



CM to Chair Crucial Meeting of Ruling Alliance MLAs Today

Likely to discuss transfers of 48 JKAS officers, restoration of statehood

HT NEWS DESK / KNO

SRINAGAR, APR 03: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has convened a crucial meeting of legislators of J&K's ruling alliance on Friday morning here. The meeting is likely to discuss the alliance's response over recent transfer of 48 officers of J&K Administrative Service (JKAS) by Lieutenant Governor and "delay" in restoration of statehood. In a sudden move, National Conference chief whip Mubarak Gul on Thursday morning informed party MLAs that Chief



Minister Omar Abdullah would chair an important meeting of MLAs of the ruling alliance on

Friday at Deputy Chief Minister's Fairview residence here.

"Keeping in view the importance of the meeting, all the Hon'ble members are requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the meeting on the aforesaid date, time and venue," reads the notice, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—

Sources said the meeting has been convened to discuss recent transfers of 48 JKAS officers by LG Manoj Sinha—a move the elected government views as encroaching

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Karra, Mir to skip 'emergency meeting' called by CM Omar

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 03: Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief, Tariq Hameed Karra and senior Congress leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir are all set to skip "emergency meeting" of legislators from ruling alliance called by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday.

Sources told the news agency—that Karra and Mir will be absent due to prior commitments in New Delhi. "They will be attending a crucial central-level meeting where district presidents from across the country are participating in phase-wise discussions."

However, despite their absence, the party sources said that other Congress legislators from Jammu and Kashmir are expected to attend Omar Abdullah's meeting.

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J&K govt enhances marriage assistance for poor girls to Rs 75,000

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 03: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has enhanced the Financial Assistance under the State Marriage Assistance Scheme (SMAS) for poor girls, increasing the amount from 50,000 to 75,000 for families holding Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) ration cards. An order issued by the Department

of Social Welfare stated that in partial modification of Government Order No.49-JK(SWD) of 2022 dated March 22, 2022, the financial assistance has been increased to 75,000 (one time) for eligible AAY category girls of marriageable age under the scheme.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that it is "a step towards dignity and empowerment."

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J&K Govt enhances social pensions, fulfilling CM's another Budget Promise

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 03: In a significant step towards social welfare, the Jammu and Kashmir Government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, has ordered the enhancement of pensions under the

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS).

This move marks the fulfillment of a key commitment made by the Chief Minister in the J&K Legislative Assembly on March 7.

As per the revised

structure, effective from April 1, 2025, pension beneficiaries will receive increased financial assistance.

"This is not just assistance—it's our commitment to an inclusive and caring welfare state," Chief Minister Omar

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Earlier practice of strikes, stone pelting things of past now: LG

Addresses Balaji Foundation's 'Bharat Shiksha Summit' at New Delhi

HT News Network



JAMMU, APRIL 03: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today addressed 'Bharat Shiksha Summit' organised by Balaji Foundation at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Shri Brajesh Pathak, Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh also graced the occasion.

In his keynote address, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the importance of Ethics, Values and National Identity in education and pointed out that Ethics and Values, guides us for the welfare of society and nation-building.

He said the deliberations and exchange of ideas during the Summit on overarching issues in education will explore challenges and opportunities and prepare a future roadmap for educational institutions.

"In the educational journey, students develop consciousness and their moral values become sharper. During this journey, students adopt life values like compassion, peace, truth, love, virtuous life, harmony and benevolence and collect all the experiences."

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LS passes Waqf bill with 288 votes in favour, 232 against

No interference in Muslims' religious matters: Shah



HT News Network

NEW DELHI, Apr 3: The Lok Sabha early Thursday passed the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, after over a 12-hour debate, which saw the ruling NDA strongly defending the legislation as beneficial for minorities, while the opposition describing it as "anti-Muslim".

The Bill was passed after all amendments moved by the opposition members were rejected by voice votes. It was passed after division of votes — 288 in favour and 232 against.

In his reply to the debate, Union Minorities Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said there is no place in the world safer than India for minorities and they are safe because the majority is entirely secular.

He said even minuscule minority communities like the

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J&K speaker slams Waqf Bill, says it violates right to religion

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 03: The Speaker of Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly Abdur Rahim Rather on Thursday said the Waqf bill passed by the Lok Sabha violates the right to religion enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Talking to reporters, as per news agency, Rather said that it infringes upon Article 25 of the Constitution of India. "As far as this bill is concerned, it violates the Article 25 of the Constitution of India which guarantees right to

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Will support Muslim personal boards in their fight against Waqf Bill: Grand Mufti

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 03: Grand Mufti of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam on Thursday said that ulema from Kashmir will support all Muslim personal boards to fight against the Waqf Amendment Bill (UMEED) passed by the Parliament and would also move the Supreme Court to challenge it. Addressing the media persons here, the Grand Mufti as per the news agency—, said, "The Bill passed in the Lok Sabha is against the Muslims and will create issues like

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Chief Secretary reviews draft J&K Hydro Power Policy 2025

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting held to review the draft Jammu and Kashmir Hydro Power Policy 2025, emphasising the Union Territory's significant potential in hydropower generation and its role in economic development.

The Chief Secretary highlighted the vast opportunities in the power sector, stating that Jammu and Kashmir possess immense potential for power



generation which can substantially boost the region's economy. He also underscored the necessity of reducing power

losses, noting that such inefficiencies constitute a substantial drain on resources.

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393 villages in J&K to benefit from tribal development initiative: GoI

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 03: The Ministry of Tribal Affairs outlined its collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir administration and other stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the expanded Dharti Aaba Mission in the Union Territory.

Members of Parliament Dr

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J&K guarantees smooth rollout of New Criminal Laws: MoS Home

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 03: The Jammu and Kashmir government has launched a comprehensive strategy to ensure the effective implementation of three new criminal laws in the region, emphasising training, technological integration and public awareness.

In Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, as reported by the news agency—, revealed that several key measures have been taken, including the formation of a steering committee under the Chief Secretary and an Empowered Committee under the Director General of Police (DGP) of Jammu and Kashmir. These

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Forest fire rips through South Kashmir, 20 incidents reported in one week

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 03: Due to the ongoing dry weather and minimal snowfall, massive forest fires have broken out at several locations across Kashmir.

According to the news agency—South Kashmir has witnessed a surge in forest fire incidents over the past few days, causing damage to the green cover.

More than 20 forest fire



incidents have been reported in the past week alone, of which 18 have been con-

trolled while others remain active, officials said. They said that massive

forest fires have erupted in Tral due to dry vegetation, spreading to Pinglish and other areas. Fires also broke out in Dadoo Marhama (Anantnag), Dachnipora (Pahalgam), and Khuwripora (Aishmuqam), affecting compartments 17, 21, 22, 50, and 58.

Large forested areas in Budroo, Sallar, Kullar, Dehvato, Mawoora, Grendwan, Reshkoal, Hapatnada,

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

200 adverse social media handles identified in 3 months: Cyber Police Kashmir

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 03: In a major crackdown against online anti-national propaganda, radicalization, and the glorification of terrorism, Cyber Police Kashmir has intensified its monitoring and enforcement efforts over the past three months.

Adverse social media handles operating across multiple platforms, including those managed from outside the country have been identified and targeted through legal and preventive action, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news



agency— During this period, 200 adverse social media handles engaged in spreading misinformation and extremist content have been identified, with 100 of them operating

from outside the country.

Several of these accounts have been blocked to curb their influence, while legal action has been initiated against key propagators, including multiple FIRs under relevant criminal laws. Security proceedings have also been started against several individuals involved in such activities, police said.

At the same time, Cyber Police Kashmir remains committed to counter-radicalization efforts. Many individuals influenced by such online propaganda have been counseled

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

BILL

Parsis are safe in India and all minorities here live with pride.

"Some members have said that minorities are not safe in India. This statement is completely false. There is no place safer than India for minorities. I am also a minority and we all are living here without any fear and with pride," he said after the debate on the Bill.

The Minister said whenever a minority community faces persecution, it always comes to India to take refuge and cited the examples of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community, minorities of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

"Minorities of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan came to India after facing religious persecution in their respective countries. How can you say that minorities are not safe in India. Very, very wrong to say this.

"The coming generation will never forgive you. Minorities in India are safe because the majorities of the country are fully secular. This is not the case in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. But still, you abuse us," he said.

Rijju said through the Bill, the NDA Government is going to unify all minorities in the country. He also highlighted the "whole-hearted" support of the Christian community for the Bill.

He said a large number of disputes are pending with the Waqf tribunals and through the legislation, the government wants to expedite these cases.

"We want to expedite the resolution of the disputes in the tribunals. Justice delayed is justice denied. Widows, divorcees, and orphans will be given justice through the Bill," he said.

Earlier, the ruling NDA launched a feisty defence of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha amid the opposition's charge that it was unconstitutional and targeted Muslims, as Home Minister Amit Shah asserted that the government had no intention of interfering in their religious matters and was solely driven by the aim of transparent administration of Waqf properties.

Shah's intervention came during the day-long debate that witnessed a fierce exchange between the two sides, with Congress Deputy Leader Gaurav Gogoi alleging that the bill was an attempt to attack the basic structure of the Constitution, defame minorities, disenfranchise them and divide the society.

Minorities Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju in his opening remarks rejected the allegation that the proposed law was interference in the constitutionally guaranteed freedom in religious affairs.

The bill has nothing to do with religion, but deals only with properties, he said tabling the Bill, which was examined and redrafted by a joint committee of Parliament.

"The Government is not going to interfere in any religious institution. The changes made in the Waqf law by the UPA government gave it overriding effect over other statutes, hence the new amendments were required," Rijju said amid noisy opposition protests.

"You (opposition) tried to mislead the people on issues which are not part of the Waqf Bill," he said to the opposition.

Both Ministers asserted that the proposed reforms would ensure the welfare of poor Muslims and women.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav claimed that the bill is a BJP's ploy for polarisation following its reverses in the Lok Sabha polls, alleging that it will send a wrong message to the world denting the country's secular image.

The bill will prove to be a "waterloo" for the BJP as some of its allies might be claiming to support the bill but inside they are not happy about the development, he said.

"Bringing Waqf Bill is the BJP's political game, it is a new form of their communal politics. The BJP wants to appease those supporters who are now distancing themselves from the party because of its policies.

After most of the leading opposition leaders had spoken, Shah launched a stout defence of the bill and rejected the most common criticism that the appointment of non-Muslims in the Waqf council and boards violated a community's right to manage its own affairs.

He also warned against instigating Muslims against the law, noting that an opposition MP had said that the minorities will not accept this. "It is the law of the Indian Government and Parliament. Everyone will have to accept it."

CM

on its mandate.

When questioned about the emergency meeting of legislators called by the Chief Minister, NC spokesman and MLA Tanvir Sadiq said that the Prime Minister and other central leaders in Delhi have praised the mandate of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasised that no one has the right to disregard this mandate. "We demand that the elected government be allowed to function without interference. As for the agenda of the meeting, it will be clarified tomorrow," he added.

On April 01, LG ordered posting of 48 JKAS officers as Additional Deputy Commissioners, Sub-Divisional Magistrates and Assistant

Commissioners Revenue.

Sources said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is upset over the move, perceiving it trespass in the domain of elected government.

Insiders suggest that Omar today wrote to the Union Government to express his displeasure over the transfers.

Sources said the issue of restoration of statehood is also likely to come up for discussions during the meeting.

"The Waqf bill and ongoing session of J&K assembly can also be discussed," he said—

LG

All these physical, intellectual and emotional experiences together develop student's knowledge" the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the aim of National Education Policy 2020 is that students should become a living source of knowledge rather than a storehouse of memories obtained from books.

"National Education Policy promotes creative imagination, ethical values and a sense of determination to contribute towards building an equitable, inclusive and pluralistic society," he further added.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the educational institutions to focus on developing personalities that are perfect blend of compassion and innovation.

"Three 'H'—Head, Heart and Heritage—will help in this mission and they will also restore the broken moral link in the education system.

We need students who are proficient in algorithms, talented in their chosen field, sensitive towards social issues and also realise their duty towards nation building.

Our students should be a selfless individual as well as a skilled researcher, writer or artist, deeply connected to their roots. This perfect balance in personality could be transformative for students, educational institutions and the society," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that the teachers need to integrate moral values with skills needed in the modern world so that qualities like strong character and intellectual curiosity can be nurtured.

"Without unprecedented inventions, moral values alone will have no value. But it is also true that without ethics and values, cutting-edge education and skills would be aimless.

There should be conversations and not monologues in the classroom. There is a need to link innovation and growth with the ethical values of the society and integrate them with the course curriculum," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor further called for encouraging hands-on, experiential and project-based learning. The young minds should be exposed to challenges of the real world. Now the time has come to take education out of the lab and into the real world, he said.

During an interactive session, the Lieutenant Governor also spoke on the educational reforms taking place in J&K, under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, in the past few years. He said the innovative programmes launched in the UT have ensured inclusive and quality education for all.

"The talent pool within Jammu Kashmir is being provided with better opportunities. Dedicated efforts have been made to promote multidisciplinary learning, and skill development of youth. We have also actively initiated campaigns to bring dropout students back to school. Through Mission Yuva, we have prepared a blueprint to foster entrepreneurship culture at college and university level.

Schools, colleges and universities are functioning without any disturbances. Earlier practice of hartals, strikes, stone pelting and bandhs are things of the past now. Today, J&K, with its full potential, is moving ahead towards a prosperous and brighter future," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the prominent personalities and institutions are also conferred with the Bharat Shiksha Samman for their valuable contribution in the field of education.

Shri Naveen Jindal, Member of Parliament; Dr Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities; Ms Rajshri Rai, Chairperson, Balaji Foundation; educationists, experts, heads of various institutions, teachers and youth in large number were present.

POOR GIRLS

"Our government stands committed to uplifting every household in need. This support will be directly credited before marriage via DBT," he remarked.

The decision follows Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Budget Speech on March 7, in which he announced a series of pro-poor initiatives, including the enhancement of marriage assistance for AAY-category girls.

The revised scheme will take effect from April 1, 2025.

To ensure transparency and efficiency, the financial aid will be directly transferred to the beneficiary's bank account through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system before the marriage.

In another major welfare initiative, the J&K government has approved the distribu-

tion of additional food grains free of cost to AAY households with four or more members under the Public Distribution System (PDS).

This move aims to strengthen food security for the region's most vulnerable families and fulfills a key commitment made in Budget 2025-26.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah hailed the initiative as a significant pro-people decision, emphasizing that the government is delivering on its promises. "We are committed to ensuring food security for our most vulnerable families. Under this initiative, all AAY households will receive additional food grains free of cost. Each beneficiary in a family with 4 or more members will get up to 10 kg of food grains, reinforcing our commitment to social welfare," he stated.

Furthering his Government's commitment to women's empowerment, the Chief Minister had also flagged off the Zero-Ticket Travel Initiative—a free Government bus service for women—on April 1 from the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Center (SKICC).

Speaking at the launch event, CM Omar Abdullah said, "This initiative will create an environment where women feel empowered to travel freely, without financial constraints. It marks another step towards ensuring gender equality and mobility for women across Jammu and Kashmir." The Omar Abdullah-led Government has fulfilled yet another promise by implementing Zero Stamp Duty on property transfers through Gift Deeds with-in blood relations. In this regard, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has issued S.O. 75, dated 27th March 2025, under Section 9(a) of the Stamp Act, 1977, to remit Stamp Duty on such transfers.

The term "Blood Relations" includes parents, siblings, children, and grandparents. This notification has come into force w.e.f. 1st April 2025.

PENSION

Abdullah stated. Individuals below 60 years of age will now receive 1,250 per month, while those aged between 60 and 79 years will be entitled to 1,500 per month.

Senior citizens 80 years and above will receive a monthly pension of 2,000, ensuring better support for the elderly.

As per the order, the government has announced significant enhancements in social pensions under the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and the Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS) to provide better financial support to vulnerable sections of society.

Under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), the pension for individuals aged 60-79 years has been increased from 1,000 to 1,500, while those aged 80 years and above will now receive 2,000 instead of 1,000.

Similarly, under the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), widows aged 40-59 years will receive 1,250 (earlier 1,000), those aged 60-79 years will receive 1,500 (earlier 1,000), and widows 80 years and above will now receive 2,000.

Additionally, the Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) has been revised, with pensions for disabled individuals in the 18-59 years category raised to 1,250, those 60-79 years receiving 1,500, and those 80 years and above now receiving 2,000.

Furthermore, under the Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS), which is UT-funded, pension rates have been revised across multiple beneficiary groups.

Old Age Pensions have been increased to 1,250 for females aged 55-60 years, 1,500 for those 60-79 years, and 2,000 for those aged 80 years and above.

Similarly, Widow/Divorcee Pensions have been enhanced to 1,250 for widows below 60 years with a legal marriageable age, 1,500 for those 60-79 years, and 2,000 for those 80 years and above.

The Disability Pension has been revised to 1,250 for those below 60 years, 1,500 for those 60-79 years, and 2,000 for those 80 years and above.

A similar structure applies to the Transgender Pension, ensuring increased financial assistance across all age categories.

KARRA

As per the sources, recent administrative decisions are making the elected government "uncomfortable" and the legislators will deliberate on future course of action. "The Congress party is also concerned over the recent bureaucratic reshuffle, questioning the rationale behind the transfers initiated by the Lieutenant Governor's administration."

A Congress leader told KNO that his party's stand has been very consistent from the beginning. "We have always opposed this dual control system where elected representatives are sidelined. Recent transfers of KAS officers by the LG administration undermine democratic governance," he added.

