reach out to artisans and weavers in the region. The program is expected to benefit a large number of artisans and weavers.

District Administration Poonch conducts market inspection ahead of festival season

HT News Network

POONCH, MARCH 29: In compliance with the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal, a joint market inspection drive was conducted today in the main Market Poonch to ensure availability of quality goods and keep a check on overpricing and profiteering ahead of the upcoming festival season. The team, comprising officials of Municipal Council Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department, Legal Metrology Department, Revenue Department, and Police Department, targeted key markets, including Prade Market, Main Market, Sandigate, Allapeer, and Haji Market. The team removed encroachments, assessed sanitation standards, checked prices and quality of essential commodities being sold in the market. As part of the initiative, the team seized approximately 8 KG of polythene from shopkeepers. The officials took strict action against violators, instructing vendors and shopkeepers to adhere to prescribed prices and maintain hygiene. The team also urged the public to remain vigilant while purchasing goods and report any malpractices.

The District Administration Poonch has reiterated its commitment to maintaining order in the markets and ensuring a safe and fair shopping experience for the residents of Poonch during this festive season. Authorities have warned that similar inspections will continue in the coming days to enforce compliance.

GDC Vijaypur hosts Lecture on empowerment of specially-abled persons through inclusive education

HT News Network

SAMBA, MARCH 29: Department of Education of Government Degree College Vijaypur today organised an expert lecture on "Empowering Inclusion: Promoting Education, Rights & Welfare of Persons with Disabilities."

A large number of students, teaching faculty and non-teaching staff of the college attended the lecture.

The event, held under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Ashu Vashisht, Principal of the college, commenced with the welcome address by Dr. Gunjeet Mahiwal, Lecturer, Department of Education. She introduced the speaker and highlighted that Disability is one of the important issues in contemporary society because stigmatization of people with disabilities contributes to the formation of biases and prejudices which put them into the disadvantageous position where they feel

themselves inferior to others.

The speaker of the event Monika, a social activist and Vice President JIGER Institute of Humanity Welfare Organization (NGO), was honoured by the Principal, Dr. Ashu Vashisht.

In a thought provoking talk, the speaker said that Inclusive Education is a learning approach that aims to provide equitable access and support to all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances. "It promotes diversity, inclusion, and collabora-

tion, creating safe and welcoming learning environments that value and celebrate individual differences," she said. She further added that Inclusive education goals seek to enhance student success and promote positive social outcomes while reducing stigma and discrimination. This approach enables students to develop their academic, social, and emotional skills, empowering them to become confident, independent learners who can thrive in diverse communities.

The lecture was followed by a question-answer session where the speaker responded to queries of the participants. The program was organized by Dr. Gunjeet Mahiwal, Lecturer, Department of Education and co-coordinated by Prof Mamta Gupta (HOD Commerce), Dr. Anoop Kumar Bhagat (HOD Sociology), Dr. Manoj Heer (HOD Dogri) and Dr. Nas-eem Chowdhary (HOD English) and Prof. Meetu Sharma (HOD Geography).

Myanmar quake death toll rises sharply to over 1000

AGENCIES
YANGON, MAR 29 (UNI)

The death toll from a powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake in Myanmar has risen sharply to over 1,000, with fears it could climb much higher, media reports said here on Saturday.

The quake, whose epicenter was near Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city, devastated one of the world's poorest nations as it reverberated through the country and across Southeast Asia. It was followed 11 minutes later by a 6.7-magnitude aftershock, state-run MRTV reported.

In neighboring Thailand, at least 10 people have died and more than 100 are missing, many of them trapped in the debris of a 33-storey building in Bangkok.

In Myanmar, a reclusive state run by a military government that tightly controls information, there are limited details on the full scale of death and destruction, NBC news reported.

Myanmar's military government declared a state of emergency in multiple



regions, including Mandalay and the capital, Naypyitaw, and said search and rescue operations were underway in the hardest-hit areas.

"The full extent of destruction caused by this earthquake may not be clear for weeks," Mohamed Riyas, the International Red Cross Director for Myanmar, said in a statement Friday.

The disaster is further compounded by Myanmar's ongoing civil war, which has raged for four years — limiting access to aid, straining resources,

and leaving millions already in crisis even before the earthquake hit.

According to the Red Cross, Myanmar has more than 19 million people in urgent need of humanitarian aid, with many displaced, facing food insecurity, and suffering from a healthcare system crippled by conflict.

