

# TOP NEWS OF J&K



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## BRIEFLY

### Theft accused dies in police custody at CHC Batote, inquiry ordered

BANIHAL/JAMMU, Feb 19 (Agencies): A 27-year-old man, who was picked up by police for his alleged involvement in several theft cases, died at a health centre after falling sick in custody in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

Ramban District Magistrate Baseer-ul-Haq Choudhary ordered a magisterial inquiry following the death of Mohd Abid, a resident of Thopal village of Batote, and its completion within a week's time.

Abid, said to be a drug addict, was picked up by police some days back and complained uneasiness in the lockup on Tuesday, the officials said, adding he was shifted to Community Health Centre (CHC), Batote, where he breathed his last.

The body of the deceased is lying at the health centre and will be handed over to his family for last rites after completion of post-mortem and other legal formalities shortly, they said.

The district magistrate appointed Sub-Divisional Magistrate Rizwan Asgar as an inquiry officer to conduct the discrete inquiry into the matter leading to Abid's death.

"The inquiry officer shall look into the cause and circumstances that lead to the death of the individual and shall fix the responsibility of the same. He shall submit his report within a week's time positively from the date of issue of this order," Choudhary said in an order issued on Tuesday evening.

### J&K to receive light rain or snow at many places from tonight till feb 20 : MeT

SRINAGAR, Feb 19 (Agencies): The Meteorological Centre Srinagar has predicted a fresh spell of rain and snowfall across Jammu and Kashmir from February 19-20.

According to the forecast, higher reaches of Chenab Valley and South Kashmir can expect moderate snowfall of 7-12 inches, while North and Central Kashmir can look forward to 4-8 inches of snowfall.

Plains of Jammu may receive light to moderate rain/thunder with gusty winds at few

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## As J&K stares at water crisis, Omar Abdullah calls for a collective approach

JAMMU, Feb 19 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir is staring at a water crisis this year, the state's Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Wednesday. The CM said he is also reviewing various measures the state's Jal Shakti department intends to take to deal with the crisis.

"J&K is staring at a water crisis this year. It's not a recent phenomenon. Actually, it's been building up for a few years now. While the government will have to adopt a more proactive approach for water management & conservation, it can't just be a government



centric approach," read an X post by the CM.

J&K is staring at a water crisis this year. It's not a recent phenomenon, actually it's been building up for a few years now. While the government will

have to adopt a more proactive approach for water management & conservation, it can't just be a government centric approach. All...

— Omar Abdullah (@OmarAbdullah) February 19, 2025

He further urged the people of the union territory to "change the way we take water for granted," and that he would be talking with various constituents on the next steps for water saving and conservation.

"All of us residents of J&K will have to change the way we take water for granted. I'll be reviewing the measures the Jal Shakti (PHE) Dept intends to take to deal with the developing crisis & I'll also be talking to the people of J&K over the next few months about what we can do collectively," his post read.

## FIR against J&K Labour Dept Secy for 'Disproportionate Assets', CBI conducts searches at 7 places



NEW DELHI, Feb 19 (Agencies): The CBI on Wednesday conducted

searches at seven locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection

with a disproportionate assets case against Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, secretary of labour and employment department, officials said. Jammu travel guide

Ranjan has allegedly amassed assets which he could not satisfactorily account for, they said. The agency has reg-

istered a case against Ranjan after analysing his assets during its investigation into gun

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## Civil society members in J&K demand CBI probe into Billawar youth's death

JAMMU, Feb 19 (Agencies): Civil society members Tuesday condemned the tragic death of 26-year-old Makhan Din, a Gujjar youth and criticised the administration for its inaction, weeks after his demise.

"Despite widespread outrage, neither a judicial inquiry has been ordered nor any compensation provided to the bereaved family, raising serious concerns about justice and accountability," they rued, demanding im-



mediate release of compensation and a government job to the Next of Kin (NoK) of the victim. In response to the growing demand for justice, a candlelight

protest and dharna were organised at Mecca Dharna, Bathindi, calling for a CBI probe into Makhan Din's case. The protest was led

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## H&ME orders transfer and posting of doctors in J&K



JAMMU/ SRINAGAR, Feb 19 (Agencies): In the interest of administration and patient care, the Health and Medical Education Department on Wednesday ordered transfer and posting of doctors in Jammu and Kashmir.

The following 22 transfers and postings have been ordered. Dr.

Yasmeen Kangoo, I/C Assistant Director (RS) Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir, is transferred and posted as I/C Dy. Director (Schemes), Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir.