"The Congress party is committed to its longstanding demand for the restoration of statehood. The governance must lie in the hands of elected representatives rather than bureaucrats," the leader said, adding, "If bureaucrats are going to run the show, what

is the point of holding elections."—

SPEAKER'

freedom of religion to people in the country. It is not good that you are interfering in personal laws of people," he said.

Article 25 of the Constitution of India guarantees the freedom of religion to every individual. It ensures that all persons have the right to freedom of conscience and can freely profess, practice, and propagate their religion.

The controversial Waqf bill was passed in the Lok Sabha late last night after 12 hours of discussion. While BJP and allies supported the bill, INDIA bloc parties voted against it.

Almost all regional political parties including NC, PC, and PDP voiced their opposition to the bill—

GRAND MUFTI

Mandir and Masjid."

"We are keenly watching the developments in this regard and will support all Muslims personal boards in case their decision of fighting against the move will be stronger. Besides, we will also knock the doors of the Supreme Court to get justice," he said, adding, "We have decided to convene a meeting of Ulema associated with different sects. It will be convened and the date is being decided with Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir."

Furthermore, he said that the "Waqf Amendment Bill known as UMEED is a start of Na Ummedi (disappointment)"

He also said that a total of 232 people voted against the bill, which is not a small number and indicates that 45% population is against the Waqf Amendment Bill—

CS

The draft policy aims to attract the private investment in hydropower generation by revising the existing framework. It proposes categorising hydroelectric projects into two segments: Small Hydroelectric Projects (up to 25 MW) and Large Hydroelectric Projects (above 25 MW and up to 100 MW). The Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) has been designated as the nodal agency for projects up to 10 MW, while the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited (JKPDCL) will oversee the projects above 10 MW.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Power Development Department, H. Rajesh Prasad; Principal Secretary Finance, Santosh Dattatraya Vaidya; Managing Director JKPDCL, Pankaj Magotra and Managing Director, Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDDL) and JKPCCL, Ch Mohd Yasin besides others.

The discussions focussed on finalising the policy framework to effectively harness the Jammu and Kashmir's hydropower potential, aiming to attract private investment and promote sustainable development in the region.

It is pertinent to mention that the UT administration will also hold consultations with the stakeholders on this account.

GOI

Hemant Vishnu Savara and Shankar Lalwani raised questions about the government's strategy for the smooth execution of the initiative.

In response, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan includes 25 interventions led by 17 ministries, aimed at addressing infrastructural gaps in 63,843 villages.

The programme focuses on improving access to health, education, Anganwadi facilities and livelihood opportunities across 549 districts and 2,911 blocks in 30 states and union territories, including 393 villages in 112 blocks of 20 districts in Jammu and Kashmir, he said, adding that each ministry has been assigned a budget and targets for its respective interventions.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has also requested state and district administrations, including those in Jammu and Kashmir, to organise awareness camps and assist in preparing essential documents such as Aadhaar cards and Jan Dhan bank accounts to enable beneficiaries to access government schemes.

Based on proposals from the Jammu and Kashmir administration, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has approved projects worth Rs 8.77 crore under the mission—

LAWS

committees aim to oversee the smooth rollout of the new legislation.

He said training programmes have been organised across various platforms, including the Police Academy, Police Training Institutes, District Police Lines, and Battalion Training Centres. The translation of the new criminal laws into regional languages such as Urdu, Dogri and Kashmiri has been completed to ensure better understanding and accessibility for local communities, he added.

To raise public awareness, the Jammu & Kashmir Police, in collaboration with other

state departments, has been conducting joint awareness programmes across all 282 blocks, the minister said, adding that these programmes are held in the second and fourth weeks of each month, as part of an ongoing effort to engage with citizens about the new laws.

Rai said the government has also integrated cutting-edge technology into the process, with the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) fully operational. This includes tools like e-Sakshya, an audio-video recording application for Investigation Officers (IOs), as well as the functionality to send e-summons, SMS, and emails.

In terms of training, 975 Gazetted Officers, 60,890 police personnel, and 254 Judicial Officers have already received instruction on the new criminal laws, the minister said, adding that 191 Master Trainers have been trained through the Training of Trainers (ToT) program, and 118 personnel received specialized training at the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) in Gandhinagar.

Jammu & Kashmir Police have also embraced the iGoT Karmayogi platform, with 50,984 personnel completing over 121,000 courses, including 110,773 focused on the new criminal laws. Rai said.

To monitor the implementation, review meetings are held regularly. "The Chief Secretary conducts bi-weekly meetings, while the Principal Secretary (Home), DGP, and senior police officials meet weekly. Reports from these meetings are circulated internally within the government to ensure continuous oversight," the minister said—

SOCIAL MEDIA

and handed over to their families as part of a de-radicalization initiative.

"The Jammu and Kashmir Police reaffirm their commitment to safeguarding national security in both physical and digital spaces. Cyber Police Kashmir will continue its proactive monitoring of online platforms to disrupt terrorism-linked narratives and prevent the misuse of cyberspace for extremist purposes," the statement reads.

Citizens are urged to remain vigilant and report suspicious online activities to the authorities. Cyber Police Kashmir remains steadfast in its mission to counter online threats and ensure a safe and secure digital environment—

FOREST FIRE

Wajoora, and Pendobal have been impacted.

A blaze in Andoo-Shangus (Anantnag) was controlled after strenuous efforts, while another fire raged in compartments 63 and 64 in Kokernag. A fire in Compartment 34V, Check Watoo Block (Vasho Range, Kulgam), has also been contained.

Mudasir Mehmood, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Anantnag, told KNO that the Forest Department is working to extinguish the flames reported in the Kokernag range.

He said the department has the necessary basic equipment and has successfully brought 80% of the fire under control.

Talking to KNO, Conservator of Forests (South Circle) Arshdeep Singh said that in South Kashmir's four districts, Anantnag and Pulwama have been mainly affected due to dry grass and the recent festival, as people visited forests, and due to their negligence, forest fires occurred.

Asked about the lack of manpower and equipment in the forest department, he said, "It is not like a house fire that can be extinguished with a fire extinguisher. A forest fire spreads over large areas, and dryness, temperature, and winds make it a more dangerous emergency situation. Only traditional methods work at such times. Our staff is working day and night to reach all sites, and manually we control the fire through traditional methods by making temporary fire lines and fire breaks. Sometimes, we tap it down, and it works. We also use technology, such as alerts from the Forest Survey of India through satellite imagery every six hours, to detect fire outbreaks. Our teams review and work on these alerts accordingly."

Singh, as per KNO, said that the media is playing an active role in spreading awareness among the common masses about how to prevent forest fires. "We are identifying miscreants responsible for igniting the fires, and strict action will be taken against them, as the government views this issue seriously since forests are public property," he said.

He said that more than 20 fire incidents occurred in the past week in South Kashmir's four districts, of which 18 have been controlled while the rest remain active.

Asked about the damage caused by these fires, he said, "Normally, it is a ground fire, and ground litter burns down. Big trees are not impacted due to their composition, while small saplings get damaged. The department conducts surveys and proposes plantations in such areas in the future so that the green forest is replenished again."—He said that more than 20 fire incidents occurred in the past week in South Kashmir's four districts, of which 18 have been controlled while the rest remain active.



Chief Secretary asks for accelerated execution of National Highway Projects in J&K

HT News Network

SRINAGAR/JAMMU, APRIL 3: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, chaired a high level meeting to assess progress on National Highway projects being executed across the Union Territory. Emphasising the critical importance of these projects, he issued firm directives to ensure their timely completion while minimising public inconvenience. The meeting was attended by senior officers including Principal Secretary Agriculture Production Department, Shailendra Kumar; Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Sheetal Nanda; Secretary, Public Works (R&B), Bhupinder Kumar and Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar while other officers participated online. Representatives from key agencies like the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) were also present.



The Chief Secretary reviewed various National Highway projects, examining the individual packages, scheduled completion dates and current progress. He specifically instructed the NHAI to expedite project completion while ensuring that public inconvenience is minimised. "Delays are unacceptable. We must prioritise efficiency and public convenience in equal measure," he asserted. The review encompassed critical infrastructure projects like Delhi-Amritsar-

Katra (DAK) Expressway, four-laning of Banihal Bypass, Srinagar Ring Road, Jammu-Akhnoor National Highway, Chenani-Sudhmahadev Road, Khellani Bypass Tunnel and various projects under Project SAMPARK. Dulloo scrutinised the physical and financial status of these projects, emphasising added accountability and swift resolution of any impediments. Addressing the challenges posed by the region's unique topography, the Chief Secretary emphasised the need for proactive planning. "Weather conditions and natural challenges must be anticipated and integrated into our project timelines to prevent unnecessary delays," he directed the officers. In a move to prevent resource-related delays, the Chief Secretary directed Director Geology and Mining, Suraj Parkash Rukwal, to conduct field visits and ensure that mining activities do not hinder the project progress. Furthermore, he discussed the forest clearance issues with Commissioner Secretary, Sheetal Nanda.

Sakeena Itoo inspects OPD, IPD sections of MCCH at GMC Anantnag

HT News Network

ANANTNAG, APRIL 03: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, conducted inspection of OPD and IPD sections of Maternity and Child Care Hospital (MCCH) here today, currently functioning from newly constructed block of Government Medical College (GMC), Anantnag. During the inspection, the Minister took stock of the facilities being provided for the newly born babies and children. She interacted with the doctors, staff and attendants and took appraisal from them about the facilities available. While speaking on the occasion, Sakeena highlighted the government's commitment towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir. She said that the construction on newly announced 250-bed Maternity and Child Care Hospital will commence soon. "This new



facility will significantly boost the Pediatric healthcare services in South Kashmir, ensuring better treatment and care for our children", she stated. The Minister said that due to the congestion at MCCH Sherbagh, we have shifted some sections of the hospital to this building, adding that in coming days more facilities will be developed here for the ease of patients. MLA Anantnag-West, Abdul Majeed Bhat (Larmi); MLA Shangu-Anantnag-East, Rey-

az Ahmad Khan; Principal GMC Anantnag, Medical Superintendents and other concerned officers accompanied the Minister during the visit. While speaking on the occasion, Sakeena highlighted the government's commitment towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir. She said that the construction on newly announced 250-bed Maternity and Child Care Hospital will commence soon.

LA Speaker inaugurates Royal Health, Wellness Centre at Srinagar

HT News Network



SRINAGAR, APRIL 03: Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, inaugurated the Royal Health and Wellness Centre at Poloview here today. Speaking after the inauguration ceremony, the Speaker emphasized on the importance of accessible and innovative healthcare solutions. He lauded the initiative for bringing advanced wellness practices to the region. He expressed hope that the Centre would serve as a significant step towards holistic health improvement for the community. On the occasion, Owner of the Royal Health and Wellness Centre, Srinagar, Dr. Hamid Sofi, briefed the Speaker about the facilities being provided at the Centre. Pertinently, the newly launched facility aims to provide advanced healthcare and wellness services to the patients, enhancing holistic well-being in the region. The Centre has been equipped to offer modern medical services, diagnostics and specialized wellness programs, integrating traditional therapeutic techniques with contemporary healthcare solutions to cater to the diverse health needs.

DLSA, Srinagar organizes awareness programme on UTRC

HT News Network

Srinagar, April 03: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, organized an awareness programme on the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) at Central Jail Srinagar. The initiative was conducted under the able guidance of Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary of J&K Legal Services Authority, and under the chairmanship of Tasleem Arif, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and under the supervision of Sajad Ur Rehman, Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Srinagar. The primary objective of the event was to educate jail inmates about the role and significance of the UTRC in safeguarding their rights and ensuring they are not unduly detained. The programme witnessed the active participation of Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) from the Prison Legal Aid



Clinic, alongside jail inmates. Tasneem Kausar, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel, served as the resource person and provided in-depth insights into the mandate of the UTRC. She highlighted the committee's role in reviewing the cases of undertrial prisoners, ensuring that their legal rights are upheld, and

emphasizing the importance of swift justice. The session also covered legal remedies available to inmates, the necessity of speedy trials, and their constitutional rights within the criminal justice system. A key focus of the programme was to inform inmates about the upcoming 2nd UTRC meeting

scheduled for 15th April 2025. Tasneem Kausar urged the inmates to come forward with their cases, particularly those falling under the 15 specified categories eligible for review under the UTRC framework. She reassured them that the legal aid system is committed to addressing their concerns and ensuring that deserving cases are brought before the committee for consideration. The interactive session saw enthusiastic participation from the inmates, who engaged in discussions with the resource person and sought clarifications on various legal matters. Their involvement reflected a growing awareness and willingness to exercise their legal rights. The initiative reaffirmed the commitment of the District Legal Services Authority to upholding justice, promoting legal literacy, and ensuring access to legal aid for all.

MD JJM directs officials to upload data of works on PM Gati Shakti portal

HT News Network



Srinagar, April 03: Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), J&K Khurshid Ahmad Shah urged the Jal Shakti (PHE) Divisions of J&K to speed up the process of mapping the pipelines laid under JJM and uploading the same on PM Gati Shakti portal. He gave these instructions today while chairing a preparatory meeting which was attended by Chief Engineers, Jal Shakti (PHE) Departments Jammu/Kashmir, Superintending Engineers (Hydraulic) Circles J&K and Executive Engineers of Civil as well as Mechanical divisions of the UT of J&K. The meeting was held in virtual mode and all the officers attended the meeting from their respective stations. On the occasion, he enquired about the progress achieved in uploading the pipeline and Water Testing Infrastructure created under JJM on PM Gati Shakti portal. He urged the executive engineers to ensure that the targets set in this regard are achieved well in time.

Samina Shah and Dr. Satish Vimal Take Over Key Roles at All India Radio Srinagar

HT News Network

Srinagar, April 3 Senior Program Executive of All India Radio Srinagar, Samina Shah, has assumed charge as the new producer of the renowned current affairs program Shaherbeen. Alongside her, Dr. Satish Vimal has taken over as the new producer of the Pahari and Sheena programs at All India Radio Srinagar. Their appointments come in the wake of the retirement of veteran Senior Program Executive, Maqsood Ahmad. Ahmad had been associated with Shaherbeen since 1997 and was one of the longest-serving editors and producers of the program. A recipient of the prestigious State Award, Maqsood Ahmad played a significant role in covering high-profile events during his tenure. Notably, he reported on the historic 2001 Agra Summit, where Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee met with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. He also covered various VVIP events in Jammu & Kashmir for All India Radio.

Vacant CEO, RDO Positions Filled; Lecturers and Principals Next: Education Minister

HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr 3 Education Minister Sakeena Itoo has said that the government is actively working to fill vacant positions in the education sector. She stated that earlier, there was a shortage of Chief Education Officers (CEOs), Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs), lecturers, and principals, which affected the education system. To address this, the government started Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs).

8 more Kashmir Crafts carve their way to GI Glory This recognition will provide legal protection against counterfeit products, lead to artisans' welfare

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 03: In a landmark achievement securing the unique craftsmanship of artisans, 8 more traditional products of Kashmir have been granted the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) certificates by GI Registry, Chennai, based on their sources of origin. GI registration provides legal protection against counterfeit products, prevents unauthorized use, boosts exports, and promotes economic prosperity for producers of goods associated with a specific geographical territory. Giving details, a spokesman from the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, today stated that Kashmir Namda, Kashmir Gabba, Kashmir Willow Bat, Kashmir Tweed, Crewel, Kashmir Chain Stitch, Shikara and Wagguv have secured GI registration. With this, he said, the total number of GI registered crafts has reached 15, with 07 crafts having already been granted GI registration.



Highlighting the benefits of the registration, the spokesman exuded confidence that these 8 new products will provide much needed boost to exports and gain greater access in international markets, leading to increased demand. "The registration, followed by GI labelling, will also help prevent unauthorised use, ensuring consumers get access to genuine products," he added. Referring to the stiff challenges faced by the department over a period of three years, the spokesman highlighted various

steps taken for earning GI registration. "After filing of applications online, the department had to go through the onerous task of preliminary scrutiny and examination of the applications filed, followed by issuance of show-cause notices and publication in GI Journal. Only after no objections were received, the GI registration was granted by Geographical Indication (GI) Registry Chennai, in favour of the 8 new products," he explained. The spokesman further stated that the department shall now shift focus to 6

more crafts for GI registration, which shall go a long way in revival of certain lost crafts and also boost their saleability in niche global markets. These include Copperware (Kandkari), Silverware, Houseboat, Tapestry, Kashmir Tilla and Aari Staple Embroidery. Identifying testing and QR labelling as a corollary to the GI registration of unique Kashmir products, the spokesman said the department has already submitted proposals for upgradation of its testing labs in IICET, CDI and Quality Control Division. "In view of the increased demand for GI testing and labelling, the department shall upgrade its testing labs by acquiring state-of-the-art equipment like OFDA (Optical Fibre Diameter Analyzer), SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) and high-resolution Digital Microscopes, which shall ensure genuineness of the products tested and weeding out sale of machine-made counterfeit products, which are sold in the garb of hand-made products," he added.

EDITORIAL

Introduction of free bus ride for women a welcome step

Few days back the union territory government introduced the free ride for women in the public transport buses managed by it. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah inaugurated the scheme on April 1 and the step has been welcomed by the people especially by the female folk. Under this scheme females boarding the smart city buses and green buses operated by Jammu & Kashmir Road Transport Corporation would not have to pay any fare while going from one place to another.

The scheme aims to empower the females and one can hope the step is implemented letter and spirit on ground. Some years back the government introduced the special bus service for females on different routes in the Srinagar city. The service was operational for some months before it was disbanded by the authorities. The reason put forward for the same was there was a lukewarm response from the females and as such the exclusive bus service was stopped.