Using a predictive analysis based on the strength and depth of the earthquake, the U.S. Geological Survey estimated that a death toll over 10,000 is a strong possibility, and that losses could be greater

than the country's gross domestic product.

According to Myanmar state media, as of Saturday afternoon local time, 2,376 people were recorded as injured, and another 30 missing.

Amid concerns about aid delays following cuts to USAID under former President Donald Trump, State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce insisted Friday that funding reductions had "no impact" on the U.S.' ability to respond, but that no formal request for assistance had yet been received.

PM Modi speaks with Myanmar's leader as India launches Operation Brahma to send relief aid

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, MAR 29 (UNI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke with Myanmar's leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and conveyed deep condolences on the loss of lives following the devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake that hit the neighbouring country a day ago.

In a post on X, the PM also said that India is despatching disaster relief material, humanitarian assistance, search and rescue teams to the affected areas as part of Operation Brahma.

"Spoke with Senior General H.E. Min Aung Hlaing of Myanmar. Conveyed our deep condolences at the loss of lives in the devastating earthquake.

"As a close friend and neighbour, India stands in solidarity with the people of Myanmar in this difficult hour.

"Disaster relief mate-



rial, humanitarian assistance, search & rescue teams are being expeditiously dispatched to the affected areas as part of #OperationBrahma."

India has handed over the first consignment of 15 tonnes of relief assistance to Myanmar.

The MEA spokesperson in a post said:

"Operation Brahma: India hands over the relief material to Myanmar.

"The first consignment of relief material was formally handed over to Chief

Minister of Yangon U Soe Thein by Ambassador Abhay Thakur in Yangon today."

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar posted on X earlier in the day:

"India dispatches first tranche of urgent humanitarian aid for the people of Myanmar."

"An Indian Air Force C-130 is carrying blankets, tarpaulin, hygiene kits, sleeping bags, solar lamps, food packets and kitchen set.

"A search & rescue team

and medical team is also accompanying this flight.

"We will continue to monitor the developments and more aid will follow."

The Indian Embassy in Yangon said:

"Following yesterday's devastating earthquake, we are coordinating speedy delivery of assistance & relief supplies from India with Myanmar authorities.

"We are also in constant touch with Indian community. Reiterate our emergency number for needy Indian nationals:-95-95419602."

At least 1,000 people have died in the 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck near Mandalay in Myanmar on Friday and rocked neighbouring Thailand.

The quake was the largest to hit Myanmar in more than a century. The US Geological Survey estimated that the death toll could top 10,000, CNN said.

Kharge accuses Modi govt of turning banks into 'collection agents'

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, MAR 29 (UNI)

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday launched a scathing attack on the Modi government, accusing it of turning banks into "collection agents" following the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to impose higher charges on ATM cash withdrawals.

Taking to his social media handle X, Kharge criticised the move, calling it an example of the BJP-led government's alleged



economic exploitation.

"Painful Price Rise + Unbridled Loot = BJP's Mantra for Extortion!" he wrote.

The Veteran Congress leader claimed that the

government has extracted at least Rs 43,500 crore due to non-maintenance of Minimum Balance from Savings Accounts & Jan Dhan Accounts combined, between 2018 and 2024.

He also highlighted various "charges imposed by banks", such as inactivity fees, charges for issuing bank statements, SMS alert fees, loan processing fees, and pre-closure charges, stating that these were to "Loot Citizen."

"Earlier, the Union Government used to provide the data of amounts col-

lected by these charges in the Parliament, but now this practice has also been discontinued by saying, citing that 'RBI doesn't maintain such data,'" Kharge alleged.

The criticism comes a day after the RBI announced that customers will be eligible for only five free transactions (including financial and non-financial) per month from their own bank ATMs. Beyond this limit, a fee of up to Rs 23 per transaction will be levied, starting May.

16 Maoists killed in encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh

AGENCIES
SUKMA (CHHATTISGARH), MAR 29 (UNI)

Sixteen Maoists were killed, and two jawans were injured after a gunfight broke out in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district here on Saturday, an official said.

The injured jawans belonged to the District Reserve Guard (DRG), a unit of the state police.

The case pertains to Upampally of Keralapal police station area. Bodies of 16 Naxals have been recovered. From the manner in which the weapons have been found, it is clear that the slain Naxalites also belong to big cadres.

The encounter is still going on.