Dr. Mehmooda Jan, I/C BMO Soibugh, is transferred and posted as I/C Assistant Director (TB),

Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir.

Dr. B.S. Tulla, I/C Controller of Stores, DHSK, is transferred and posted as Principal RFPTC Kangan.

Dr. Sameena Gul, Medical Officer, SSO Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir, is transferred and posted as I/C DNO, Kashmir against an available vacancy.

Dr. Andleeb Bashir, I/C BMO Ganderbal, is transferred and posted as I/C Medical Superintendent, SMHS Hospital, Srinagar, against an available vacancy.

Dr. Bushra Yousuf, I/C Turn to page 9

## NIA arrests 3 men for leaking sensitive Defence Information to Pakistani Intelligence Operatives

NEW DELHI, Feb 19 (Agencies): The NIA has arrested three men for leaking sensitive information to Pakistan-based intelligence operatives, the anti-terror federal agency said on Wednesday.

They were sharing sensitive information about Indian defence establishments at Karwar Naval Base and Kochi Naval Base, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said in a statement.

While Vethan Laxman Tandel and Akshay Ravi Naik were picked up from Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka, Abhilash PA was arrested from Kochi in Kerala, the agency said.

All three accused persons arrested on Tuesday with the assistance of local police were found to have been in

contact with Pakistan Intelligence Operatives (PIOs) through social media, it said.

As per NIA investigations, they were sharing sensitive information about Indian defence establishments at Karwar Naval Base and Kochi Naval Base and were receiving money from PIOs in exchange for the information.

A total of eight people have been arrested so far in the case, including these three, the statement said.

NIA has so far chargesheeted five persons, including two absconding Pakistani operatives, in the case that was originally registered by the Counter Intelligence Cell, Andhra Pradesh in January 2021.

NIA investigations

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## Army opens fire on seeing suspicious movement along LoC in Rajouri

JAMMU, Feb 19 (Agencies): Alert Army troops early morning on Wednesday opened fire on seeing a suspicious movement along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Sunderbani sector of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Troops deployed in the forward areas resorted to a brief firing on seeing a suspicious movement in the Sunderbani sector," said official sources.

"Terrorists movement is apprehended close to the border but troops are keeping a close watch and surveillance," they said.

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## EDITORIAL

EFFICIENCY OF  
TOLL PAYMENTS

In a significant move to enhance the efficiency and security of toll payments across India's national highways, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced new guidelines for FASTag users, effective from August 1, 2024. These changes are designed to streamline toll plaza operations, reduce congestion, and ensure seamless travel for motorists. This comprehensive overview delves into the key aspects of the new FASTag rules, their implications for users, and the steps required to comply with the updated regulations.

One of the cornerstone changes is the emphasis on the Know Your Customer (KYC) process. Users possessing FASTags issued between three to five years ago are required to update their KYC information by October 31, 2024. This measure ensures that user data remains current, bolstering the security and reliability of transactions. Failure to comply with this directive may result in the deactivation of the FASTag, leading to potential inconveniences at toll plazas.

Additionally, FASTags that have been in use for over five years must be replaced. This initiative aims to phase out older tags that may have deteriorated or become obsolete, thereby maintaining the system's overall efficiency. Users are advised to check the issuance date of their FASTags and, if necessary, approach their respective issuers to obtain replacements promptly.

To prevent misuse and ensure that each FASTag is uniquely associated with a specific vehicle, the new guidelines mandate the linking of the FASTag to the vehicle's registration number and chassis number. This association facilitates accurate toll deductions and minimizes errors during transactions.

For owners of new vehicles, it is imperative to update the vehicle registration number within 90 days of purchase. This timeframe allows for the completion of registration formalities and ensures that the FASTag system reflects accurate vehicle details. Non-compliance within this period may lead to the FASTag being hotlisted, rendering it inactive until the necessary information is provided.

Service providers are now obligated to undertake rigorous verification processes to maintain the integrity of the FASTag system. This includes uploading clear photographs of the vehicle's front and side profiles, aiding in visual identification and reducing instances of tag misuse. Moreover, each FASTag must be linked to the user's mobile number, ensuring that communications, updates, and alerts are efficiently conveyed to the rightful owner.

The introduction of these guidelines signifies a proactive approach by the NPCI to modernize toll collection mechanisms, aligning with global best practices. For users, adherence to these rules is crucial to avoid disruptions in service. An active and properly linked FASTag not only facilitates swift passage through toll plazas but also contributes to a reduction in cash transactions, promoting a more transparent and accountable system.