Hope this time around nothing of that sort would happen and the free bus ride for the females would be a hit not only in Srinagar but other places of Kashmir. Since the green buses operate in the different districts of Jammu & Kashmir one can hope the females across the length and breadth of the union territory would take benefit. Females, especially the students should take full benefit of the scheme and they should ensure that they are not bullied by the conductors of green buses and smart city buses.

It is the responsibility of the concerned department to carry out regular review of the scheme and ensure that the benefits are reaching the beneficiaries. Since everybody talks about the rights and duties the females should be fully aware about their rights in this regard. As the government has introduced the free ridership facility for the females it is the responsibility of the intended beneficiaries to ensure that there is no holding back in this regard.

At the same time the government should procure more and more smart city buses and green buses so that more and more benefits trickle to the females of Jammu & Kashmir. Since a limited number of red and green buses operate as on date it is quite natural that benefits of free ridership would be available to a limited number of females. The need of the hour is that the scheme is implemented in totality without any fault.

Markaz Ul Madaris to SARUK: Allama Dr. Shaykh Hami's Journey of Educational Innovation

SHEIKH SAMEER MANZOOR:

Allama Dr. Shaykh Hami (Hh), a revered Islamic scholar, humanitarian, and social reformer, has dedicated his life to the pursuit of knowledge and the betterment of society. His unwavering commitment to education has paved the way for thousands of students to access quality learning, combining traditional Islamic teachings with modern academic disciplines. With a focus on intellectual growth, spiritual enrichment, and societal progress, Shaykh Hami's contributions stand as a testament to his belief in the transformative power of education. This article explores Shaykh Hami's pioneering initiatives in the field of education, including his dream of establishing the Sheikh Ul Alam Research University (SARUK), the founding of Markaz Ul Madaris Al Jammia Al Qadriya, and the proliferation of madrasas and libraries across Jammu and Kashmir. Through these endeavours, he continues to shape the educational landscape, fostering a generation of scholars, leaders, and change-makers.

Shaykh Hami has emerged as a transformative educational reformer, pioneering the modernization of Islamic education while preserving its traditional values. His visionary approach is evident in the establishment of thousands of madrasas and libraries across the region, providing access to quality education for students from all backgrounds. His efforts have significantly contributed to bridging the gap between traditional Islamic knowledge and modern academic disciplines. One of his most ambitious goals is the establishment of the Sheikh Ul Alam Research University (SARUK) under the "Minaz Zulmaat-i-Ilan Noor" program of Karwan-e-Islami International. SARUK is envisioned as a state-of-the-art institution integrating Islamic scholarship with contemporary academic disciplines. This university aims to cultivate well-rounded scholars equipped to address the challenges of the modern world while upholding Islamic principles. His dream of SARUK is inspired by the historical legacy of Sheikh Ul Alam (RA), the revered Kashmiri saint and scholar who



advocated for knowledge, spirituality, and social reform. By naming the university after Sheikh Ul Alam, he emphasizes the importance of preserving the rich intellectual and spiritual heritage of Kashmir. The university aims to embody Sheikh Ul Alam's teachings by fostering a spirit of unity, compassion, and pursuit of knowledge.

The institution will not only serve as a hub for Islamic learning but will also host departments in fields such as engineering, medical sciences, environmental studies, and artificial intelligence. Shaykh Hami believes that a multidisciplinary approach will provide students with the necessary tools to contribute to the advancement of society. Furthermore, SARUK will prioritize research and innovation. He envisions the university establishing state-of-the-art research centers that explore solutions to global challenges, including poverty, climate change, and mental health. Special attention will be given to Islamic studies research, preserving manuscripts, and contributing scholarly work to the global academic discourse. Despite the monumental benefits SARUK promises to bring, the university's establishment faces significant challenges. He has tirelessly advocated for the necessary permissions and support from the authorities to make this dream a reality.

However, bureaucratic hurdles and administrative delays have hampered the progress of this transformative project. Shaykh Hami continues to engage with policymakers, academics, and religious leaders, emphasizing the urgency of SARUK's establishment. He remains steadfast in his resolve, believing that a university of this calibre will not only benefit Kashmir but also serve as a beacon of Islamic and scientific knowledge on the global stage.

In his pursuit of educational reform, Shaykh Hami established the Markaz Ul Madaris Al Jammia Al Qadriya at Mursaidnagar, Tergam Bandipora. This institution stands as a living testament to his commitment to integrating Islamic teachings with modern education. At Markaz Ul Madaris, thousands of students receive a comprehensive education encompassing Islamic sciences, modern subjects, and vocational training. Free education and financial support ensure that underprivileged students have access to quality learning opportunities. By nurturing both the intellect and the spirit, the institution empowers its students to become responsible leaders and contributors to society.

Beyond large institutions, his commitment to education is evident in the establishment of thousands of local madrasas and libraries across Jammu and Kashmir. These

centers provide accessible learning environments for students of all ages, particularly in remote and economically disadvantaged areas. Local madrasas uphold the Islamic tradition of imparting religious knowledge while incorporating essential modern subjects. Libraries established under Shaykh Hami's guidance serve as repositories of knowledge, offering resources in Islamic studies, science, literature, and various academic disciplines. These initiatives have ignited a culture of learning and scholarship, fostering intellectual growth and community development.

Shaykh Hami's commitment to educational reform is further exemplified by his desire to establish SARUK as a means to reduce educational migration. Thousands of Kashmiri students currently travel outside the state for higher education due to limited opportunities. Shaykh Hami envisions a university that offers world-class education within Kashmir, eliminating financial and logistical burdens on students and their families. He believes that by nurturing scholars and professionals locally, SARUK will contribute to the region's intellectual and economic growth. Graduates will be empowered to take on leadership roles, innovate within their fields, and address local and global issues. Recognizing the importance of global

perspectives in education, He advocates for SARUK to engage in international academic partnerships. Through collaboration with renowned institutions worldwide, the university will facilitate knowledge exchange, promote cultural understanding, and inspire innovative research. Students will have opportunities to participate in exchange programs, contributing to their holistic development.

Shaykh Hami emphasizes the need for a balanced education that incorporates both religious teachings and scientific advancements. His vision for SARUK includes specialized departments dedicated to Islamic jurisprudence, theology, ethics, social sciences, and emerging fields like artificial intelligence, environmental studies, and biotechnology. By integrating traditional wisdom with modern knowledge, he seeks to produce graduates who can provide ethical leadership and contribute to solving global challenges. Shaykh Hami's efforts as an educational reformer reflect his unwavering commitment to uplifting society through knowledge. By establishing institutions like SARUK and Markaz ul Madaris Al Jammia Al Qadriya, he wants to integrate traditional Islamic education with modern disciplines serves as a beacon of hope and progress for Kashmir and beyond. Through his dedication and foresight, Shaykh Hami continues to inspire a new generation of scholars, educators, and leaders who are equipped to navigate the complexities of the contemporary world while remaining firmly rooted in their cultural and spiritual heritage. It is imperative for society to come forward and support visionary leaders like Shaykh Hami in their pursuit of educational reform. Establishing institutions like SARUK requires collective efforts – financial, physical, and moral support. Philanthropists, organizations, policymakers, and the public must contribute to realizing this noble dream. Supporting initiatives like SARUK will ensure that future generations have access to quality education, fostering peace, progress, and prosperity.

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Freedom of authorship versus editorial policy: New dimensions to the debate



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

There has been a long-standing debate in the literary publishing world about whether an author should have the freedom to send his works to more than one magazine. While editors are free to publish or not publish any work, and no time limit is imposed on them, why should not an author have the right to send his work to as many places as he wants? This question has become even more relevant in today's digital age, where the speed of dissemination of information and content has become extremely fast.

Editorial View: The quest for

uniqueness

Most editors believe that the credibility and reputation of a magazine depend on the fact that the material published in it is original and unique. If a work has already been published in another magazine, then the readers would have already read it, which may affect the uniqueness of the new magazine. Editors also believe that if the same work is published in many places, then the readers may lose trust in the magazine.

In addition, another important argument from the editorial point of view is that if an author submits the same work to multiple places and it is accepted by multiple editors, it may create confusion between journals. Therefore, many journals follow the policy that they will accept only those works that have not been published elsewhere before.

Freedom of the Author: Rights and Limits

From the point of view of the authors, this policy sometimes seems unfair. When the editor has the freedom to choose the best material for his magazine, the author should also have the right to increase the chances of publication by sending his work to as many places as possible.

Delay in publication

Sometimes editors hold on to articles for months and eventually reject them. This wastes the author's valuable time, and their work remains unpublished for a long time. Many authors wait for months or years just to submit their work to a magazine, but if it is finally rejected, their options are limited.

Different readerships

Every magazine has its own readership. If a work is published in many places, it can be beneficial for the author as his work reaches more and more readers. It has also been observed that different magazines focus on dif-

ferent topics so that the author's work can reach the right readers on different platforms.

Author's rights

Just as the editor has the freedom to choose the best works for his magazine, similarly the writer should also have the freedom to send his work wherever he wants. If the editor has the right to reject the work at any time, then the writer should also have the right to get more opportunities by sending his work to different platforms.

Changing rules in the digital age

In today's digital age, where there are plenty of blogs, online magazines, and social media platforms, this debate has taken on a new form. While earlier writers had to struggle to get published in print magazines, now they can publish their works on various online platforms.

New possibilities of online

publishing

Now many online magazines and blogs are providing platforms where writers can publish their works without any restrictions. This is not only giving more freedom to the writers but also increasing the availability of content for the readers.

Content syndication and cross-platform publishing

Many big media houses and digital publishing groups are now adopting the process of "content syndication," where the same content is republished on different platforms. This gives writers an opportunity to reach more viewership and readers.

The need for solutions and balance

The solution to this debate lies in establishing a balance. Some possible solutions can be found by taking into account the concerns of both sides:

Transparent editorial policy

If a journal wishes to publish only original works, it should clearly state this rule and also specify the time frame in which a decision will be made. This will give authors clarity on how long they should keep their work in reserve for a journal.

Allow shared publishing.

Some journals may adopt a policy that they will accept works that have previously reached a limited readership but not a wider one. This may be a middle ground, protecting the interests of both authors and editors.

Editing and republishing facilities

If a work has been published earlier, it should be allowed to be republished after slightly modifying and updating it. This will not only maintain the exclusivity of the magazines but will also give the authors an opportunity to present their works again.

In the world of literature and

publishing, the contribution of both authors and editors is important. On one hand, editors have the responsibility to provide new and original content to their readers, and on the other hand, the rights of authors must also be protected. If a healthy and transparent system is developed, it will be beneficial for both parties. Ultimately, the purpose of literature is to spread ideas and expand knowledge, and there should be no room for unnecessary restrictions in it.

Is a perfect balance possible?

The answer to this question is not easy, but this debate can encourage transparency and dialogue in the literary community. If journals respect authors' rights and authors understand and act in accordance with editorial policies, a better publishing culture can be created.

Author is an Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, radio and TV panelist.

Startups - Igniting India's Innovation Revolution

BY PIYUSH GOYAL

After the spectacular success of the Mahakumbh at Prayagraj Sangam, it is time to celebrate the confluence of three streams of development - innovation, job creation and entrepreneurship, carrying forward Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of vikas (development) and virasat (heritage) for a vibrant India.

The three streams will converge at the Startup Mahakumbh on April 3. Like the awe-inspiring spiritual gathering at Prayagraj, the Startup Mahakumbh is being organized on a grand and global scale.

The event will bring together over 3,000 startups, 1,000+ investors, 500+ speakers, and more than 15,000 delegates and business visitors from across the globe, with participation from over 50 countries. It will be a powerful platform for startups to explore collaborations, mentorship, funding, and access to new markets. With dedicated masterclasses, knowledge sessions, and networking forums,

the event will not only fuel innovation but also inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs to launch their own ventures.

Also, at this year's Mahakumbh, a three-tier investor-led jury process would select 150 finalists in what will be India's largest private sector funded Grand Innovation Challenge with a Rs. 50 crore prize pool.

Innovation - Be it the game of chess or the concept of 'zero' in ancient India, or the UPI, Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan of today, innovation has always been a part of the Indian DNA. New ideas, innovative goods and services achieved through healthy research and development will propel India in its mission to become a developed country by 2047. Appropriately, the theme of the event is Startup India @2047.

PM Modi's Vision - In his independence day speech in 2015, PM Modi articulated his vision of making India a global startup hub and transforming the country into a nation of job creators.

Shortly thereafter, the transformational Startup India initiative was launched.

This initiative of PM Modi has unleashed a groundswell of youthful energy that is transforming India's entrepreneurial landscape. The number of registered startups has risen exponentially from just about 500 in 2016 to about 1.7 lakh now. These ventures are spread across more than 55 sectors including Fin-tech, Deep-tech, Ed-tech, Nano-tech, Bio-tech, Space-tech, Agri-tech and Health-tech, helping India emerge as a cradle of major technology-driven entrepreneurship.

The Government is also actively taking initiatives to support funding of startups. In last year's budget, our Government abolished the Angel Tax, a move that was applauded by new entrepreneurs. This year, the budget launched a new Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds.

Jobs & Solutions - Government registered startups have created 17.69 lakh direct jobs as on Jan 31,

2025. In addition, they are providing cutting-edge solutions to real-world challenges. Revolutionizing breast cancer detection with non-invasive, AI-powered thermal imaging technology; simplifying rural trading by connecting farmers directly with buyers; providing affordable and efficient payment gateway solutions; creating impressive eco-friendly products that convert waste to wealth; securing our cyberspace are only a few among many examples of the challenges addressed by our startups for India and the world.

Our startups are also very nimble and quick footed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, startups that had developed strong analytical solutions, drones, telecommunications platforms, etc. quickly pivoted to leverage these technologies for contact tracing, quarantine monitoring, and developing dashboards for war rooms. They had a key role in producing critical equipment such as PPE kits, ventilators, and sample collection products and services.

Entrepreneurial Culture - The Startup India initiative has significantly transformed the entrepreneurial mindset across the country. Where once families sought comfort of a secured job, today they encourage and take deep pride in the entrepreneurial adventures of their young family members. This is driving our energetic youth to become job creators instead of job-seekers.

Ventures born out of such energy are scaling new heights. The number of Indian unicorns having more than a billion dollar valuation has jumped from less than 10 before 2016 to more than 110 today, with a collective valuation of over USD 385 billion, according to industry estimates.

Support in Public Procurement - Our Government has made a special provision of preferential treatment for eligible startups in the Government e Marketplace (GeM). This platform gives sellers transparent and corruption-free access to procurement by Government departments, thereby help-

ing entrepreneurs bypass complex procedures and entrenched vested interests that operated before its launch.

GeM has enabled 29,780 government registered startups fulfil 4,09,155 orders worth Rs 37,460 crore with the help of democratised market access, easy product listing and relaxation in the requirements of turnover and experience in public procurement.

Beacons of New Bharat - Today, startups are beacons of hope of New Bharat. The thriving startup ecosystem is transforming the Indian economy to enhance the 'Ease of Living' for our citizens.

The Mahakumbh at Prayagraj showcased India's spiritual grandeur to the world and made our youth proudly embrace our culture, heritage and beliefs. The startup ecosystem built and nurtured by PM Modi is helping the youth embrace the entrepreneurial culture that will make Bharat a global powerhouse of innovation, new technology and new ideas.

Academics vs. Belief: The Path To Wisdom

ER. AMIR GULAM LONE loneamir2057@gmail.com

The pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of belief have long been considered pillars of human progress. Yet, in an era defined by rapid technological advancement and shifting cultural norms, the relationship between academics and belief can often seem contradictory or misunderstood. This article aims to illuminate the complementary nature of these forces, revealing how their balance is essential for true wisdom.

Academics

Academics form the bedrock of intellectual growth. Through study, observation, and analysis, academics equip individuals with the tools to question, discover, and innovate. The sciences, humanities, and arts each contribute uniquely to shaping a comprehensive understanding of the world. They challenge assumptions, foster critical thinking, and inspire exploration.

tion. The academic path, however, is not without limitations. Knowledge, though powerful, can remain sterile if confined to the realm of pure intellect. Facts and theories may illuminate how the world works but can struggle to answer why it matters.

Belief: Belief, whether rooted in spirituality, ethics, or personal convictions, provides an essential anchor for the human experience. It imbues life with purpose and nurtures resilience. Where academics seek evidence and rationality, belief offers trust and meaning. It is belief that gives strength in uncertainty, that allows individuals to navigate challenges with hope and determination. Yet, belief without the discernment of knowledge risks becoming dogmatic, detached from reality or misdirected. Just as a ship without a rudder is at the mercy of the waves, belief unguided by understanding can lead to a perilous drift.

The harmony of intellect and conviction

True wisdom arises at the intersection of academics and belief. When knowledge is complemented by deep conviction, intellect becomes purposeful, and belief becomes enlightened. Consider the great minds of history: philosophers, scientists, and leaders who harnessed their intellect but were equally driven by unwavering beliefs—beliefs that their work served a higher calling or profound truth. This balance allows for the creation of solutions that are not only effective but ethical; progress that is not only innovative but humane.

Avoiding extremes

An overemphasis on academics without belief can lead to cold rationalism—an existence driven by data, devoid of empathy or deeper values. On the other hand, belief devoid of intellectual scrutiny can result in blind faith, where critical questions are dismissed, and progress is stifled. Wisdom lies in harmony: a mind that seeks

to learn endlessly, paired with a heart that believes deeply.