The IG said a search operation will be launched after the operation is over. Only then will it be clear how much more damage has been done to the Naxalites. Automatic weapons like INSAS, SLR have also been recovered. The number of Naxals killed is likely to increase.

Shah hails security agencies for neutralising 16 Naxalites in Sukma operation

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, MAR 29 (UNI)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday hailed security agencies for neutralising 16 Naxalites in an operation in Chhattisgarh's Sukma.

Reaffirming the government's resolve to eradicate Naxalism before 31st March 2026, Shah appealed to those with arms to shun extremism and join the path of peace and development.

In his social media handle X, Shah said, "Another strike on Naxalism!"

"Our security agencies have neutralised 16



Naxalites and recovered a massive cache of automatic weapons in an operation in Sukma," he said.

The Home Minister said, "Under the leadership of PM Shri @narendramodi Ji, we are resolved to eradicate Naxalism before the 31st of March 2026".

"My appeal to those with arms is that weap-

ons and violence cannot bring change; only peace and development can," he added. Notably, 16 Naxalites were killed, and two jawans injured after a gun battle broke out in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Saturday. The security forces have recovered automatic weapons like INSAS, SLR.

First tranche of Indian relief material reaches Myanmar

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, MAR 29 (UNI)

An Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft, carrying 15 tonnes of relief material for earthquake victims in Myanmar landed in Yangon on Saturday morning.

The aircraft carried tents, blankets, sleeping bags, generators and essential medicines, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of life and property in Friday's earthquake and offered all possible assistance to the Myanmar government.

The relief material also carried solar lamps and kitchen sets. MEA spokes-



person said that assistance is being provided to affected people under 'Operation Brahma'.

It may be mentioned that Prime Minister had reached out to Myanmar Junta Chief Gen Min Aung Hlaing and conveyed "deep condolence" at the loss of lives in the devas-

tating earthquake.

Indian officials and the rescue teams are ensuring that relief materials are being expeditiously dispatched to the affected areas.

Moreover, two more IAF aircrafts with relief material will leave for Myanmar.

IMD issues yellow warning of hot weather for Tripura

AGENCIES
AGARTALA, MARCH 29 (UNI)

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a Yellow warning of a warming atmosphere for the next three days in Tripura, forecasting persistent hot and humid weather.

According to an IMD statement, the combination of a partly cloudy sky, intense solar radiation, and the movement of hot westerly winds is expected to push daytime temperatures to 36°C or higher in some areas of the state. Temperatures may remain 3 to 4°C above normal levels across different districts during this period.

Moreover, an increase in atmospheric moisture is likely in certain parts of Tripura, further contributing to rising humidity levels, it stated. Although the state received scant rainfall in isolated places in different districts, Agartala has not recorded any rain in the last three months, creating an unusual environment.

"The prevailing weather conditions pose health risks like heat exhaustion, heat stroke, dehydration, and exacerbation of preexisting diseases, including asthma, heart, and kidney-related ailments," it added

Centre blocking discussions in Parliament to evade scrutiny: alleges Priyanka Gandhi

AGENCIES
WAYANAD (KERALA), MAR 29 (UNI)

AICC General Secretary and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday alleged that the Union Government is deliberately obstructing discussions in the Parliament to evade scrutiny.

Talking to news persons at Kalpetta, after attending the DISHA meeting here, She said "the ruling party is actively disrupting the democratic process in the Parliament, and this action is very sad for us



(MPs) to see.

Priyanka also alleged that the ruling government's policy is to sabotage the democratic process, the notion usually used to be that the opposition was accused of sabotaging parliament process.

This phenomenon is a new type from the side of the government and I have seen in the last few sessions of Parliament.

She also alleged that they even disrupted the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in various ways, when the opposition came to protest against the government.

Earlier, the Congress leader attended various functions including the distribution of a scholarship named "Viyarpu" to the children of the landslide survivors at Kalpetta.

Nitish congratulates students on passing of Matriculation examination in Bihar

AGENCIES
PATNA, MAR 29 (UNI)

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday congratulated all candidates on emerging successful in matriculation examination conducted by Bihar School

Examination Board.

Chief Minister Kumar said he was extremely pleased to learn that three candidates including two girl students were jointly declared as topper of matriculation examination.

All candidates particularly girl toppers deserved warm congratulations for their success in matriculation examination, he added.

"Parents of girl students have played vital role



in promoting them for studies," Kumar sad adding that two girl students securing top position in the examination was reflection of women empower-

ment in Bihar.