Users are encouraged to engage with their FASTag issuers or authorized service providers to complete the necessary KYC updates and, if applicable, replace outdated tags. Timely compliance will ensure uninterrupted service and contribute to the overarching goal of a seamless, efficient toll collection infrastructure across the nation.

The revised FASTag regulations introduced by the NPCI mark a significant stride towards enhancing the efficiency, security, and user experience of toll payments in India. By mandating KYC updates, enforcing the replacement of outdated tags, and ensuring accurate linking of vehicle details, these measures aim to create a robust and reliable toll collection system. Users are urged to proactively comply with these guidelines to enjoy uninterrupted services and contribute to the nation's infrastructural advancement.

## Aastha Apar Mahakumbh Main Sankhya Beshumar

By: Omkar Dattatray

There is in fact the there is the Aastha of Sunami descending Prayagraj for participation in Maha Kumbh and the sea of humanity gathering at Maha Kumbh clearly testifies that there is some intrinsic beauty and greatness in Sanatan Dhrama as such a largest number of people from all corners of India and even abroad are visiting Prayagraj for having a holy dip in sacred confluence called Triveni which is the Sangam of river Yamuna, Ganga and mystical Saraswati which is hidden, but the Hindu's believe that all the three rivers flow at Prayagraj and people take a holy bath and purify their sins and believe by having a holy dip they will be freed from the cycle of birth and death. Mahakumbh Mela 2025 has broken all previous records of more than century and history as more than 55 crore devotees approximately took part in this grand spiritual, cultural as well as economic and scientific gathering which is one of the largest in the world. The Mahakumbh 2025 has set a new milestone as one of the largest religious-cultural gathering in history with over 47 crore devotees attending the sacred event as on 12th February the occasion of Magi Purnima since the start of the Mahakumbh on January 13. The UP government has expected that at the end of the Kumbhmela on 26th February there would be 45 crore devotees having attended the mela but to their and every one's surprise this mela has witnessed more than 47 crore devotees on 12th of February that is 15 days before the culmination of the grand mela. The amrit sanan has passed successfully as the UP government had made elaborate arrangements for today's festival. It was predicted that in the Mahakumbh at least 40 crore people in all will take part from 13th January 2025 Poush pournima to 26th of February 2025 that is up to Mahashivratri festival when this mela will culminate and come to close. It is now expected that the Mahakumbh mela will witness nearly 60 crore up to its culmination on 26th February. Mahakumbh Mela is the aastha of faith, divinity,

cultural diversity, unity, economic as well as scientific extravaganza. Mahakumbh Mela surpassed all records and it witnessed surge of humanity and witnessed a gathering of more than 47 crore on the eve of Magi purnima. On the occasion of the auspicious Maghi Purnima over two crore devotees had a holy dip in the sacred waters of the sangam of Yamuna, Ganga and saraswati. Amid heightened security at least 2 crore people performed Amrit Sann on the occasion of Magi Purnima. It was a great and grand spectacle to see the sea of humanity taking the holy bath at and around trivani and it was very soothing to the eye and for the first time such a large gathering has assembled at this spiritual cum cultural spot which has no parallels in history. Mahakumbh mela basically being a festival of faith, divinity, spirituality, cultural diversity, human unity has become a festival of pursuing economic activity as many stakeholders were seen busy in eking not only livelihood but in making their economic fortunes as well. Therefore Mahakumbh has become an economic extravaganza as thousands of people were seen involving in economic activities as they were selling the goods and services which were needed by the devotees. It is not easy to manage, regulate and control such a largest gathering, as it is a very challenging and daunting job, but the Yogi government of UP has shown its mettle and has successfully managed one of the world's largest gathering. UP is a state with 25 crore population but its government has managed 47 crore of devotees and tourists since the start of the Mahakumbh and it is really commendable and Yogi deserves a pat at his back for managing well one of the world's largest spiritual cum cultural gathering. The state government had anticipated reaching this number by the end of 45 days, but more than the target was achieved within just one month, with 12 days still remaining for the Kumbh to conclude. Now it seems that by the end of the Mahakumbh the figure of the pilgrims including tourists will go up to a record 55 crore and this will be the