Bringing it together

To cultivate this harmony, one must actively seek both academic learning and personal belief. Engage with diverse knowledge and challenge your perspectives, but also take time for introspection and nurture your guiding values. Ask not just, "What do I know?" but also, "What do I stand for?" By fostering this balance, individuals can navigate life with clarity, making choices that are both informed and meaningful.

Academics and belief are not at odds; they are two sides of the same coin. When combined, they transform knowledge into wisdom and action into purpose. The world needs minds that think and hearts that believe, for only then can society move forward—not just with progress, but with purpose.

The author is a Gold medalist in Environmental Engineering from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)

Empowering Futures: A Framework For Career Guidance And Counselling In J&K Schools



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In a fast-evolving world marked by changing career landscapes, technological advancements, and increasing socio-emotional complexities, the need for robust Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC) in schools has never been more urgent. Particularly in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where lack of access to diverse career information, and limited mentorship contribute to students' career anxiety, a well-structured CGC framework can serve as a transformative tool.

As a Resource Person for Career Guidance and Counselling, I have witnessed firsthand how students in Classes 10 and 12, standing at crucial crossroads, grapple with confusion, pressure, and misinformation. This article lays out a comprehensive framework aimed at empowering these students through informed choices, psychological support, and long-term visioning.

Why Career Guidance and Counselling?

Decision-making at Crossroads: Class 10 and 12 students are required to make critical academic and vocational choices with long-term implications.

Psychological Well-being: In the absence of guidance, students experience high levels of stress, low self-esteem, and fear of failure.

Changing Employment Landscape: Students need updated exposure to emerg-

ing careers.

Local Challenges: Rural students often lack mentors, digital access, and exposure.

Core Objectives of a Career Guidance and Counselling Program

- To provide accurate and updated career information.
- To assess aptitude, interests, values, and personality.
- To address emotional and motivational blocks.
- To enhance decision-making and planning skills.
- To expose students to emerging fields, scholarships, and opportunities.
- To involve parents and teachers as facilitators of the student's journey.

The Framework: A Step-by-Step Model

- Pre-Session Planning: Conduct surveys, prepare resources.
- Student Group Segmentation: Based on class, aspirations, motivation.
- Career Awareness Module: Explain career journeys, introduce stream-subject-career linkage.
- Psychometric Support & Self-Discovery Tools: Use tools to assess aptitude, personality, interests.
- One-on-One Counselling & Group Guidance: Clarify myths, discuss alternatives.
- Parental and Teacher Involvement: Conduct awareness sessions, train teachers.
- Use of Technology & Resources: Introduce portals, provide printed/digital guides.

Post-Session Follow-Up and Mentorship

- Develop Career Tracker Files.
- Provide mentorship and alumni networks.
- Collaborate with NGOs and colleges.
- Set up a school-level Career Cell.

Challenges and Cultural Sensitivities

- Stigma around failure or vocational courses.
- Limited options for girls.
- Over-focus on government jobs.
- Fear of stepping outside the valley.

Conclusion: Building a Culture of Informed Hope

Career Guidance is not just about selecting a stream or profession, it is about building informed hope. We must recognize the unique struggles of Kashmiri youth and walk with them as co-dreamers. A strong CGC framework is the foundation for an empowered, skilled, and emotionally resilient generation.

Author's Note

This framework is inspired by on-ground experiences, psychological principles, and the dynamic needs of our students. It is not a final destination but a living map, open to updates, feedback, and collective wisdom. The writer is an educator and mental health advocate at the Government High School Aripal, Zone Lurgam, Pulwama

A Farewell To A Guiding Light: A Tribute to Mr Ghulam Mohammad Mir's Legacy

KOUSAR AHMAD RATHER kousarrather34@gmail.com

On his retirement, we celebrate the profound impact of our beloved principal, whose dedication and wisdom have shaped the future of Higher Secondary School Nehalpora

On the 29th of March 2025, we gathered with a mix of joy and wistfulness to honour Mr Ghulam Mohammad Mir, our esteemed principal of Higher Secondary School Nehalpora, as he embarked on a well-deserved retirement. For years, he has been the guiding light of our institution, a beacon of wisdom, and a true mentor to countless students and faculty members.

Mr Mir's tenure has been marked by unwavering dedication and a profound commitment to the pursuit of knowledge. He fostered an environment where learning thrived, where curiosity was encouraged, and where every student was valued. His leadership was not just about administering; it was about nurturing potential, instilling values, and shaping the future.

He approached his responsibilities with quiet dignity, gentle strength, and a deep sense of fairness. His door was

always open, his advice always insightful, and his support always unwavering. Whether it was a student seeking guidance, a teacher needing encouragement, or a parent seeking counsel, Mr. Mir was always there, ready to lend a helping hand.

His vision for HSS Nehalpora extended beyond academic excellence. He understood the importance of holistic development, encouraging students to explore their talents in sports, arts, and other extracurricular activities. He believed in fostering a sense of community, where everyone felt a sense of belonging.

Under his leadership, HSS Nehalpora has seen significant progress, both in terms of academic achievements and infrastructural development. He has left an indelible mark on the institution, a legacy that will continue to inspire generations to come.

As he steps into this new chapter of his life, we wish him all the happiness and fulfillment he deserves. May his retirement be filled with cherished moments, new adventures, and the satisfaction of knowing that he has made a profound difference in the lives of so many.

Mr Ghulam Mohammad Mir,

your dedication, wisdom, and kindness will be deeply missed. You have been more than just a principal; you have been a role model, a mentor, and a friend. We thank you for your years of service and wish you a long and happy retirement.

Your dedication and leadership have left an indelible mark on our school. May your retirement be as extraordinary as the legacy you leave behind.

Mr Ghulam Mohammad Mir, your vision and guidance have shaped countless lives. We are deeply grateful for your service and wish you a fulfilling retirement. The impact of your leadership will resonate for years to come. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our students and community. You have created a learning environment that has allowed so many to flourish. Your leadership will be sorely missed. Your years of service have built a strong foundation, and we thank you for your commitment to excellence.

May your retirement be filled with joy, relaxation, and the pursuit of all your passions. Wishing you a retirement filled with new adventures and the time to enjoy all the things you love. As you embark on this new chapter, may you find peace, happiness, and fulfil-

ment in all your endeavours. May your days be filled with laughter, love, and cherished moments. May your retirement be as rewarding and fulfilling as your distinguished career.

Mr Ghulam Mohammad Mir, thank you for your unwavering dedication and the positive influence you've had on us all. We express our sincere gratitude for your years of service and the wisdom you've shared. Your leadership has been invaluable, and we are deeply thankful for your contributions.

A Tribute in Verse
Oh, Principal Mir, your deeds we hold,

A mentor's tale, in stories told.

A friend, a guide, a noble soul,

May peace embrace and make you whole.

With grateful hearts, we bid adieu,

A long, bright future waits for you.

In every breeze, your spirit's call,

A legend's echo, standing tall.

With sincere gratitude,
Students and Staff Members

The writer is a teacher at Higher Secondary School (HSS) Nehalpora, Pattan

Javed Rana lauds efforts of stakeholders in achieving target under 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: Jammu and Kashmir has successfully met its ambitious goal of planting 150 lakh seedlings under 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign.

Lauding the achievement of Forest, Ecology and Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana credited it to the collective efforts of government agencies, village-level institutions, local people and other stakeholders.

"The aim of the campaign is to contain land degradation and promote restoration of degraded land for a sustainable future," he said adding that the campaign aligns with the quest

for sustainable development. He commended the efforts of Forest department in leading the campaign saying that tree plantation raises awareness about environmental sustainability and the importance of afforestation.

"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" was launched across the country to encourage the people to plant a tree as a mark of love, respect and honour for their mothers and pledge to protect trees and earth.

The Forest Department led the campaign for planting 1,50,18,803 saplings in J&K, involving the students, NGOs, security forces, government departments, citizens and



nature lovers.

Under the initiative, the Forest department and its wings planted 91 lakh plants on forest and non-forest lands. Besides, it distributed 59 lakh plants among various stakeholders for planting at various locations throughout the Union Territory.

More than one lakh plants were planted by Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and about two lakh plants were distributed on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Javed Rana complimented various sections of the society for their contribution in achieving the target. He said that each stakeholder has made substantial contributions to this initia-

tive, demonstrating a collective commitment towards sustainability, green cover enhancement and fostering public engagement.

"It was heartening to see how enthusiastically people embraced the campaign, reinforcing the importance of environmental stewardship for the well-being of future generations. We would not have been able to achieve the target without the active participation of the local people" he said.

During the campaign, the forest department sensitised the locals about the importance of tree plantation in combating the climate change and enhancing greenery.

IUST Celebrates Almond Festival

HT News Network

Awantipora, April 3: The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) celebrated the week-long Almond Festival, bringing together the university officials, faculty, and staff in a spirit of camaraderie and appreciation for nature. The event organized by Dean of Students was attended by Vice Chancellor Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Dean Academic Affairs Prof. A. H. Moon, Registrar Prof. Abdul Wahid Makhdoom, Finance Officer Mr. Sameer Wazir, Dean of Students Dr. Asifa Baba along with Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, faculty members, and administrative staff.



The gathering provided an opportunity for the university community to engage in meaningful conversations in an informal and refreshing setting, promoting a sense of unity and shared purpose. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo emphasized the importance of such events in nurtur-

ing an appreciation for the natural environment and invigorating collective vision and enthusiasm. He remarked that these gatherings allow us to reconnect with our surroundings, rejuvenate our energies, and strengthen our commitment towards academic and institutional growth.

The festival served as a platform for interaction beyond formal engagements, enabling participants to reflect on the beauty of the season while reinforcing a collaborative spirit among university members. The festival that will continue for a week aims to encourage a shared sense of appreciation for nature and a renewed commitment to fostering an enriching academic and cultural environment at IUST.

90 Bn CRPF Organizes Free Medical camp at Bejebehara

Farooq Rather.

Anantnag: April 03, 2025: 90 BN CRPF. In its ongoing efforts to strengthen community relations and provide essential services to the local populace under a Civic Action programme under the aegis of CRPF Madadgar organized a free medical camps at vill Rakh Moman, Bijbehara, distt Anantnag. These camps aimed to offer medical assistance to underprivileged sections of society, especially in remote areas where access to healthcare is limited. This camp was set up under the guidance of senior CRPF officers and provided a range of healthcare services including general health check-ups, consultations with specialist doctors, and free distribution of medicines. Sh. Kamleendra Pratap Singh (Commandant 90Bn), Sh. BRH Prasad (Second in Command 90 Bn), Dr Suraj Kumar Singh, 90 Bn CRPF), Sh. Ranjeet Kumar Maurya (Dy Commandant, 90 Bn), Sh. Rohit Ranjan (Asstt. Commandant), Sheikh Muddasir Ahmad Faruqi (SDPO, Bijbehara) and Mohammad Farooq (Head Master), Govt Middle School, Rakh Moman) also were present. A team of experienced CRPF and civil doctors and paramedics were present to ensure the highest quality of care. The event saw an overwhelming response from all age group of the society. Total 225 people of different age have been benefitted during the medical camp from village Rakh Moman and Moman Danji. "The CRPF is committed to serving the people, not just by maintaining peace and security but also by contributing to the well-being of communities. This medical camp is one of the many initiatives taken BY CRPF to support local communities."

Tempo Catches Fire in Tangmarg; No Injuries Reported

HT News Network

Baramull, April 3, : A Tempo Traveler bearing registration number PB01A-0198 was completely destroyed after a fire broke out due to an apparent wiring short circuit.

The incident occurred in Tangmarg, but fortunately, no casualties were reported as the driver and the tourists on board managed to escape unharmed.

Fire and Emergency Services personnel responded swiftly, preventing the flames from spreading to nearby areas. Their prompt action ensured that the situation remained under control.

Police have registered a case in this regard.

HDFC Bank adjudged 'India's Best for HNW' at Euromoney Private Banking Awards 2025

HT News Network

Srinagar: HDFC Bank was adjudged as 'India's Best for HNW' at the Euromoney Private Banking Awards 2025. The awards were organized by Euromoney magazine.

On its website, Euromoney writes, "HDFC Bank continues to build momentum in India's high net-worth (HNW) segment via its flagship Imperia programme, a premium service that offers personalised wealth solutions. At the heart of this offering is a model where wealth relationship managers collaborate closely with bank specialists to deliver tailored investment and banking support." Euromoney further writes, "In the digital space, the bank recently introduced the SmartWealth platform, an investment service aimed at expanding coverage to the mass-affluent segment. This mobile platform provides clients with the ability to track portfolios, execute investments and

access goal-based investment recommendations. By integrating gamification and an intuitive user experience, SmartWealth democratizes access to the bank's research capabilities, empowering a broader client base to make informed financial decisions independently."

Rakesh K Singh, Group Head - Investment Banking, Private Banking, International Banking, Digital Ecosystems and BaaS, HDFC Bank said, "We are honoured to have been recognised as India's Best for HNW. We believe that we are in the business of preserving client's wealth, ensuring its growth and retaining their trust. Our strong brand as well as experience of over two and a half decades resonates trust in our customers. We have strengthened this trust through our robust processes and diligent research methodology. From Ultra-HNW and Super-Affluent to Mass-Affluent segment, our relationship managers are equipped to understand

& meet the unique and ever-changing investment needs and goals of our clients. This year, we increased our focus in the mass affluent category with the introduction of our digital platform - SmartWealth, which is equipped with an unassisted journey to invest through need-based recommendation basis risk appetite. This ensures every client gets to experience a specialised and curated investment service, especially the digitally savvy generation.

Euromoney's Private Banking Awards is the distinguished annual awards programme of the worldwide private banking and wealth management industry. For over 20 years, the programme has recognised the private banks of distinction across key categories. This includes high to ultra-high net worth, family office services, succession planning, digital services, discretionary portfolio management, sustainability and more. (KNT)

Jammu Police Crack Greater Kailash Gold Heist, Arrest Mastermind

Jammu, Apr 3, : Jammu Police have cracked the sensational Greater Kailash gold shop robbery case, arresting the culprits and recovering the stolen

gold. The daylight heist at Anand Jewelers in Greater Kailash, Fowara Chowk, had created fear among the Sawarnkar community and sent shockwaves across the city. However, with a focused and professional approach, police managed to solve the case, ensuring justice was delivered. The incident occurred on February 1, during broad daylight when

two armed robbers barged into Anand Jewelers. At the time, only the woman shop owner was present inside. The assailants, wielding a deadly Toka blade, placed it against her throat, instilling fear before looting gold, cash, and a mobile phone. The criminals then fled the scene, leaving the victim traumatized and the entire area in panic.

GOVERNMENT DEGREE COLLEGE MATTAN OTTTCN OF THE PRINCIPAL MATTAN ANANTNAG (J&K)

No: -DCIW25/ NIT /1339-43

Dated:-03-04-25

Notice Inviting Tender

On behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of the IJT of J&K, Sealed tenders are invited from experienced and reputed Canteen contractors/individuals of the UT of J&K for running College Canteen of Govt. Degree College Mattan for the session 2025-26. The tenders must reach to the office of the undersigned within 10 days from the date of publication of this tender notice i.e. upto 12.04.2025. The tender should be accompanied with CDR of 3000/- (Three Thousand Only) each duly pledged in favour of Principal Govt. Degree College Mattan. Incomplete tenders shall be rejected.

The list of items to be served in the canteen, along with the terms and conditions of the contract, is available in the office of the undersigned and on the college's official website at www.gdcmttan.ac.in.

The decision of the Principal in all matters shall be final. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason thereof.

DIPK-50/25
Date: Apr 3 2025

PRINCIPAL GDC
MATTAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

MY NAME HAS BEEN WRITTEN WRONG AS MUSKAAN BANO D/O BASHIR AHMAD MIR ...WHERE MY CORRECT NAME IS RUTBA JAN D/O BASHIR AHMAD MIR ... WHICH ACCORDING TO MY SCHOOL CERTIFICATES NEED TO BE CORRECTED...IF ANYBODY IS HAVING OBJECTIONS REGARDING THIS...HE/SHE MAY FILE HIS/HER OBJECTION IN THE OFFICE OF AADHAR AUTHORITIES WITHIN SEVEN DAYS FROM THE PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE AFTER THE SEVENTH DAY OF NOTICE...NO OBJECTION WILL BE ENTERTAINED

NAME : RUTBA JAN
D/O : BASHIR AHMAD MIR
R/O : SIRAJPORA , MAGAM , HANDWARA , KUPWARA , J&K

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my registration certificate (RC) of My vehicle bearing registration no JKO1A J-2745. Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She contact with (ARTO) srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained .

Name.....ABDUL HAMID
R/O ..TENGPORA BAKSHIPORA NOORBAGH SRINAGAR
Distt ...SRINAGER

PUBLIC NOTICE

My son's name has been wrongly written as AATIF FAYAZ BHAT S/O FAYAZ AHMAD BHAT in school record while his correct name is AATIF AHMAD BHAT S/O FAYAZ AHMAD BHAT which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection he / she may file his/ her objection in the office of GOVT PRIMARY SCHOOL NAGIBHAT within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

NameFAYAZ AHMAD BHAT
F/O AATIF AHMAD BHAT
R/O... NAGIBHAT

PUBLIC NOTICE

My son's name has been wrongly written as MOMIN MANZOOR DAR S/O MANZOOR AHMAD DAR in my Adhaar card while my correct name is MUYEEN MANZOOR S/O MANZOOR AHMAD DAR which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of BDO WAGOORA / Tehsil office WAGOORA within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

NAME.....MANZOOR AHMAD DAR
F./O MUYEEN MANZOOR. DAR
R/O NAJIBHAT
BLOCK WAGOORA

ازنیابت پہلگام

درخواست منجانب انجمن احمد ملک ولد غلام نبی ملک ساکن بڑو کوٹ پہلگام بحصول نیگل سیر سرٹفکٹ استیبار مراد انجمن بڑو کوٹ پہلگام

اشتہار بمراد انجمن

معاملہ الصد مرتبہ عنوان سائل انجمن احمد ملک نے ایک درخواست دفتر حراستین پیش کی ہے سائل کا والد غلام نبی ملک مورثہ 2018/01/29 کو فوت ہوا ہے اور متوفی کے ورثان مندرجہ ذیل افراد ہیں

سروہ بیوی متوفی 72 سال
انجمن احمد پیر 53 سرکاری ملازم
ریاض احمد پیر 50
نگہت سائین دختر 54 سال

اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی وارث نہیں ہے زیر کاروائی سرٹفکٹ الزام کرنے میں کسی کو کوئی عذر ہو تو وہ سات یوم کے اندر دفتر حراستین پیش کرے بعد از معاد کوئی عذر قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار پہلگام

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as NASIR AHMAD MIR S/O GHULAM NABI MIR in my adhaar card while my correct name is NISAR AHMAD MIR S/O GHULAM NABI MIR which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/ her objection in the office of Aadhar authorities within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

Name.....NISAR AHMAD MIR
S/O GHULAM NABI MIR
R/O ...DOLIPORA

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SUBAYAH NISAR D/O NISAR AHMAD MIR R/O DOLIPORA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 27/01/2021 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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer Wagoora)/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of AALIYA JAN D/O REYAZ AHMAD GANIE R/O SALOOSA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 05/02/2016 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate
1st Class KREERI

Sakeena Itoo conducts extensive tour of Shangus-Anantnag East Constituency Inspects SDH Shangus, PHC Nowgam, reviews healthcare facilities

HT News Network

ANANTNAG, APRIL 03: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today conducted an extensive tour of Shangus-Anantnag East Constituency to assess the public healthcare facilities and educational infrastructure in the area. MLA Shangus-Anantnag-East, Rey-az Ahmad Khan; MLA Anantnag-West, Abdul Majeed Bhat (Larmi); Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Syed Fakhruddin Hamid; Director Health Services Kashmir, Director School Education Kashmir, Director Social Welfare Kashmir besides other district officers also accompa-

nied the Minister during the visit. While inspecting the Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Shangus, Sakeena took stock of medical services, availability of essential supplies and overall patient care at the facility. She engaged with the hospital staff and enquired about the overall healthcare delivery at the hospital. She assured them that necessary interventions would be made for infrastructural and other advanced medical care services at the facility to provide world-class healthcare facilities to the public. The Minister also interacted with the patients and had on-spot feedback from them about the services being provided at the hospital.



Later, the Minister visited the Primary Health Centre (PHC) Nowgam, assessing its operational efficiency, availability of medicines as well as

other facilities. Meanwhile, Sakeena Itoo also inspected the Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), Shangus, and took stock of its functioning. She inspected the classrooms, laboratories and other facilities at the institution. She also interacted with the staff and the students. Interacting with the Principal and other staff, Sakeena Itoo stressed on the importance of ensuring a conducive learning environment in line with the NEP-2020. She assured them all possible support from the government for necessary infrastructure upgrades at the institution. Sakeena Itoo also engaged with large number of locals at Shangus, assessing their issues and con-

cerns. Addressing the large gathering, Sakeena Itoo reiterated that the government is strengthening grassroots governance and ensuring that essential services reach every household and section of the society. "Healthcare and education are among the top priorities of Omar led government. We are committed towards strengthening these sectors for a brighter future of Jammu and Kashmir", she stated. She assured the people of Shangus that their concerns regarding healthcare and public welfare will be addressed on priority. MLA Shangus-Anantnag-East, Rey-az Ahmad Khan also addressed the gathering.

DC Pulwama reviews NEET (UG) Examination arrangements

HT News Network

Pulwama, April 03: Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom chaired a preliminary meeting today regarding NEET (UG) Examination arrangements at the Administrative Complex Pulwama. The meeting focused on assessing logistical support, security arrangements and infrastructure readiness to ensure the seamless and fair conduct of the examination across designated centres in the district. During the session, the representatives from designated NEET centres briefed the chair on their preparations, including infrastructural and logistical arrangements, surveillance measures and secu-



city protocols. The Deputy Commissioner directed strict adherence to all prescribed protocols and guidelines to ensure transparency and fairness in the

examination process. The Police Department provided an overview of security arrangements, informing that special Police Nodal Officers will

be designated for each centre to oversee security measures. In addition, proper escort services will be deployed to ensure the safe and secure transportation of examination materials. The DC stressed the importance of maintaining strict law and order in and around the examination centres. Dr. Qayoom further instructed the concerned departments to facilitate seamless transportation, uninterrupted power supply and other essential services on the day of the examination. Emphasizing the need for inter-departmental coordination, the Deputy Commissioner called for a collaborative effort to create a conducive atmosphere for candidates appearing in the NEET examination.

DM Baramulla chairs 17th District Level NCORD, NMBA meeting

HT News Network

Baramulla, April 03: District Magistrate Baramulla, Minga Sherpa today chaired the 17th District Level NCORD/NMBA meeting reviewing ongoing efforts to combat drug abuse and strengthen enforcement, awareness, and rehabilitation initiatives. During the meeting, the DM issued several key directions to concerned officers. He emphasized the need to conduct awareness programs, training sessions for resource persons, and seminars to educate communities about the dangers of substance abuse. These initiatives will help enhance grassroots-level intervention and ensure effective implementation of anti-drug measures. To engage youth in positive activities, the DM directed the organization of inter-youth club tournaments and district-level sports events to discourage drug abuse through sports and recreation. Additionally, he called for plantation drives at the village level, promoting environmental consciousness alongside anti-drug



awareness. A significant focus was placed on identifying and monitoring 20 hotspots in Baramulla and 6 in Sopore, where targeted interventions will be implemented to curb drug-related activities. Furthermore, rehabilitation programs will be strengthened to support affected individuals and help them reintegrate into society. The DM urged all stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, civil society, and educational institutions, to work collectively in tackling

drug abuse. He emphasized the need for sustained efforts, community participation, and strict enforcement measures to eliminate the menace of drugs and safeguard the future of the youth in Baramulla. Principal Government Medical College Baramulla, Prof. Majid Jahangir, Additional Superintendent of Police Baramulla, Syed Yasir Qadri, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Pattan, Gulzar Ahmad, District Social Welfare Officer, Sajad Ahmad Bhat besides other concerned officers were also present during the meeting.

IUST Students Shine as Top Finalists in IIT Bombay's e-Yantra Innovation Challenge

HT News Network

Awantipora, April 3: The student team from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) secures a spot among the top 12 finalists in the prestigious e-Yantra Innovation Challenge, organized by IIT Bombay. Out of 20 teams from Jammu and Kashmir, IUST is the only university from the region to qualify for the finals, reaffirming its commitment to innovation and technological excellence. Additionally, IUST served as the regional coordinating institute, hosting workshops and activities to prepare students for the competition. The finals showcased IUST's technical competence on a national stage. Vice Chancellor Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo commended the team, stating that this milestone reflects students' hard work and dedication. He further said that IUST remains committed to nurturing creativity and problem-solving skills at the highest level. Congratulating the students, IUST e-yantra coordinator, Mr. Syed Mujtiba Hussain said that such achievements help IUST to strengthen its reputation as a hub of research and technological innovation, committed to empowering students for national and international excellence.

Police organizes Thana Diwas/ Lok Darbar to discuss New Criminal Laws in Handwara

HT News Network

HANDWARA, April 03: Police in Handwara conducted Thana Diwas/Lok Darbar across all police establishments in the police district as part of its ongoing public outreach initiative. The program aimed to raise awareness and facilitate discussions on the new criminal laws, with a special focus on victim-centric and citizen-centric provisions. The event witnessed active participation from community members, religious leaders, local representatives, and senior citizens, included Masjid Imams, Nambardars, respected elders, and other prominent citizens. During the address, Police officers highlighted the key aspects of the new criminal laws, emphasizing how they prioritize justice for victims, safeguard citizens' rights, and ensure a more efficient and transparent legal process. Also urged the public to familiarize themselves with these laws and assured them that the police department is committed to fair implementation and public welfare. Police reaffirmed its commitment to "public safety, victim support, and citizen-friendly policing, urging continued cooperation from the community in maintaining peace and justice.

Two Extortionists, Posing As Police Officers, Apprehended in Tral

HT News Network

Pulwama, Apr 3 : The police in South Kashmir's Tral have arrested two individuals who were allegedly posing as law enforcement officers to extort money from the general public. The arrests were made following a complaint lodged by one Muhammad Altaf Ganai, a resident of Nageenpora, Tral. The accused have been identified as Bashir Jamal Sheikh from Saimooh, and Shafi Nabi Dar from Dadsara. According to officials, the duo was targeting unsuspecting citizens, falsely claiming police author-



ity and demanding money under various pretexts. Police sources revealed that several victims had come forward, reporting instances where they were coerced into paying sums of money under the fear of legal action. Taking cognizance of the matter, Tral police registered an FIR under relevant legal provisions and swiftly apprehended the sus-

pects. Both individuals are currently in custody and face multiple charges related to impersonation, fraud, and extortion. Meanwhile, police have urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to law enforcement authorities. "Legitimate officers never demand money from the public under any circumstances. If anyone encounters such fraudulent behavior, they should immediately inform the nearest police station or reach out through the official helpline," a police spokesperson said. [KNT]

District Admin Ganderbal accords farewell to outgoing officers

HT News Network

GANDERBAL, APRIL 03: The District Administration Ganderbal, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Jatin Kishore, today organized a heartfelt farewell ceremony to honor the services of Additional Deputy Commissioner Gulzar Ahmad; SDM Kangan, Nuzhat Qureshi, and Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Mohammad Altaf on their transfer. The event was attended by senior officials, including the Chief Planning Officer, ACD, ACP, and other dignitaries. Addressing the gathering, Deputy Commissioner Jatin Kishore lauded the contributions of the outgoing officers, acknowledging their dedication, profes-

sionalism, and commitment to public service. He extended his best wishes for their future assignments and expressed confidence in their continued excellence. In his farewell speech, ADC Gulzar Ahmad expressed gratitude to the district administration for its support during his tenure. SDM Kangan and ACR also shared their experiences, appreciating the cooperation and teamwork that contributed to their achievements. Officials present at the event also shared their reflections, praising the leadership and dedication of the outgoing officers. The ceremony concluded with a token of appreciation being presented to the officers as a mark of gratitude for their invaluable service to the district.

DC Kupwara chairs NCORD meeting to review measures for curbing drug menace

HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 3: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan today chaired the meeting of the District Level Committee of Narco Coordination (NCORD) to review the measures put in place for curbing drug abuse in the district.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed appraisal from concerned officers regarding the present scenario of drug related occurrences, various issues related to menace of drug addiction, its control and rehabilitation and areas of concern. The Deputy Commissioner meticulously reviewed the implementation of the measures taken and progress achieved to eliminate drug abuse and its peddling in the district. The Deputy Commissioner took feedback from the members of the Committee who presented the latest report related to action taken against drug-addiction and drug trafficking in the District.



The DC also emphasized the Officers including Enforcement agencies for identification and close vigil of entry points, hot spots of drugs, public places and abandoned buildings. She also laid thrust on further intensifying IEC campaigns at Schools and Colleges levels to sensitize students and common masses about ill-effects of drugs. She sought close coordination between Health, Police,

Education and other line departments for consolidated efforts towards eradication of drug menace. The Deputy Commissioner meticulously reviewed the functioning of Drug De-addiction Centre Kupwara and Addiction Treatment Facility Centre (ATFC) Handwara and stressed for upscaling of the therapeutic management and proper counseling of the drug addicts which

can help the addicts to come out of the menace. She also reviewed the progress of providing self employment opportunities to the drug victims who have been recovered so that they can live a dignified life in the society. Nodal Officer for NMBA Campaign, Mudassir Ahmad also spoke and briefed the officers about the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abiyan Campaign which is set to be launched on April 7th in the district. The Deputy Commissioner impressed upon all the concerned departments to ensure their participation in the campaign for mass awareness among the people about ill effects of drugs. She directed the officers to take separate review meeting of their respective subordinate staff and field functionaries for smooth conduct of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Campaign. The meeting was attended by SSP Kupwara, ASP Handwara, CMO, CEO, Medical Superintendent DH Handwara, Assistant Drug controller, Tehsil Dars, besides other concerned Officers.

Kulgam Police seizes 600 litres of illicit kerosene; one accused arrested

■ Farooq Rather.



Kulgam: April 03: In a significant crackdown on illegal activities, Kulgam Police recovered illicit kerosene in the jurisdiction of Police Station DH Pora and arrested the accused person involved in the commission of crime. A special checkpoint was established by the police party led by IC PP Nehama at Pombay near Takiya Gopalpora crossing. During checking one vehicle (Load carrier) bearing registration number UP 19T-6079 was intercepted and after search 03 Barrels filled with 600 litres of illicit kerosene were recovered. The accused person identified as Manzoor Ahmad Itoo son of Ali Mohammad Itoo resident of Pombay, Kulgam involved in the commission of crime has been arrested and the said vehicle was seized. Accordingly, cases vide FIR No. 16/2025 under relevant sections of law have been registered in Police Station DH Pora and investigation is in progress. Preliminary investigation reveals that the accused was selling the Kerosene oil illegally in black market.

Kulgam Police urge the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities or illegal practices they come across. Such information can be crucial in curbing criminal activities and maintaining a safe and secure environment for all.

LMD penalises E-Commerce Platform for Labelling Violations in Jammu

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: On the directive of Controller Legal Metrology J&K Anuradha Gupta, the field staff of Legal Metrology, Consumer Protection Unit, Jammu imposed a penalty of 1.50 lakh on a prominent e-commerce platform operating in the region. The step is a significant move to uphold consumer rights and ensure compliance with packaging regulations. The concerned e-commerce platform has recently expanded its services to Jammu by opening stores, including one in Jammu, primarily offering instant delivery of a wide range of products such as groceries, fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, stationery, bakery items, personal care, baby care, pet care products, snacks, and flowers.

The action was initiated following an inspection by the area Inspector, under the supervision of Assistant Controller Consumer Protection Jammu. During the inspection approximately 1200 packages were seized for failing to meet mandatory labelling requirements as stipulated under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 and the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011.

The main violation includes non-declaration of exact net weight of pre-packaged fruits and vegetables for sale through the e-commerce platform. Upon issuance of a show cause notice, the company acknowledged the offence and promptly submitted application for compounding of the offences which led to imposing a penalty and settling of case at department level on assurance of immediate corrective measures to align with the prescribed labelling norms.

Following the department's intervention, the e-commerce platform has removed the non-compliant products from its physical store shelves for re-labelling and has unlisted the violating items from its online platform to prevent further consumer inconvenience.

Desilting of Bhagwati Nagar Escape Channel starting in next 3 days: I&FC department

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: The Irrigation and Flood Control Department today clarified that the desilting of Escape Channel of the Ranbir canal originating at Bhagwati Nagar is being started in the next 2 to 3 days. Responding to a News about appearing a section of press reporting on poor sanitation, the Department clarified "The Escape Channel besides playing a vital role in protection of MRC structure during flood season also feeds Bhadore Supply channel, Bhadore khul and Seora khul to provide irrigation to 600 Ha of CCA falling in 2 villages viz. Bhadore and Seora which is minor as compared with the total CCA of 38000 Ha of the entire Ranbir canal. As per the past practice, the desilting work of the Escape channel and these khuls is done in the month of April every year as the farmers along these khuls do not allow passing the vehicles through their fields in view of the standing wheat crops and water is supplied to them ending April as per their demand.

Union Secretary, Food & Public Distribution visits J&K Takes review of FCS&CA Dept, FCI

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: Union Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution, Sanjeev Chopra today visited Jammu and reviewed the functioning of Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs and FCI here.

He also assessed the status of implementation of schemes and other reforms across Jammu and Kashmir.

Interacting with the officers of the FCS&CA Department, J&K and FCI, J&K, here, the Union Secretary hailed the efforts made by the department in making the Public Distribution System clean and efficient. He asked the officers to continue these efforts and take follow up actions on suspect beneficiaries, whose details are being shared by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, with States/UTs.

The Union Secretary while advising the Department to share details of savings made, subsequent to implementation of



Optimized Route Plan, also instructed the FCI to make available food grains in different districts as per Route Optimization Plan.

The Union Secretary also reviewed the operations of FCI, J&K region.

While reviewing the wheat procurement in the J&K region, he emphasised that FCI and FCS&CA J&K should make all out efforts to ensure procurement of wheat and try achieve the target fixed by GOI in RMS

2025-26.

Earlier, in his presentation, Commissioner Secretary FCS&CA, Zubair Ahmad presented an overview of the functioning of the department with stress on new initiatives and issues flagged by Central Government.

He informed the Union Secretary that the Department is presently providing free and subsidised food grains to 24.76 lac households, comprising 98.81 lac benefi-

ciaries in J&K. While 67 lac beneficiaries are provided free foodgrains every month under PMGKAY, another 31.75 lac beneficiaries are provided food grains at highly subsidised rate in NPHH group.

He also said that the distribution network across J&K is built around 6622 sale outlets and 6390 such outlets are presently working in an online mode. He added that Aadhaar authentication rate of 95% has been achieved in distribution process by now.