It was time for all to congratulate girl students for their achievements and also wish them for bright future, he added.

Speaker of Bihar Legislative Assembly Nand Kishore Yadav also con-

gratulated students particularly girl students for their success in matriculation examination. He wished them bright future in days ahead.

It may be recalled here that Bihar School Examination Board declared results

of Matriculation examination on Saturday. A total of 15,58,077 students had appeared in examination and 12,79,294 of them were declared successful. Three students including two girl students have been declared toppers.

INDIAN ACHIEVERS AWARD 2025 FOR DR TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO

Dr Tasaduk Hussain Itoo has been honored with the prestigious Indian Achievers Award 2025 for his outstanding contributions to healthcare, medical education, and public health awareness. The award, presented by the Indian Achievers Forum, recognizes individuals who have demonstrated excellence, innovation, and leadership in their respective fields. Currently serving as a doctor at Narayana Health, Dr Itoo is also a Fellow of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), Belgium. Dr Itoo's recognition underscores his extensive academic accomplishments, including medical writing, research, mentorship, and patient care.



Dr. Itoo's academic excellence and clinical expertise paved the way for his success. He completed his Bachelor of Science degree from University of Kashmir, MBBS degree from University of Jammu and went on to earn a Certificate Program for Clinicians in Diabetes Management (CPCDM) accredited by Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI).

As a Senior Medical Officer at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital, Jammu, Dr. Itoo demonstrated exceptional clinical skills, compassion, and leadership. His commitment to patient care and community service earned him the respect and admiration of his peers and

patients.

Dr. Itoo is affiliated with several prestigious organizations, including the American College of Physicians (USA), Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI), Royal College of Physicians of London, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and International Diabetes Federation (IDF), Belgium, where he holds the distinguished title of IDF Fellow.

Dr. Itoo's achievements extend beyond his clinical practice. As an author and writer, he has written numerous articles, essays, and columns in leading newspapers, journals, and magazines. Dr. Itoo's literary pursuits are a testament to his versatile talent and passion for creative expression. His writing style is engaging, informative, and inspirational, making complex medical concepts accessible to a broad audience.

Dr. Itoo's literary achievements have been recognized

through several awards, including the National Literature Award 2025. His columns have been widely read and appreciated, offering valuable insights on healthcare, social issues, and personal development. Through his writings, Dr. Itoo has raised awareness about various health issues, promoting education and prevention.

Dr. Itoo's literary pursuits have cemented his legacy as a multifaceted personality, leaving an indelible mark on the literary and medical worlds. His commitment to creative expression and his ability to connect with readers through his writing have made him a respected and admired figure in both fields.

Dr. Itoo's success story serves as an inspiration to aspiring medical professionals, demonstrating that hard work, determination, and a passion for making a difference can lead to remarkable achievements and a lasting impact on the world.

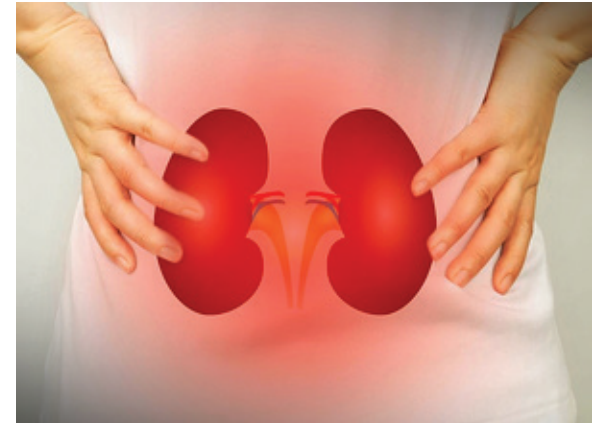
High BP can damage kidney functions even before symptoms appear: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Hypertension or high blood pressure can have a significant impact on kidney function, much before clinical symptoms begin to appear, according to a study that stressed the importance of early detection.

The research, led by a team from the Medical University of Vienna in Austria, found that high blood pressure can lead to abnormalities in the podocytes -- specialised cells in the renal filter -- even without other pre-existing conditions such as diabetes. "Early detection and treatment could help to slow the progression of kidney disease and prevent long-term damage," said the researchers Rainer Oberbauer and Heinz Regele from the varsity.