biggest achievement of the Yogi government of the UP. This Mahakumbh has become the remarkable blend of spirituality, grand rituals, and modern technologies and innovations, setting new records and standards for crowd management, sanitation and digital facilitation. Now the footfall has crossed 47 crore, ensuring smooth crowd management has been a key priority. It is worth appreciating that the Amrit Sann on 12 February coinciding with Magi Purnima holds great significance and it has come to end successfully adding a feather in the cap of Yogi government as this event of Mahakumbh has passed peacefully and successfully. The chief minister Yogi was monitoring all the arrangements and crowd management in the war room established in his official residence from the early 4 am of 12th February 2025 and it shows how much is the Chief minister Yogi concerned with the Mahakumbh Mela. In fact we can say that the political stature of Modi-Yogi has increased considerably and if general elections and UP elections are held now, they will definitely go in favor of the Modi-Yogi duo and the BJP. The fact is that Mahakumbh 2025 has witnessed a record-breaking footfall of more than 47 crore as on 12th February the festival of Magh Purnima and this is no ordinary thing but is extra-ordinary. It is no mean development but a breakthrough that on Magh Purnima that is on 12th February Mahakumbh breaks record with 450 million devotees, over 7.03 million took holy dip at the confluence of Saraswati, Yamuna and Ganga. This means that Mahakumbh 2025 has etched its name in history as more than 2 crore people took holy bath on the auspicious occasion of magh Purnima. Notably mela area was designated a 'no vehicle Zone' from 11th February ensuring the safety and smooth movement of pilgrims. A digital token system has been introduced for streamlined access to bathing ghats, easing congestion. Special arrangements were made for the elderly people and the differently-abled devotees. The Mahakumbh has seen the participation of President Droupadi Murmu, who took a holy dip

at the Triveni Sangam on February 10 and several dignitaries, including prime minister Narendra Modi, Home minister Amit Shah, Defense minister Rajnath Singh has also visited Pthrayagraj and took holy dip in sangam. The tradition of Kalpavas, a period of ascetic discipline, has been observed by 10 lakh devotees, culminating on Magh Purnima. These devotees are leaving Kumbh Mela and authorities had appealed them to follow rules of crowd management and leave cautiously and carefully. Although the Mahakumbh witnessed the unfortunate tragedy—stampede on January 29th, the spirit of the devotees is still very high as the pilgrims continued to visit Mahakumbh site undeterred by the stampede. UP state government used new techniques of crowd management and this resulted in the safe and smooth pilgrimage at Prayagraj on the occasion of Mahakumbh after the sad incident and in fact it was the mob frenzy more than the laxity of the administration which was responsible for the tragedy. The entire team of officials, security forces, state police under the direction of the state government is working towards better experience for devotees in terms of crowd management, sanitation, amenities and devotees are being provided the best of the facilities irrespective of the numbers that arrive in Maha Kumbh and all this has ensured safe, secure and smooth pilgrimage after the unfortunate stampede. In short Mahakumbh 2025 will be written in the golden letters in the history and for this Modi-Yogi duo and the UP state government should get the credit and rest the Kumbh mela has surpassed all previous records as far as the number of devotees arriving to the site of Mahakumbh is concerned.

*(The author is a columnist, social, KP activist & Freelancer)*

## Effective Methods for Facial Hair Removal

By: Shahnaz Husain

All women have light coloured body and facial hair, but some of it is thicker and grows faster than others.

Generally, around 10% of women battle the problem of extensive, coarse and dark facial hair growth. The unwanted hair growth in females is mainly caused due to hormonal or genetic disorder, stress, prescription drugs, higher than normal levels of male hormones in the body or a combination of various such factors.

Every woman wants to look beautiful, soft and smooth without any dark hair on face or other parts of body skin. The various products available in the market to get rid of thick facial hair can be expensive and irritate skin due to harsh chemicals. There are many easy and safe methods to remove facial hairs though it may take some time to show results. Natural treatments are best remedies in removing unwanted facial hairs. Coarse and thick growth of hair, especially on the face, presents quite a problem, where beauty is concerned. All women are troubled by it, because it detracts from femininity.

Where removal of facial hair is concerned, it falls into two categories – temporary and permanent. The method should be chosen according to the quantity or thickness of hair, its location and rate of growth. It is also

essential to get information about the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods. Temporary hair removal, as the term suggests, requires repeat treatments, as and when there is regrowth. Methods such as depilation, shaving, tweezing, threading, waxing, epilation, come under the temporary category. Several hair removal creams are available, which contain chemical ingredients to dissolve hair. However, chemical hair removal creams can sometimes cause skin discoloration (dark patches) and should preferably be avoided on the face, especially on the "upper lip" area, which is particularly sensitive. Needless to say, a hair removing cream should be patch-tested before use. This is done by applying it on the inner arm. If there is a reaction within 10 to 15 minutes, it should not be used. Home remedies do not remove hair, but may lessen growth over a period of time. Make a thick paste of sugar, lemon juice and water and apply it in the direction of hair growth. Wash off when it dries. Apply it once or twice a week. Or, 3 teaspoons of powdered barley can be mixed with one teaspoon cold milk and 2 to 3 teaspoons lemon juice. Apply and leave on for 20 minutes and then rinse off with water. Do this two to three times a week. It is said to discourage hair growth over a period of time.