He also informed that after achieving 100% Aadhaar seeding, the Department has completed e-KYC of 87% beneficiaries under NFSA and 75% of beneficiaries in Non Priority Households group. He also apprised the Union Secretary that the department has started implementation of Route Optimization Plan in eight districts of J&K on trial basis and complete implementation across all the districts would commence in the month of June, 2025.

The Union Secretary was also apprised about the status of implementation of SMART PDS in J&K.

DC Kupwara chairs training session under Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 3: District Administration Kupwara today organized a training session for Resource Persons and other stakeholders to ensure smooth and vibrant conduct of Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan. The training session was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ms. Ayushi Sudan.

The training session aimed to equip participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure the smooth and vibrant implementation of the initiative across the district. The Nasha Mukht campaign which shall be launched on 7th April in the district will



be held across Educational Institutions, Panchayat Level and ULBs to combat drug abuse and promote a drug-free society. Speaking at the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of collective efforts in achieving the goal of a "Nasha Mukht" (Drug-Free) Jammu and Kashmir. She underscored that the cam-

paign is not just about eradicating drug abuse but also about building awareness, fostering resilience within communities, and providing rehabilitation and support for those affected. She impressed upon the officers of different departments to work in close coordination with concerted efforts to ensure smooth conduct of the

Nasha Mukht J&K campaign across the district.

Nodal Officer NMBA, Mudasir Ahmad also spoke and provided awareness to the participants about their role and responsibility in conducting awareness camps down to block, ULB and panchayat level.

The training session covered various aspects of the initiative, including awareness generation, community mobilization, identification of at-risk individuals, and the role of various departments in the rehabilitation process. Participants were also briefed on the procedures for coordinating awareness programs and ensuring timely support for individuals in need of intervention.

ADDC Shopian kick-starts sale of Hi-Tech vegetable seedlings

■ HT News Network

Shopian, April, 03: Additional District Development Commissioner, Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone in presence of Chief Agriculture Officer, Shopian, Farooq Ahmed and other officials of the Agriculture department kick-started the sale of Hi-Tech vegetable seedlings at Shopian, today. The sale of seedlings including Cauliflower, Cabbage, broccoli and other vegetables was held at Green House, Mini Secretariat, organised by the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shopian.

The sale witnessed an overwhelming response of vegetable growers from Shopian and adjacent areas.

Interacting with the growers, ADDC said that the department is committed to promote the Kitchen Garden endeavour and aims at providing quality vegetable seedlings to the growers for better economic turnover.

He impressed upon the department to promote kitchen gardening in such a way that growers get more and more benefits.

On the occasion, it was emphasised that vegetable cultivation has a good potential of employment generation and the unemployed youth of the district with the help of modern technology and suitable agro-climatic conditions for vegetable cultivation in the Valley can take it to new heights.

MLA Sonawari, DC Bandipora visit Semi Ring Road Project site Shadipora to address public concerns

■ HT News Network

Bandipora April 03: In a significant step towards addressing public grievances and expediting infrastructural development, Member of Legislative Assembly for Sonawari Constituency of Bandipora District Hilal Akbar Lone, along with Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, today visited under construction semi Ring Road project site Shadipora sumbal. The visit was aimed to assess the progress of the project, address concerns raised by local residents, and ensure timely completion of the project. During the visit, the MLA and Deputy Commissioner interacted with the locals to understand their grievances regarding land acquisition, compensation, and road connectivity. The MLA emphasized the importance of the project in enhancing transportation, reducing traffic congestion, and boosting economic activities in the area.



He assured the public that their concerns would be addressed in coordination with NHA and other concerned departments. Qadri, while reviewing the progress of the project, emphasized the adherence to the deadlines while maintaining quality standards. He highlighted the administration's commitment to resolve any pending issues in a transparent and time-bound manner.

Drug de-addiction awareness programs held in Shopian schools

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, APRIL 03: A Mega drug de-addiction awareness programme on Thursday was organised by School Education Department District Shopian at Govt Boys Higher Secondary School Shopian besides various other schools of the District.

On the occasion, Chief Education Officer Shopian Bashir Ahmad Malla, Principal BHSS Shopian other officers and officials of Department, and a large number of students participated in the important awareness programme. The speakers emphasized on the ill effects of drug abuse and highlighted the need of taking immediate preventive and remedial measures for combating and eradicating the menace of drug addiction and other social evils in the district.

The organisers said that the main aim of the programme was to spread awareness amongst the student community to take

necessary steps for curbing the rising drug menace. CEO Shopian, who was the chief guest on the occasion, advised the students not to indulge in drug abuse and other social evils and instead be a role model in the field of education, sports and other activities.

Highlighting the harmful effects of drugs, he said that it starts merely as an amusement but ends up becoming addiction. The young generation is the most-affected section of drug addiction that needs to be eradicated completely from the society, he said seeking cooperation of all stakeholders.

CEO further said that the Shopian administration would lend a helping hand to anyone who was feeling stressed and ensure that youth instead engage in academic, co-curricular and sports activities. Principal BHSS Shopian, Mohd Ashraf Allaie and other speakers also spoke on the occasion and appealed to the students to stay away from the tobacco and other harmful drugs.

Omar-Led Govt implementing poll promises at unprecedented speed: Rattan Lal Gupta

■ HT News Network

Kathua April 3, Advocate Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), asserted that the Omar Abdullah-led government is swiftly delivering on its election promises, ensuring that commitments made to the people during the Assembly elections are being honored in record time. According to News Service, Associated News Bureau, ANB, he was speaking at a one-day convention organized by Anoop Gupta, Youth Leader and District President Kathua Urban JKYN. At the beginning of the meeting, Anoop Gupta apprised the senior party functionaries about the hardships being faced by the youth of District Kathua due to the hollow policies of the earlier government. He emphasized the urgent need for concrete measures to address unemployment and ensure better opportunities for the younger generation. Rattan Lal Gupta highlighted the landmark welfare measures introduced by the NC government within the first five months of its tenure. These



include free travel for women in J&K Government buses, 200 free electricity units for AAY households, 10 kg of free ration per person, per month AAY family, waiver of stamp duty for property transfers among blood relatives, and an increase in marriage assistance from 50,000 to 75,000. The Provincial President emphasized that these initiatives reflect the NC's unwavering commitment to the welfare of J&K's citizens, particularly the youth and marginalized sections. He said that the Omar government has initiated the process towards providing one lakh jobs, as promised in the party manifesto, by streamlining recruitment

procedures, ensuring transparency and prioritizing merit-based selections.

Tejinder Pal Singh Aman, Provincial President of the Youth National Conference (YNC), underscored the NC's unwavering commitment to youth empowerment. He emphasized the party's continuous efforts in advocating for equal opportunities in political, educational, economic, and social spheres. He called upon the youth to unite and secure strong representation in the upcoming elections, reinforcing the party's dedication to their progress and leadership in governance.

Vijay Lochan, Chairman of NC's SC Cell, reaffirmed the party's dedication to fulfilling its promises, particularly those aimed at marginalized communities. He highlighted several landmark initiatives that have significantly benefited vulnerable sections across the region. He emphasized that the NC has always prioritized the welfare and empowerment of the underprivileged, and these measures further solidify the party's commitment to their upliftment.

Doda celebrates Milestone in Education and Sustainability District gets a green boost; Delivers 5000 recycled school desks

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 03: In a groundbreaking achievement, Doda district has successfully delivered 5,000 recycled school desks to government schools across the region, marking a significant milestone in education and sustainability. This innovative initiative, implemented by Indian Pollution Control Association (IPCA), funded by SBI Cards and Payment Services Limited under their flagship CSR initiative MASS (Mantra for Advance Sustainable Solution) and supported by the District Administration Doda, showcases a pioneering approach to environmental conservation and resource utilization. The culmination ceremony, held here in Community Hall, was attended by DDC Chairman Dhananter Singh Kotwal; Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh; DDC Vice-Chairperson Sangeeta Bhagat; Founder & Director, IPCA Ashish Jain and Secretary IPCA Ajay Garg and other Officers of District Administration. The event featured a lamp-lighting ceremony, the inspection of a stall showcasing a skit on



"Plastic Waste Management," and the release of a booklet titled "Shaping the Future of Waste Management." In his address, DDC Chairman Dhananter Singh Kotwal highlighted the need for better infrastructure in schools, calling this initiative a significant step

towards enhancing the education system in Doda. Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh praised the contributions of all stakeholders and emphasized the importance of these steps in enhancing the education system in the district. "A student's bright future is our aim," he added.

The Director IPCA, while promising further collaboration, stressed on the need for plastic waste segregation and reuse to prevent soil and water pollution.

The flagship MASS Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative has successfully transformed low-value plastic waste into high-impact recycled products, promoting sustainable waste management practices and improving educational infrastructure.

Certificates were distributed to acknowledge the efforts of contributors and stakeholders, and a cultural program was held to celebrate this achievement.

In a pledge to further environmental conservation, attendees vowed to promote waste segregation, recycling, reducing, and making the environment free of pollution.

This initiative serves as a model for innovative approaches to education and sustainability, and its impact is expected to be felt for years to come. Certificates were distributed to acknowledge the efforts of contributors and stakeholders, and a cultural program was held to celebrate this achievement.

Tawi, Ravi Canals being recharged on April 7-2025

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: The Irrigation Department has geared up to release waters in Tawi and Ravi Canals on the coming Monday, a departmental notification stated today. "It is notified for the information of the public in general and farmers in particular that the water in Tawi and Ravi Canals of this department shall be released from 07.04.2025. The Executive Engineers of RCCU/Division, Kathua/RCC Lower Division Hiranagar besides TCC Division, Jammu are directed to plan their activities to ensure completion of all the ongoing works well before the recharging of the canals", it stated.

The Executive Engineer concerned have been asked to constitute teams in their respective jurisdiction which shall monitor flow in canals/distributaries system during release of water as it reaches their jurisdiction to ensure its safe passage right up to tail and to avoid any untoward incident.

GCOE Jammu organises awareness rally themed "Stay away from drugs"

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: NCORD Committee of Government College of Education, in collaboration with Social Reform Charitable Trust on Thursday organised a Rally-cum awareness campaign themed "Stay away from drugs." The College Principal Dr.(Prof.) Jyoti Parihar led the event in the presence of esteemed speaker S.K Jain, State Yoga Commissioner and his team.

The event was initiated with a warm and engaging welcome speech by Convener NCORD Committee, Prof. Sunanda Rani.

In his address, the State Yoga Commissioner captivated the audience with a heartfelt poem highlighting the dangers of drug addiction and emphasizing the importance of saying no to drugs. His other team members also shed light on this sensitive issue.

To enhance the impact of the event, the participants solemnly pledged to "Say No To Drugs". To add depth to the event, a rally was organised and flagged off by Prof. Sunanda Rani in presence of Dr. Shalini Sharma, Prof. Roopa Kumari, Dr. Ambica Kumari along with the students to raise awareness about drug abuse. A formal vote of thanks was extended by Dr. Ambica Kumari.

The event concluded with the distribution of refreshment to the students, generously sponsored by Dabur India Limited. The event was a great success witnessing active participation from both students and faculty members, including Prof. Satish Kumar Sharma, Dr. Rajinder Kour, Dr. Sushma Bala and Prof. Sarita Dogra. Overall the event concluded on a positive note, leaving a lasting impact on all the participants.

Girls' Sports competitions held in Doda to promote Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 03: In line with the directives of the District Development Commissioner, Department of Social Welfare, in collaboration with the Department of Youth Services and Sports organized girls' sports competitions under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative.

The event, held in two zones—Bhaderwah and Bhallessa—aimed to promote the empowerment of girls through sports and encourage their active participation in physical activities.

A total of 90 girls from different institutions and panchayats of twin zones participated in the competitions. Zone Bhaderwah hosted Kabaddi, while Zone Bhallessa organized a Volleyball competition, allowing young athletes to showcase their skills, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

The initiative emphasized the importance of providing equal opportunities to girls in both education and sports, fostering confidence and leadership qualities among them.

The event not only celebrated the sporting talent of young girls but also served as a platform to raise awareness about gender equality and the importance of empowering the girl child.

Encouraging participation in sports plays a crucial role in breaking stereotypes and inspiring young girls to pursue their dreams fearlessly. The initiative was widely appreciated by the participants and community members, reinforcing the message of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and the role of sports in shaping a progressive society.

DC inaugurates Senior Citizens Club/Old Age Care Home at Kishtwar

HT News Network



KISHTWAR, APRIL 03: In a significant move to bolster welfare services for the elderly, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today inaugurated the Senior Citizens Club/Old Age Care Home here in the heart of Kishtwar town.

The inauguration ceremony witnessed a large gathering of Prominent and Senior citizens of the District, who expressed their heartfelt appreciation for this thoughtful initiative. The event was marked by warmth, gratitude, and a strong sense of community. The DC highlighted the importance of such facilities in ensuring the well-being and dignity of the elderly. He acknowledged the invaluable contributions of senior citizens to society and emphasized the administration's commitment to their welfare. The gathering lauded this initiative, describing it as a "gift to the senior citizens" by the DC, designed to provide them with a comfortable and supportive environment.

The newly inaugurated facility is equipped with modern amenities, including sports facilities, medical care services, and homestay accommodations, all aimed at promoting a healthy, active, and fulfilling lifestyle for senior citizens.

The DC urged the community to actively participate in making this initiative a success, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and support for the elderly. The event was attended by DSWO Zubair Ahmed; CMO Dr Rajinder Kumar; MS DH Kishtwar Dr. Yudhvir Singh Kotwal; TSWO Rajesh Kumar, Senior Citizens, Prominent Citizens, besides staff from Social Welfare Department and other concerned.

DC reviews implementation of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in Poonch District

HT News Network

POONCH, APRIL 3: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal today chaired a meeting to evaluate the implementation of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in the district. The meeting aimed to streamline the installation of solar rooftop systems and enhance public awareness regarding the scheme's benefits.

At the outset, the Executive Engineer JPDC delivered an in-depth PowerPoint presentation detailing the objectives and advantages of the scheme. It was reported that out of 570 applications received, 61 solar units have already been installed, with 48 cases approved for loan schemes by banks. The Deputy Commissioner directed the Executive Engineer to ensure the installation of 100th solar units by April 12, 2025. He urged vendors to commence the installation of Solar Rooftop Systems (SRTs) for sanc-



tioned applicants methodically.

The DC emphasized the need for public awareness and participation. He instructed the Executive Engineer to actively involve stakeholders and enlighten them about the numerous

benefits and incentives associated with the solar energy scheme.

This initiative represents a strategic effort to empower consumers and facilitate their access to the government's solar energy program, reinforcing the com-

mitment of the administration to sustainable energy solutions.

The Deputy Commissioner underscored the pivotal role of collaborative efforts in achieving maximum outreach and ensuring the successful execution of the scheme across Poonch district. The Deputy Commissioner directed the Executive Engineer to ensure the installation of 100th solar units by April 12, 2025. He urged vendors to commence the installation of Solar Rooftop Systems (SRTs) for sanctioned applicants methodically.

The DC emphasized the need for public awareness and participation. He instructed the Executive Engineer to actively involve stakeholders and enlighten them about the numerous benefits and incentives associated with the solar energy scheme.

This initiative represents a strategic effort to empower consumers and facilitate their access to the government's solar energy program.

Status of Registrations on JK Samadhan Portal 2.0 reviewed in Kishtwar

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, MARCH 03: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Pawan Kotwal today chaired a meeting to review the progress of registrations on the JK Samadhan Portal 2.0.

The meeting focused on evaluating the current status of registrations, identifying gaps, and implementing measures to enhance the process. The ADC emphasized the critical role of the portal in streamlining grievances redressal mechanism, promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in addressing public complaints. He directed the line departments to maximize outreach and ensure active public participation in the registration process.

He specifically instructed Supervisors and Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to register left out citizens within the next five days to achieve the



targets set by the government.

Furthermore, the ADC directed the Election Registration Officers (AEROs) to closely monitor the registration progress and submit daily reports to ensure timely completion of the process.

Stressing the importance of public awareness, the ADC urged all stakeholders to actively sensitize citizens about the JK Samadhan Portal, highlighting the benefits of timely grievance registration and resolution through the platform.

The meeting was attended by ACR Idrees Lone, Tehsildars/AEROs, Deputy CEO, Supervisors, BLOs, and other concerned officials.

DIPR artists promote anti-drug campaign among GDC Sidhra Students

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 03: A Nukkad Natak cum Cultural Awareness Programme on "Nasha Mukht Bharat" (Say No to Drugs) campaign was organised by the Cultural Unit, Department of Information & Public Relations here at Government Degree College Sidhra. The initiative aimed to spread awareness about the detrimental effects of drug abuse and encourage a drug-free society.

Artists of the Cultural Unit presented theme-based songs and Nukkad Natak depicting real-life consequences of substance abuse and the importance of rehabilitation and awareness. The performers skillfully highlighted how drug addiction impacts individuals, families and society at large.

Speaking on the occasion, the College Principal Dr G.S. Rakwal shared his views and also made the students and the audience aware of the topic. He appreciated the Department of Information and Public Relations for organising such a meaningful event to raise awareness among the future of the nation.

Among others, officials of different departments, staff members and students witnessed the programme. The programme was conducted under the directions of Joint Director Information Jammu Atul Gupta and supervisor of Cultural Office Mukesh Kumar Sharma.