For the study, published in the journal "Hypertension", the team analysed



kidney tissue from a total of 99 patients: who either suffered from high blood pressure (arterial hypertension) and type 2 diabetes or did not have either of the two conditions. High BP and diabetes are the most common causes of chronic kidney disease.

The study was conducted on unaffected renal tissue samples from tumour nephrectomies -- a surgical procedure in which a kidney is removed in whole or in part to treat a kidney tumour.

Using modern imaging and computer-assisted methods, the size and density of the podocytes and the volume of the renal corpuscles (glomeruli) were determined in the tissue samples.

Podocytes are specialised cells of the renal corpuscles (glomeruli) that play a crucial role in the filtering function of the kidney. Their size and density are important indicators of the health of the kidney tissue.

Artificial intelligence in

the form of deep-learning-based image analysis was used for the analysis. With the help of a specially trained algorithm, digital tissue sections were automatically analysed to precisely capture the structure of podocytes and glomeruli.

"The results show that patients with hypertension have a reduced density of podocytes compared to healthy controls and that their cell nuclei are enlarged compared to those of healthy controls," said first author Christopher Paschen.

These changes occurred independently of the additional diagnosis of type 2 diabetes and likely represent the first microscopically visible step towards impaired renal function.

This indicates that high blood pressure can cause structural damage to the kidneys at an early stage and before clinical symptoms appear, the researchers explained.

ICMR calls for investing in adolescent nutrition to tackle obesity woes

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Investing in adolescent nutrition is a national imperative, and key to tackling the country's rising obesity issues, said Rajiv Bahl Secretary, Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research on Friday.

He was speaking at a stakeholder consultation on the Let's Fix Our Food (LFOF) Consortium, held in the national capital.

The LFOF Consortium is a multi-stakeholder initiative led by ICMR-NIN, PHFI, and UNICEF, working in collaboration with national and international organisations to create healthier food environments for adolescents.

At the event, the experts focused on providing Indian adolescents with healthy food environments to address the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity -- directly



linked to the rise in several non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, hypertension and cancers.

"Investing in adolescent nutrition is not just a health priority but a national imperative. By fostering healthier food environments and implementing evidence-based policies like placing reasonable restrictions on advertising and marketing of foods to children, possible taxation of foods high in fats, sugars or salt, and promoting nutrition literacy, we can secure the well-being of future gener-

ations," Dr. Rajiv Bahl Secretary, Director General, ICMR. "The rising burden of overweight and obesity among adolescents is an emerging crisis. If left unaddressed, it will have long-term consequences on public health and economic productivity," added Dr. V.K. Paul.

As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 (2019-21), overall, 24 per cent of women and 23 per cent of men in India are overweight or obese.

There has also been an increase in the percent-

age of children under 5 years who are overweight (weight-for-height) from 2.1 per cent in NFHS-4 (2015-16) to 3.4 per cent in NFHS-5 (2019-21).

The LFOF Consortium aims to advance evidence-based policies, empower youth through nutrition literacy, and advocate for regulatory frameworks that promote healthier food choices. It recognises that bettering food environments for adolescents is essential to combating the growing problem of overweight/obesity.

During the event, the experts also released several policy briefs and research updates; as well as held a panel discussion to explore strategies to enhance multi-sectoral collaboration in fostering healthier food environments.

Govt to create regional BIRAC centres to accelerate startups and biomanufacturing

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

The Union government on Friday announced the creation of regional BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council) Centers across India to accelerate startups and biomanufacturing.

At a high-level meeting of the Department of Biotechnology, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh said the move will be launched in collaboration with States and will also harness the biotech potential in different parts of the country.

Singh emphasised the need for comprehensive mapping of states based on their biotech potential and directed the department to collaborate with them in establishing Bio E3 (Economy, Environment, and Employment)



cells. These specialised cells will provide the necessary support for fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and scaling up biotech ventures.

"Encourage startups in biomanufacturing and bio foundries, attract FDI, and provide handholding and incubator support," Singh said.

The MoS stressed that the Tripartite arrangement -- a synergy between research infrastructure, startups, and industrial R&D -- is the way forward

for India's biotech sector.

Singh also reiterated the government's commitment to fostering a biotech revolution across states through collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and technical assistance. He noted that several States have expressed interest in setting up biotechnology parks, further strengthening India's bio-economy.

Singh instructed the Department of Biotechnology to "establish early industry linkages and

work towards a 4P Model (Public-Private-People Partnership) for accelerating biotech growth".