Anti Drug Campaign: Reasi Admin hosts orientation workshop for Resource Persons

HT News Network

REASI, APRIL 03: A one-day orientation programme to train resource persons for conducting Information, Education and Communication Campaign against drug abuse was organized today by the District Administration Reasi here under the aegis of Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Malik. Additional Deputy Commissioner Rakesh

Kumar chaired the workshop organised to impart training to Resource persons for Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan. The IEC campaign forms part of the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction initiated under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. District Social Welfare Officer Sachin Sharma; District Information Officer Ujwal Sambyal and officials from other stakeholder departments attended the orientation program.



At the outset, the District Social Welfare Officer delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the importance of equipping resource persons with proper training and knowledge for effective implementation. A detailed deliberation was held on strengthening efforts to curb drug abuse and work collectively towards making Reasi a drug free district.

Addressing the participants, the ADC emphasized the necessity of a coordinated, multi-

departmental effort to implement the IEC campaign at the grassroots level. He urged resource persons to ensure the successful execution of the campaign across the district. Resource persons were sensitized on the importance of executing the campaign in mission mode by conducting awareness drives, drug-free pledge ceremonies and organizing events at the Block and Panchayat levels to promote drug abuse prevention across all Panchayats in the district.

India, Thailand elevate ties to Strategic Partnership after talks between PM Modi, Thai PM Shinawatra

AGENCIES
BANGKOK/NEW DELHI, APR 3 (UND)

India and Thailand agreed to elevate the bilateral ties to a Strategic Partnership, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Thai PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra at the Government House in Bangkok today.

PM Modi was also accorded a ceremonial welcome ahead of the talks.

MEA spokesperson said in posts on X: "India-Thailand Adding new vigour & dynamism to our longstanding friendship."

"PM @narendramodi held a productive meeting



with PM @ingshin of Thailand at the Government House today in Bangkok.

"Both leaders held extensive discussions on various areas of bilateral cooperation & agreed to elevate India-Thailand relations to a Strategic Partnership."

"A special ceremonial

welcome with Guard of Honour.

"PM @ingshin of Thailand warmly received PM @narendramodi at the Government House in Bangkok today.

"The two leaders will have wide-ranging discussions for charting the way for future India-Thailand

partnership."

PM Modi was also presented with the Holy Scriptures: "World Tipitaka: Sajjhaya Phonetic Edition" by the Prime Minister of Thailand, Paetongtarn Shinawatra.

It was brought out by the Thai government in 2016 to commemorate King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) and Queen Sirikit of Thailand's 70-year reign.

It is a compilation of Lord Buddha's teachings with accurate pronunciation of the Pali Tipitaka's over nine million syllables. Thai Govt has presented it as a "Gift of Peace and Wisdom for All" from the Kingdom of Thailand to more than 30 countries.

India's Northeast emerging as connectivity hub for BIMSTEC: EAM at Bangkok ministerial meet

AGENCIES
BANGKOK/NEW DELHI, APR 3 (UND)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said today that India's North-Eastern region is emerging as a connectivity hub for the BIMSTEC, with its network of roads, railways, waterways, grids and pipelines.

Addressing the 20th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, the EAM said that completion of the Trilateral Highway will connect India's North East all the way to the Pacific Ocean, and become a veritable game-changer.

He said that India is aware of its special responsibility in regard to BIMSTEC, as it has the longest coastline in the Bay of Bengal, of almost 6500km. India also shares borders with five of the BIMSTEC members, and connects most of them, and also provides much of the interface between the Indian Sub-continent and ASEAN.

"We are conscious that our cooperation and facilitation are an essential pre-requisite for the smooth flow of goods, services and people in this larger geography.

Keeping this geo-strategic factor in mind, we have devoted increasing energies and attention to the strengthening of BIMSTEC in the last decade. We also



believe that cooperation is an integrated outlook, not one subject to cherry picking."

Jaishankar said that BIMSTEC represents the trifecta of three of India's crucial initiatives: the Act East policy, the Neighbourhood First approach and the MAHA-SAGAR outlook, and is also on the pathway to its Indo-Pacific commitment.

"That our bilateral relationships with individual BIMSTEC members are also strong and steadily growing is a further source of strength," the EAM said, adding, "At the end of the day, what we seek to create is a strong structural framework with a substantial relevance to our people."

For this, he said that the bloc should have a real commitment towards enhancing the growth of BIMSTEC. He also said that members should deepen collaboration through power grid connections, digital infrastructure,

business activities, maritime and land transport, blue economy or health, food and energy security, and creation of Centres of Excellence. He said BIMSTEC is a shared endeavour with an ambitious purpose and said their activities on culture and arts, on sports, in addressing the hopes of the youth, in exploring the potential of space, or in sharing best practices of diplomacy are important. "There is much we can gain through interaction and sharing."

He said the BIMSTEC nations need to deal effectively with cyber security, counter-terrorism, human trafficking, illegal narcotics trade and other associated activities.

"The reality is that the world is moving to an era of self-help. Every region needs to look out for itself, whether it is in food, fuel and fertilizer supply, vaccines or speedy disaster response. We are seeing that unfold before our very eyes. Times have

indeed changed. Shorter supply chains and immediate neighbors have a salience much more than before," he added.

"The nations around and proximate to the Bay of Bengal have both common interests and shared concerns. Some of it emanates from our history, where other priorities overrode the well-being of this region. The results are there for all of us to see even today. Whether it is connectivity, trade, investment or services between the BIMSTEC members, we are performing below our real potential. Now, if we are to change that, both the past and the future are our friends. One are the traditions, habits and an ethos that can be made contemporary now. The other gives us new tools and fresh possibilities, some that can even help leapfrog our capabilities."

He added that the Summit meeting of the leaders tomorrow would set the stage for the emergence of the Bay of Bengal as a vibrant and energetic region. BIMSTEC - the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation - comprises seven countries of the Bay of Bengal region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

PM Modi welcomed by enthusiastic Indian community in Bangkok, watches Thai Ramayana performance

AGENCIES
BANGKOK/NEW DELHI, APR 3 (UND)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received an exuberant welcome from the Indian community in Bangkok today, and also witnessed a performance of the Thai Ramayana, called Ramakien.

In posts on X, the PM said:

"Grateful for the warm welcome by the Indian community in Bangkok.

"India and Thailand share a deep-rooted cultural bond that continues to flourish through our people.

Heartening to see this connection reflected so strongly here."

On witnessing the Thai Ramayana, he posted:

"A cultural connect like no other!

"Witnessed a captivat-



ing performance of the Thai Ramayana, Ramakien. It was a truly enriching experience that beautifully showcased the shared cultural and civilizational ties between India and Thailand.

"The Ramayana truly continues to connect hearts and traditions across so many parts of Asia."

On landing in Bangkok, the PM said that he is looking forward to participating in the upcoming official

engagements, including the bilateral meetings with the Thai leadership and with other leaders of the BIMSTEC.

"Landed in Bangkok, Thailand.

"Looking forward to participating in the upcoming official engagements and strengthening the bonds of cooperation between India and Thailand."

At the hotel in Bangkok, where he is staying, the Prime Minister was

warmly welcomed by the Indian diaspora, and greeted with a lively Garba dance performance outside his hotel.

PM Modi also engaged with the Indian diaspora crowd and posed for photographs.

He later watched the Ramakien performance in the hotel, along with NSA Ajit Doval, and other senior officials.

The MEA spokesperson posted on X:

"An exuberant welcome in Bangkok!

"PM @narendramodi received a warm reception by the Indian community upon his arrival in Bangkok.

"PM also witnessed a beautiful Thai Ramayana performance-Ramakien.

"This reflects the strong India-Thailand cultural & people to people connect."

SC upholds decision nullifying Bengal SSC teacher recruitment

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 3 (UND)

The Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the cancellation of the selection process for school teachers in West Bengal, ruling that even untainted candidates could not retain their appointments as it violated Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution.

Delivering its judgment on the State of West Bengal's challenge to the Calcutta High Court's ruling, the Supreme Court declared the recruitment process of the State Level Selection Test-2016 (SLST) in West Bengal government-sponsored and aided schools null and void.

The Bench, comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar, observed, "Manipulations and frauds on a large scale coupled with attempts to cover up have tainted the selection process beyond repair... the credibility and legitimacy of the selection are denied."

The Court upheld the Calcutta High Court's decision, reaffirming that appointments made through the tainted recruitment process could not be allowed to stand. The Bench stated, "We find no valid ground or reason to interfere with the directions of the High Court that services of tainted candidates must be terminated, and they will be required to refund any salaries they had received since the appointments are a result of fraud, which amounts to cheating. Therefore, we see no justification to alter this direction."

Previously, the Court had classified the catego-

ries of the parties involved in matters related to the appointments of approximately 25,000 school teachers by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC). The State of West Bengal had challenged the Calcutta High Court's ruling, which declared the SLST-2016 recruitment process null and void and ordered the cancellation of all appointments made through it.

On July 16, 2024, a Bench comprising then-Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala, and Justice Manoj Misra had ordered, "No counter affidavit has been filed till date. In the event that any of the Respondents seek to file their counters, they shall do so.... If no counter is filed, the right to file a counter affidavit shall stand closed, and the proceedings shall be conducted on the basis of the record as it stands."

Over 23 lakh candidates had appeared for the SLST-2016 for 24,640 vacant posts. However, a total of 25,753 appointment letters were issued, exceeding the declared vacancies. The Division Bench, formed by the Chief Justice of the High Court on a direction from the Supreme Court, extensively heard numerous petitions and appeals regarding the selection of candidates for appointments in classes 9, 10, 11, and 12 and Group C and D staffers through SLST-2016.

The Calcutta High Court had ordered the termination of multiple teaching and non-teaching staff members after identifying irregularities in the selection process. The High

Court had directed, "All appointments granted in the selection processes involved, being violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India, are declared null and void and cancelled... OMR sheets available in the three hard disks, if not already done or such portion not done, must be uploaded on the website of SSC forthwith and made available to the public for viewing... CBI will undertake further investigation in respect of all the four cases. CBI will interrogate all persons who had received appointments beyond the panel, after the expiry of the panel, and after submitting blank OMR sheets. If necessary, CBI shall undertake custodial interrogation in respect of each of them... SSC shall undertake a fresh selection process for the declared vacancies involved in these selection processes preferably within a fortnight from the date of declaration of results of the ensuing elections."

The Supreme Court further held that even candidates not specifically found to be tainted could not retain their appointments, as the process itself violated Articles 14 and 16.

However, while their services would be terminated, they would not be required to refund the salaries they had received. The Bench clarified that its observations and findings would have no bearing on ongoing criminal proceedings.

The appeals filed by the State of West Bengal concerning the CBI investigation directive will be taken up for hearing on April 4, 2025.

Sena voted against Waqf Bill to oppose govt "intention to grab land" : Udhav

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, APR 3 (UND)

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday said his party voted against the Waqf bill in Parliament to oppose the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Alliance government's "ploy" to "grab land and give it to its industrialist friends".

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai after the Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha, Sena president Thackeray said, "The concern shown by the BJP and its allies during the discussion on the Waqf Amendment Bill would put Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah to shame."

"The BJP has won a third term at the Centre and things are going well, yet it is raking up Hindu-Muslim issues and if the aim is to appease Muslims, then who left Hindutva - BJP or us who opposed the bill? How can they blame us?" he remarked.

He said, "On one hand BJP leaders, including Union home minister Amit Shah, made speeches appealing Muslims while advocating the Bill, while on the other they targeted those who voted against the Bill."

"We voted against it to oppose the hypocrisy of BJP and their intentions of land grabbing through this Bill," he said adding, "The BJP should remove colour green from its party flag if it dislikes Muslims."

President Trump announces 26 pc 'discounted reciprocal tariff' on India

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, APR 3 (UND)

US President Donald Trump announced a 26% "discounted reciprocal tariff" on Indian imports, while describing the tariffs imposed by India as "very very tough".

While discussing India, during his address at the White House Rose Garden, President Trump said that New Delhi was "very, very tough", and added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "is a great friend" of his.

"India, very, very tough.



Very, very tough. The Prime Minister just left. He's a great friend of mine, but I said, "You are a friend of mine, but you are not treating us right," he said.

He said that India charges 52 per cent tariffs on US.

"They charge us 52 per cent. You have to under-

stand, we charge them almost nothing for years and years and decades, and it was only seven years ago, when I came in, that we started with China," he said.

The reciprocal tariff will be effective from April 9, according to a statement from the White House.

"This is Liberation Day, a long-awaited moment. 2nd April 2025 will forever be remembered as the day American industry was reborn, the day America's destiny was reclaimed, and the day that we began to make America wealthy again. We are going to make it wealthy, good, and wealthy," President Trump said.

The announcement of reciprocal tariffs comes as India and the US are negotiating a mutually beneficial Bilateral Trade Agreement with the first tranche expected to be ready by the fall of 2025.

Sonia slams Waqf Amendment Bill as 'brazen assault on Constitution'

AGENCIES
DELHI, APR 3 (UND)

Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday slammed the passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha, describing it as a "brazen assault on the Constitution."

With the bill now scheduled for discussion in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, Gandhi condemned the government's actions, accusing the BJP of using it as part of a "broader strategy to keep society in a state of permanent polarization."

"The bill was in effect bulldozed through," the Rajya Sabha MP said.

Moreover, she also stated that the 'One Nation, One Election' Bill represents another attack on the Constitution, and reaffirmed her party's strong opposition to the proposed legisla-

tion. While accusing the BJP of "aggressively attacking the Congress-ruled states, Sonia Gandhi called upon the party Members of Parliament to "respond with equal vigor, highlighting the failures and mismanagement in BJP-led states".

AI can identify patients at risk of serious arrhythmia, prevent sudden death

AGENCIES LONDON

Artificial intelligence (AI) can help scientists identify patients at risk of a serious arrhythmia that is capable of triggering cardiac arrest and sudden death.

As part of a new study to be published in European Heart Journal, a network of artificial neurons imitating the human brain was developed by researchers from Inserm, Paris Cite University and the Paris public hospitals group (AP-HP), in collaboration with their colleagues in the US.

During the analysis of data from over 240 000 ambulatory electrocardiograms, this algorithm identified patients at risk of a serious arrhythmia that was capable of triggering cardiac arrest within the following 2 weeks in over 70 per cent of cases. Each year, sudden cardiac death is responsible



for over 5 million deaths worldwide.

AI could help to improve the anticipation of arrhythmias - unexplained heart rhythm disorders which, if severe, can cause fatal cardiac arrest - according to the new study.

As part of this study, a network of artificial neurons was developed by a team of engineers from the company Cardiologs (Philips group) in collaboration with the universities of Paris Cite and Harvard.

What this algorithm does is imitate the functions of the human brain in order to improve the prevention of cardiac sudden death.

The researchers analysed several million hours of heartbeats thanks to data from 240 000 ambulatory electrocardiograms collected in six countries (USA, France, UK, South Africa, India and Czechia).

Thanks to artificial intelligence, the researchers were able to identify new weak signals that herald the risk of arrhythmia.

They were particularly interested in the time needed to electrically stimulate and relax the heart ventricles during a complete cycle of cardiac contraction and relaxation.

"By analysing their electrical signal for 24 hours, we realised that we could identify the subjects susceptible of developing a serious heart arrhythmia within the next two weeks. If left untreated, this type of arrhythmia can progress towards a fatal cardiac arrest", explained Dr Laurent Fiorina, researcher at the Paris Cardiovascular Research Centre (PARCC) (Inserm/Paris Cite University).

While the artificial neural network is still in the evaluation phase, it showed itself in this study to be capable of detecting at-risk patients in 70 per cent of cases, and no-risk patients in 99.9 per cent of cases.

Study decodes who actually needs statin medication to lower cholesterol

AGENCIES NEW YORK

A new study in the US aims to determine the best method to screen and evaluate patients who are at risk of developing coronary heart disease and which patients would benefit from taking a statin medication to lower cholesterol.

A new approach by researchers at Intermountain Health in Salt Lake City to determining risk and selecting a statin is the use of the coronary artery calcium (CAC) score which is determined by taking a low-radiation dose image of the heart using computed tomography (CT) to look for calcium deposits in plaques in the heart's coronary arteries.

"Our study is now fully enrolled with over 5,600 patients, and in this abstract for the American College of Cardiology, we wanted to look at baseline



characteristics and differences in statin prescribing recommendations," said Jeffrey L. Anderson MD, principal investigator of the study and distinguished clinical and cardiovascular research physician at Intermountain Health.

"The question is: Can we do a better job in selecting people who need a statin for primary coronary risk reduction by

using the coronary artery calcium score, rather than just putting coronary risk factors into an equation - that is, is it more effective to use direct imaging evidence of plaque burden or a risk probability. That's what we're aiming to find out," he said.

The new study was presented at the American College of Cardiology's Annual Scientific Sessions meeting in Chicago on Sat-

urday. The results of scoring by their assigned risk assessment tool were sent in letters to their personal physicians, including whether a statin was recommended based on a high-risk score.

Patients in the two groups in the study were found to have very similar baseline characteristics. However, researchers found that the rate of statin medication recommendations were different.

The study is expected to conclude in early 2026, at which time a comparison of outcomes, including deaths, heart attacks, strokes, and revascularisations during up to 7 years, and an average of over 4 years, of follow-up will be made.

This is especially important considering that statins entail costs and can have side effects, including muscle aches and an increased risk of diabetes.