He also welcomed proposals to create BIRAC Centers at a global level to attract cutting-edge biomanufacturing technologies and investments.

Noting that India ranks third in biotech publications worldwide, with nearly two-thirds of research papers emanating from the Department of Biotechnology, Singh said "This reflects India's growing influence and leadership in the international biotech arena."

With these strategic directives, Singh reinforced the government's vision to position India as a global leader in biotechnology, ensuring that biomanufacturing, research, and innovation drive the country's economic and scientific growth to achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat in 2047.

Ayush Ministry working to integrate Unani with modern medicine: Prataprao Jadhav

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Ayush is taking multiple initiatives, for the integration of Ayush systems, including Unani with modern medicine, said the government.

In a written reply in Lok Sabha, Union Minister Prataprao Jadhav noted that the government has set up the Central Council of Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM), New Delhi and National Institute of Unani Medicine (NIUM), Bengaluru, for education and research in Unani system of medicine.

This includes the development of new drugs as well as conducting clinical trials on scientific lines.

"A satellite institute of the National Institute of Unani Medicine with a 200-bedded hospital is also established at Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. A total number of 21 clinical institutes/units are



also working under the CCRUM across the country," Jadhav said.

These clinical institutes/units provide treatment through general OPD, reproductive and child health OPD, geriatric OPD, non-communicable diseases clinics, etc.

"Both CCRUM and NIUM have taken up several clinical research studies for various diseases which include arthritis, bronchial asthma, anaemia, anxiety, depressive disorders, neuro-degenerative diseases, lifestyle disorders like hypertension, obesity dyslipidemia, diabetes and various skin diseases like

vitiligo, etc," the MoS said. To boost Ayush and Unani into the mainstream of the healthcare system in the country the CCRUM is providing healthcare facilities through relocation/extension centre at several government hospitals. These have been set up to make the Unani treatment facility accessible and affordable to the public.

The CCRUM is also taking various research programmes including pre-clinical and clinical research, drug standardisation research, fundamental research, etc. to ensure accessibility and

affordability to the public.

Five mobile apps have been developed and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Ilaj-bit Tadbeer (IBT) are being developed. Standard Treatment Guidelines for Musculoskeletal disorders have also been developed.

Other measures include Ayush Vertical under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) -- a dedicated institutional mechanism for planning, monitoring, and supervising Ayush-specific public health programmes.

This vertical provides technical support to both Ministries in developing strategies for public health, healthcare, Ayush education, and training, Jadhav said.

Further, the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) jointly established Integrated Ayush Departments in Central Government Hospitals to promote integrative healthcare.

Study shows how resistance to chemotherapies may occur in some cancers

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

US researchers have found how resistance to chemotherapies may occur in some cancers, an advance that could help pinpoint treatment-resistant tumours.

Chemotherapy resistance is a major challenge in cancer treatment. It occurs when cancer cells stop responding to chemotherapy, allowing the tumour to grow again.

The team from Mass General Brigham focused on a pathway that harnesses reactive oxygen species (ROS) to kill cancer cells. The study, published in the journal Nature, found that mutations to VPS35 -- a key player in this pathway -- can prevent chemotherapy-induced cell death.

"ROS play an important role in healthy and diseased cells, but pathways that sense and control cellular ROS levels are not well understood," said co-



responding author Liron Bar-Peled, of the Krantz Family Center for Cancer Research at the hospital.

"A clearer understanding of ROS could help us understand why chemoresistance occurs in some cases."

Low concentrations of ROS are required for normal cell signalling, but higher levels of ROS can damage cells and contribute to diseases such as cancer and neurodegeneration.

Previous studies have

shown that mitochondria play an important role in ROS production, but it has been unclear if ROS-sensing proteins influence the mitochondria. If they do, this could impact responses to some anticancer treatments.

To investigate the team screened cancer cells for ROS-sensing proteins that might contribute to chemoresistance.

They identified mutations that increased treatment resistance, and the team traced two of them to a protein called VPS35. Further studies showed that these mutations led to lowered ROS levels within the cell.

In addition, they analysed VPS35 expression levels in 24 patients with high-grade serous ovarian cancer (HGSOC), who received treatment at MGCC. They noted that higher tumoral VPS35 levels were associated with improved treatment responses and overall survival rates.

CSK's spin wizards set to test RR at Barsapara

AGENCIES

GUWAHATI, MAR 29 (UNI)

A high-stakes spin showdown is on the cards as Chennai Super Kings (CSK) lock horns with Rajasthan Royals (RR) in the 11th match of the IPL 2025 at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium here on Sunday at 7:30 PM. With the pitch expected to favour turn, CSK's spin duo of Noor Ahmad and Ravindra Jadeja could hold the key against an out-of-form RR batting lineup desperate for a turnaround.

CSK have had a mixed start to the season, stunning Mumbai Indians with a commanding win before facing a humbling defeat against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Chepauk. Meanwhile, RR have found themselves in early trouble, losing both their opening games and searching for form.

Head-to-head, CSK hold a slight advantage with 16 wins in 29 encounters.



However, RR have been the dominant force in recent years, winning six of their last eight matches against the five-time champions since 2020.

Noor Ahmad has emerged as CSK's trump card, striking crucial blows in both matches so far. His variations and ability to thrive on spin-friendly tracks make him a major threat. Meanwhile, the ever-reliable Ravindra Jadeja will be crucial in choking the runs and breaking partnerships in the middle overs. His duel with Sanju Samson and RR's top order could

shape the contest.

CSK's mystery spinner Maheesh Theekshana, despite an underwhelming start, has the tools to cause damage in the powerplay. His carrom ball could be a vital weapon on Guwahati's slow surface.

RR's fortunes could hinge on Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has been their stand-out batsman since 2023 with 1060 runs at a strike rate of 160.4. His explosive starts in the powerplay could put CSK on the back foot early. Skipper Sanju Samson, fresh from a blistering 66 off 37 balls against

Sunrisers Hyderabad, will be eager to lead from the front again.

For CSK, Rachin Ravindra has already shown his class with a match-winning 65 against Mumbai Indians and will be a key figure at the top of the order. However, CSK's middle-order inconsistencies remain a concern.

The Barsapara track has traditionally favoured slower bowlers, with spinners maintaining an economy of 7.8 runs per over. The average first-innings score at the venue stands at 173, while teams chasing have averaged 158.

With RR struggling for momentum and CSK's spinners likely to thrive, Sunday's clash promises to be a fascinating contest of skill, strategy, and adaptability. Can CSK's spin web strangle RR, or will Jaiswal and Samson script a turnaround? The stage is set for a riveting showdown in Guwahati.

Kupwara police organises successful Women's Cricket Tournament

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR, MAR 29 (UNI)

Kupwara Police successfully conducted the Women's Cricket Tournament 2025, with Wonder Girls Lolab emerging victorious against Girls AGS Chandigarh in the final match.

The tournament, which began on March 18, featured eight teams from across Kupwara district.

The final match witnessed intense competition, drawing a large crowd of enthusiastic spectators.

Senior Superintendent of Police Kupwara,



Glulam Jeelani Wani, was the chief guest at the closing ceremony. He awarded

trophies, mementos, and cash prizes to the winners and runners-up.

The winning team received Rs 20,000 while the runners-up team was awarded Rs 10,000.

SSP Kupwara commended the players for their dedication, skill, and sportsmanship.

"The successful conclusion of the Women's cricket tournament provided a dynamic platform for young girls to showcase their talent as these initiatives are intended to foster a mutual cooperation and a warm relation between police and the local population," a police statement said.

Novak Djokovic reaches Miami final to close on 100th title

AGENCIES

FLORIDA, MAR 29 (UNI)

Novak Djokovic cruised past Grigor Dimitrov to reach his first Miami Open final since 2016 and move within one win of his 100th career ATP title.

He will face unseeded Czech player Jakub Mensik in Sunday's final following his shock 7-6 (7-4) 4-6 7-6 (7-4) victory over American Taylor Fritz in Friday's second semi-final.

Bulgaria's Dimitrov broke Djokovic in the opening game, but the Serb, watched by his coach Andy Murray, broke back.

World number five



will put me in a position to fight for a trophy, a big trophy," he said.

"That's what I've been doing this week, to be honest. I've been very happy with the way I prepared for the tournament, the way I've been playing. I haven't dropped a set," Djokovic said.

"It's a great opportunity. Let's see what happens in two days," he said.

Things started off well in windy conditions for 14th seed Dimitrov, 33, who won the first game on Djokovic's serve but was unable to capitalise and the classy Serb hit his stride and easily won the first set.

Djokovic, 37, reeled off five straight games to win the first set, the BBC reported.