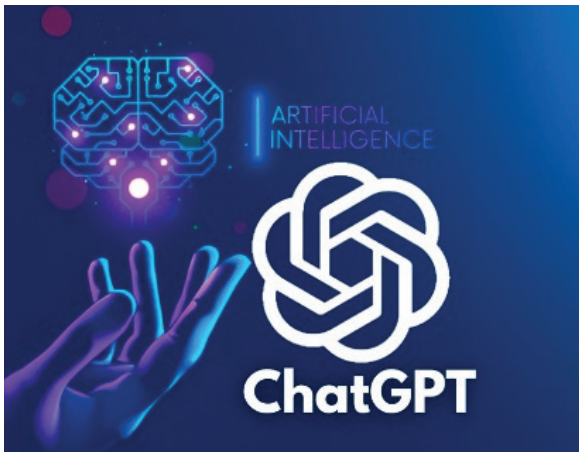
ChatGPT can be used in sensory evaluation of foods, specifically brownies: Study

AGENCIES NEW YORK

ChatGPT can be used in the sensory evaluation of foods, specifically brownies, according to a study, which offers insights that could streamline development of new products, and possibly enhance recipes.

Researchers from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the US looked at 15 different brownie recipes, ranging from standard ingredient lists to unusual combinations, including mealworm powder and fish oil. Study author Damir Torrico, assistant professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, provided ChatGPT with recipe formulas, and asked the AI to describe sensory characteristics of each brownie, including taste, texture, and overall enjoyment.

Torrico then categorised the themes of ChatGPT's responses to deter-



mine if they were positive, negative or neutral.

"Sometimes, relying on human testers can slow down the process, especially when multiple product prototypes need to be evaluated simultaneously. Sensory panels require time and careful coordination, and in some cases, certain ingredients may not be food-grade, making them unsuitable for tasting," said Torrico in the study published in the journal Foods.

That is why large language models such as ChatGPT are being considered for sensory evaluation. It is possible to create models that can replicate certain human responses. Surprisingly, ChatGPT's responses were overwhelmingly positive, even for recipes that included unusual ingredients.

This positivity aligns with the psychological phenomenon scientists call "hedonic asymmetry".

"Hedonic asymmetry" is the idea that people (and apparently AI) tend to describe things that are beneficial to them in more positive terms. Food serves a role in keeping us full and giving us energy, Torrico explained, causing humans to respond to food in a positive manner. In ChatGPT's attempt to act human, it seemed to display this behaviour. "ChatGPT was trying to always see the good side of things," Torrico said.

"Using AI can give general insights of what products can be considered for further testing, and what products shouldn't be put through that long process," Torrico said. "I could see ChatGPT being developed for sensory evaluation to help the industry."

Looking ahead, he plans to refine the experiment, training ChatGPT to respond with a vocabulary that is similar to a human descriptive panel.

Antidepressants linked to substantial increase in sudden cardiac death risk: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Researchers on Sunday showed that compared with the general population with no history of antidepressant (AD) use, individuals with a history of AD use have an increased risk of sudden cardiac death (SCD), which varies based on age and time of exposure.

The causes in people under the age of 39 are often a thickening of the heart muscle or an electrical problem with the heart. In older people, SCD is more likely to be caused by a narrowing of the blood vessels that supply the heart.

Previous research has shown that patients with psychiatric disorders have an increased all-cause mortality as well as double the risk of sudden cardiac death across all age groups.

However, the impact of antidepressant exposure on SCD risk has so far been



unclear.

In new research presented at 'EHRA 2025', a scientific congress of the European Society of Cardiology, researchers now show that there is a link.

"Exposure time to antidepressants was associated with a higher risk of sudden cardiac death, and linked to how long the person had been exposed to antidepressants," said study co-author Dr Jasmin Mujkanovic, Rigshospitalet Hjertercentret, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Those exposed for 6 years or more were at even more increased risk

than those exposed for 1 to 5 years, when compared with people unexposed to antidepressants in the general population, Mujkanovic added.

In individuals aged 30-39 years, compared with the unexposed general population, those with 1 to 5 years of antidepressant exposure were around three times more likely to suffer sudden cardiac death. This risk increased to five times higher for those with six or more years of AD exposure.

In individuals aged 50-59 years, compared

with the unexposed general population, those exposed to antidepressants for 1 to 5 years saw their risk of sudden cardiac death doubled, while individuals exposed to antidepressants for 6 or more years had four times the risk of sudden cardiac death.

The differences in risk associated with varying periods of antidepressant exposure decreased in older groups. In individuals aged 70-79 years compared to the unexposed general population, those with 1-5 years AD exposure had a 1.83 or 83 per cent times increased risk, whereas those with 6 years or more exposure had a 2.2 times increased risk of SCD.

In individuals aged 40-79 years, the SCD incidence rate ratio was significantly higher among persons with 6 or more years of exposure to AD compared to persons with 1-5 years of exposure, the study showed.

Study links atrial fibrillation with high risk of dementia

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

A new study showed on Sunday that presence of atrial fibrillation (AF) increases the risk of future dementia by 21 per cent in patients diagnosed with AF under 70 and the risk of early-onset dementia (diagnosed before age 65 years) by 36 per cent.

The association was stronger in younger adults and was lost in older adults aged 70 years and over, according to new research presented at the 'EHRA 2025', a scientific congress of the European Society of Cardiology, in Austria.

"This is the largest European population-based study evaluating the association between AF and dementia," said the authors that included Dr Julian Rodriguez Garcia of the Electrophysiology and Arrhythmia department of the Bellvitge Univer-



sity Hospital, Barcelona, Spain.

"The association between AF and dementia was stronger in patients under 70 and was maximal for early-onset dementia," Garcia noted.

Atrial fibrillation causes an irregular heartbeat and is relatively common, affecting 2-3 per cent of the general population, with the prevalence rising with age.

In this new study, the

researchers assessed the independent association between AF and incident dementia in Catalonia, Spain.

The study included 2,520,839 individuals with an average follow-up of 13 years. At baseline, 79,820 patients (3.25%) had a recorded diagnosis of AF. In multivariable analyses adjusting for potential confounders, AF was, overall, a statistically significant but weak predic-

tor of dementia, linked with a 4% increased risk of dementia.

However, age was found to significantly affect the association between AF and dementia.

In pre-specified analyses stratified by age, the strength of the association progressively weakened with increasing age: in patients aged 45-50, those with AF were 3.3 times more likely to develop dementia than those without AF. But in patients aged over 70 years, no association was found.

Further analysis showed the association lost statistical significance from 70 years. By contrast, in patients diagnosed with AF before the age of 70, the condition independently increased the risk of dementia by 21 per cent, and an even stronger effect was observed for early-onset dementia, with AF increasing the risk by 36 per cent.

Screen use during bedtime may raise your risk of insomnia by 59pc: Study

AGENCIES NEW DELHI

Love to scroll your phone while in bed? Scientists have found that using a screen in bed can drive your risk of insomnia by 59 per cent.

While sleep is critical to mental and physical health, an increasing number of people are accustomed to using screens in bed. The study by researchers from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health in Norway showed it may be associated with poor sleep.

While social media is seen to be more associated with poorer sleep because of its interactive nature and potential for emotional stimulation, a survey of 45,202 young adults, aged between 18-28 years old, in Norway showed that the type of screen activity did not matter.

"We found no significant differences between social



media and other screen activities, suggesting that screen use itself is the key factor in sleep disruption -- likely due to time displacement, where screen use delays sleep by taking up time that would otherwise be spent resting," said lead author Dr. Gunnhild Johnsen Hjetland, from the Institute.

The study showed that screen use in bed can

reduce sleep time by 24 minutes.

Notably, sleep problems were found to be highly prevalent among students.

This may "have significant implications for mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being", said Hjetland.

The study, published in the journal Frontiers in Psychiatry, screens reduce sleep time because they

displace rest, not because they increase wakefulness: different activities would be expected to affect wakefulness differently.

"If you struggle with sleep and suspect that screen time may be a factor, try to reduce screen use in bed, ideally stopping at least 30-60 minutes before sleep," Hjetland said.

"If you do use screens, consider disabling notifications to minimise disruptions during the night," Hjetland added, while calling for further studies to understand the relationship between screen use and sleep globally.

A recent study by researchers from Pennsylvania State University in the US showed that young adults who do not get the right amount of sleep may be at an increased risk for high blood pressure or hypertension -- a common risk factor for cardiovascular diseases.

Resurgent Mumbai Indians face familiar foe

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, APR 3 (UND)

Mumbai Indians will enter the 16th IPL 2025 match against Lucknow Super Giants on Friday with renewed confidence after a dominant win over Kolkata Knight Riders. Their bowlers bundled KKR out for just 116, and Ryan Rickelton's unbeaten 62, along with Suryakumar Yadav's explosive 27 off nine balls, ensured a comfortable chase.

Debutant Ashwani Kumar impressed with a four-wicket haul, while Deepak Chahar and Trent Boult have been effective in the powerplay. With this resurgence, MI appears well-positioned to challenge LSG despite past head-to-head records.

Lucknow have held an upper hand against Mumbai in the IPL, winning five of their six encounters. However, MI's recent win over Kolkata



has given them a much-needed boost.

Nicholas Pooran has been LSG's standout performer, amassing 189 runs in three matches at a strike rate of 220. His contribution will be crucial as LSG look to bounce back from a heavy eight-wicket defeat to Punjab Kings in their last home game.

Mitchell Marsh and Pooran have carried much of the batting load, and their failure often exposes the team's fragility. Captain Rishabh Pant's poor form remains a concern, while Ayush Badoni and

Abdul Samad have shown promise in the lower order.

In the bowling department, Shardul Thakur has claimed six wickets in three matches but has been expensive, conceding at an economy rate of 10.22. The return of Akash Deep is expected to bolster the attack, while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi will be keen to improve on his underwhelming returns so far.

Mumbai bowling attack, led by Chahar and Boult, has been effective in the powerplay. Debutant

Ashwani impressed with a four-wicket haul in the last game and could play a key role again. Mitchell Santner's experience in the middle overs will be vital, while young pacer Vignesh Puthur may be called upon for breakthroughs.

The Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Stadium pitch is expected to be balanced, offering assistance to both batsmen and bowlers. Dew in the second innings could make chasing a preferred option. The highest successful chase at this venue in IPL history stands at 199.3, achieved by Rajasthan Royals against LSG last season.

With both teams searching for consistency, the contest is set to be a thrilling encounter. While LSG have dominated MI in the past, the visitors' recent resurgence makes them slight favourites heading into the match.

Pakistan women cricket camp resumes at Lahore

AGENCIES

LAHORE, APR 3 (UND)

The training camp of Pakistan women's squad resumes here at the LCCA ground on Thursday after a four-day break for Eid-ul-Fitr.

The camp is being held to prepare the national team for the ICC Women's World Cup qualifying round, which Pakistan is hosting at two venues of Lahore - Gaddafi Stadium and the LCCA ground, the Dawn reported.

The Pakistan team will play a practice match with their Thailand counterparts at the LCCA ground on Friday.

Besides Pakistan and Thailand, other countries featuring in the qualifiers include West Indies, Bangladesh, Ireland and Scotland.

The final will be held at the Gaddafi Stadium on April 19. The finalist teams will qualify for the main round of the World Cup.



Meanwhile, all six squads for the qualifying event have been announced.

Squads:
Pakistan: Fatima Sana (captain), Najiha Alvi, Gull Feroza, Sidra Amin, Omaira Sohail, Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Sadia Iqbal, Nashra Sundhu, Muneeba Ali, Rameen Shamim, Sha-waal Zulfiqar, Syeda Aroob Shah, Natalia Parvaiz, Sidra Nawaz

Bangladesh: Nigar Sultana Joty (captain), Nahida Akter, Ishma Tanjim, Dilara Akter, Sharmin Akter Supta, Sobhana Mostary, Shorna Akter,

Jannatul Ferdus Sumona, Rabeya, Fahima Khatun, Fariha Islam Trisna, Farzana Haque, Shanjida Akther Maghla, Marufa Akter, Ritu Moni

Ireland: Gaby Lewis (captain), Ava Canning, Christina Coulter Reilly, Alana Dalzell, Laura Delany, Sarah Forbes, Amy Hunter, Arlene Kelly, Louise Little, Sophie MacMahon, Jane Maguire, Kia McCartney, Cara Murray, Leah Paul, Orla Prendergast

Scotland: Kathryn Bryce (captain), Chloe Abel, Abbi Aitken-Drummond, Sarah Bryce, Darcey Carter,

Priyanaz Chatterji, Katherine Fraser, Ailsa Lister, Abtaha Maqsood, Megan McColl, Hannah Rainey, Nayma Sheikh, Rachel Slater, Pippa Sproul, Ellen Watson

Thailand: Naruemol Chaiwai (captain), Sunida Chaturongrattana, Nannapat Khoncharoenkai, Suleeporn Laomi, Suwanan Khiaoto, Onnicha Kamchomphu, Natthakan Chantham, Nannaphat Chaihan, Chanida Sutthiruang, Aphisara Suwanchonrathi, Nattaya Boochatham, Chayanisa Phengpaen, Phannita Maya, Rosenanee Kanoh, Thipatcha Putthawong

West Indies: Hayley Matthews (captain), Nattaya Boochatham, Chayanisa Phengpaen, Phannita Maya, Rosenanee Kanoh, Thipatcha Putthawong
West Indies: Hayley Matthews (captain), Nattaya Boochatham, Chayanisa Phengpaen, Phannita Maya, Rosenanee Kanoh, Thipatcha Putthawong

UK set to host 2035 Women's World Cup as only valid bid

AGENCIES

LONDON, APR 3 (UND)

The United Kingdom is set to host the 2035 Women's World Cup as the sole "valid" bidder for the tournament, FIFA president Gianni Infantino said.

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland submitted a joint expression of interest in March to hold the World Cup across the home nations.

Under FIFA rotation rules, the tournament must be in Europe or Africa.

Spain's federation president Rafael Louzan said last week that they were "working on" a joint bid alongside Portugal and Morocco, the BBC reported.



However, the deadline for expressions of interest passed on Monday and Infantino said the UK's bid is the only one received for 2035, while the United States are set to host the 2031 edition.

"Today I can confirm as part of the bidding process that we received one bid for 2031 and one valid bid for 2035," Infantino said at a Uefa congress in Belgrade.

"The 2031 bid is the United States of America and potentially some other Concacaf members and the 2035 bid is from Europe and the home nations.

"So the path is there for the Women's World Cup in 2031 and 2035 to take place in some great nations and further boost the women's football movement."

FA chief executive

Mark Bullingham said, "We are honoured to be the sole bidder for the Fifa Women's World Cup 2035.

"The hard work starts now to put together the best possible bid by the end of the year."

Formal bids for the 2035 World Cup must be submitted this winter, with a vote taking place to confirm the hosts in a FIFA congress in 2026.

Infantino also confirmed that the 2031 Women's World Cup will be a 48-team tournament, up from 32 in 2027.

Should the UK's bid be confirmed, the 2035 Women's World Cup will be the second time a World Cup has been held in the home nations after the 1966 men's tournament in England.

Hockey India Senior Men National Championship set to feature new format in Jhansi

AGENCIES

JHANSI (UP), APR 3 (UND)

The 15th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2025 is set to take place from April 4 to 15 at the Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.

The tournament will be played in the same new Division-based format as the Senior Women National Championship was played in March.

The domestic competition which will now also feature promotion and relegation battles, will see the 30 teams participating, divided into three Divisions: Division A, Division B, and Division C.

The Division A will be the highest Division as the teams will fight for the championship title. Division B will have teams competing for promotion to Division A next season while in Division C, the



teams will fight for a spot in Division B for the next edition.

Division A includes the top 12 teams in India based on their overall performances in the tournament over the years. Defending champions Hockey Association of Odisha and runners-up Hockey Haryana are also part of the Division A.

The teams are split into four pools in Division A:

Pool A: Hockey Association of Odisha, Hockey

Punjab, Hockey Madhya Pradesh

Pool B: Hockey Haryana, Hockey Maharashtra, Hockey Jharkhand

Pool C: Uttar Pradesh Hockey, Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu, Hockey Bengal

Pool D: Manipur Hockey, Hockey Karnataka, Le Puducherry Hockey

Each team will play every opponent once in their respective pools. This will be the only division featuring a knockout stage as the top two teams from

each pool will advance to the Quarterfinals, scheduled for April 12, followed by the Semifinals on April 13, and the Final and 3rd/4th place

match on April 15. The bottom two teams from Division A will be relegated to Division B for the next edition.

In Division B, 10 teams will compete for promotion to Division A. The teams are divided into two pools:

Pool A: Hockey Chandigarh, Goans Hockey, Telangana Hockey, Hockey Andhra Pradesh, Hockey Uttarakhand

Pool B: Delhi Hockey, Hockey Mizoram, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Hockey, Kerala Hockey, Assam Hockey

The top two teams from Division B will earn promotion to Division A for the next season, while the bottom two will be relegated to Division C.

Barcelona books Copa del Rey final against Real Madrid

AGENCIES

MADRID, APR 3 (UND)

FC Barcelona won 1-0 away to Atletico Madrid on Wednesday to secure a Copa del Rey final appearance against Real Madrid.

Ferran Torres' first-half goal sealed Barca's spot in the Cup final in a game where Barca dominated

the first 45 minutes before Atletico took control after the break.

Barca coach Hansi Flick surprised many with his starting lineup, fielding Torres ahead of top scorer Robert Lewandowski, while Fermin Lopez started instead of Gavi, who replaced the injured Dani Olmo.

Atletico coach Diego Simeone made no surprises, with Juan Musso starting in goal, as he has throughout the Cup season.

Following a first leg that produced eight goals, a high-octane start to the game was expected, and Lamine Yamal almost set up Torres in the opening

minute.

Atletico defender Cesar Azpilicueta survived a VAR check after eight minutes following a late studs-up challenge on Raphinha. When Rodrigo De Paul was also booked for a late tackle on the Brazilian, tensions threatened to boil over.

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