Dimitrov made a shaky start to the second set and the 24-time Grand Slam champion took advantage to go through 6-2 6-3.

"Ever since I won my

99th title, which was the Olympic Games in Paris, I've been playing with the prospect of winning the special 100 titles," said Djokovic.

"I've been trying to find that necessary and much-needed level of tennis that

NZ defeat Pak by 73 runs in first ODI at Napier

AGENCIES

NAPIER, MAR 29 (UNI)

New Zealand registered a comprehensive 73-run victory over Pakistan in the first One Day International (ODI) of the ongoing series at McLean Park here on Saturday.

After being put in to bat, the hosts posted a formidable total of 344 for nine in their allotted 50 overs. New Zealand's batting was led by a collective effort, with key contributions from their top and middle order. In reply, Pakistan were bowled out for 271 in 44.1 overs despite a valiant knock from Babar Azam (78 off



83 balls).

For Pakistan, Usman Khan (39), Abdullah Shafique (36), and Salman Agha (58) made notable contributions, but wickets fell at regular intervals,

derailing their chase. Skipper Mohammad Rizwan managed 30 runs before falling to Muhammad Abbas.

New Zealand's bowling attack was spearheaded

by Nathan Smith, who claimed four wickets for 60 runs in his 8.1-over spell. Jacob Duffy (2/57) and Michael Bracewell (1/60) also played crucial roles in restricting Pakistan's batting lineup.

Earlier, Pakistan won the toss and elected to field first. Their bowlers struggled to contain New Zealand's aggressive batting, allowing the hosts to post an imposing total. Despite some resistance from Pakistan's middle order, the required run rate proved too steep.

The second ODI of the series will be played on March 31 at the same venue.

KL Rahul set to return as DC face SRH at Vizag

AGENCIES

VISAKHAPATNAM, MAR 29 (UNI)

Delhi Capitals (DC) will be bolstered by the return of KL Rahul as they take on Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in a day match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 at the Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium here on Sunday.

Rahul's presence is expected to strengthen DC's batting lineup, which struggled in their opening game.

Delhi commenced their campaign with a thrilling last-over victory against Lucknow Super Giants at this venue. A resilient batting display from Ashutosh Sharma (66* off 31 balls) and Vipraj Nigam (39 off 15 balls) helped them chase down 210 with one wicket in hand.

However, concerns remain over their top and middle order, with Jake Fraser-McGurk, Faf du Plessis, and Abhishek Porel struggling in the first game.

Their bowling unit, led by Mitchell Starc, Kuldeep Yadav, and Mohit Sharma,



will be aiming to make early inroads against a formidable SRH batting order.

Hyderabad, on the other hand, started their season with a commanding win over Rajasthan Royals but stumbled in their second match, suffering a setback against Lucknow. Despite a valiant effort from Travis Head (47 off 28 balls), SRH could only manage 190/9, which LSG chased down comfortably.

SRH boast one of the most aggressive batting lineups in the tournament, with Abhishek Sharma, Heinrich Klaasen, and Aniket Verma expected to play key roles. However, their bowling remains a concern, with Simarjeet Singh and Adam Zampa struggling for form. Cap-

tain Pat Cummins and senior pacer Mohammed Shami will have to step up to contain DC's batsmen.

The pitch at Visakhapatnam has shown high-scoring tendencies in recent matches, with scores exceeding 200 being chased successfully. Spinners are likely to have an impact, with the ball expected to keep low in the latter stages of the match.

With both teams possessing formidable batting units, a high-scoring contest is on the cards. While Delhi have a balanced lineup, Hyderabad's aggressive approach and recent dominance over DC in the last two meetings give them a slight edge.

The match is set to begin at 15:30 IST.

Tamim Iqbal opens up on harrowing health scare

AGENCIES

DHAKA, MAR 29 (UNI)

Former Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal expressed his gratitude on Facebook after being discharged from the hospital following a heart attack on Monday.

Despite retiring from international cricket in January 2025, Tamim continues to play domestic cricket. He was leading Mohammedan Sporting Club in a Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League match against Shinepukur Cricket Club when he experienced discomfort immediately after the toss.

He was taken to a local hospital for initial treatment, but later collapsed and was rushed for an angioplasty surgery on Monday.

Tamim was discharged on Friday, four days after the incident, and thanked everyone who stood by him during the difficult time.

"By all your prayers, I am at home now," said Tamim in a message posted in Bangla on his Facebook page.

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