Mix a tablespoon of honey, lemon juice each with five tablespoons of potato juice. Meanwhile, grind the lentils (soaked

overnight) to a smooth paste. Add all the ingredients and apply the mixture for about 20 minutes on the affected area. Wash it off once it is completely dry. This paste makes a thin crust that helps in hair removal. Plus, potatoes help in bleaching the hair, making them less visible.

An effective and common facial hair removal method is threading. It is useful for shaping the eyebrows and also for removal of facial hair on areas like the upper lip and chin. There may be slight redness after threading, which reduces in a day. It is a popular method of hair removal. Tweezing is another method, where one hair is removed at a time. It is a suitable method for shaping the eyebrows, or to remove solitary hairs from the chin area, or eyebrows. However, a word of caution – hair from a mole must not be removed without consulting a doctor.

Waxing can also be used for facial hair removal. Soft, strip waxing is useful. Roll on waxing kits are also available. It is said to be a breakthrough technology that may be used for facial hair. It is becoming popular as it is easy to use and also more hygienic. The results are also said to be longer lasting. This relatively new method has a roll-on applicator, which is placed in a device that heats the product, but at a low temperature. It is then rolled on the area and removed with a strip. It is said to be useful in removal of short facial hair.

Hair removal by laser is becoming

increasingly popular as a permanent method. Laser produces an intense beam of light, which is absorbed by the hair follicles. The laser disables the hair follicle's ability to produce hair. The heat produced by the laser light is controlled by the operator. A strong laser light leads to more heat. That is why cooling devices are used to prevent damage to the rest of the skin. The advantage of a laser is that the laser light can scan broader areas. Therefore, fewer sessions may be required. It should be done under supervision of a doctor. The temporary known side effects are redness, swelling and itching. The main risk in laser treatment is the possibility of skin burns, due to excessive heat of the laser light. Regrowth occurs in some cases, but is slower and scantier. It is very important to find a good laser clinic. So, before choosing the clinic, it is essential to find out its reputation, by making enquiries and talking to people who have been through the treatment. It is an expensive procedure and one should also discuss the approximate number of sessions that may be needed.

Laser can be used to remove hair from the entire face, or from particular areas, like upper lips, chin or cheeks. The time taken for the actual treatment is not much. As re-growth may occur, one may have to repeat the treatment after four or five months.

## Shiv Sena open memorandum to CM, asking for focus on 'Local First'

### Seeks separate funds for 'Dogra heritage', tourist places



#### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 19: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of Shiv Sena (UBT) has issued an open memorandum addressing the Chief Minister, emphasizing the aspirations of the people ahead of the upcoming budget session.

Highlighting the significance of a budget that caters to public interests, the party commended the Chief Minister's initiative of seeking suggestions from the public and their representatives.

Speaking at a press conference at the Jammu Press Club, state chief Manish Sahni stated that, in continuation of this commitment, the Shiv Sena is presenting an open memorandum based on the expectations and demands of the people.

A key demand of the memorandum is the implementation of the 'Local First' policy, which seeks to prioritize the interests of the local

population. Sahni urged the government to issue strict directives reserving 80 percent of jobs in industries and private sectors for local youth.

Additionally, he stressed the need for special financial assistance to promote small local industries, ensuring their growth and sustainability.

He pointed out that under Article 16(4) of the Constitution, the state government has the authority to provide reservations for local employment, making this demand both feasible and necessary.

Furthermore, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has called for a dedicated financial package and a separate budget allocation for the development of Dogra heritage sites and tourism in the Jammu division.

The party also insisted on fulfilling the long-standing promise of developing Kesar Park in Kishtwar, which would boost tourism and cul-

tural preservation.

The memorandum also reinforced the need to address essential public welfare commitments, including the provision of free electricity, along with improvements in education, healthcare, and road infrastructure.

Sahni made a strong appeal to BJP MLAs, who often position themselves as well-wishers of Jammu and the Dogra community, urging them to take up these demands in the upcoming budget session.

The party emphasized that this is a crucial opportunity to ensure that the voices of Jammu's people are heard and their aspirations reflected in the governance of the state.

Accompanying Sahni at the press conference were General Secretary Vikas Bakshi and Senior Vice President Sanjeev Kohli, who echoed the sentiments of the memorandum and reinforced the party's commitment to the welfare of the region.

## Raman Suri urges swift implementation of CCTV installation in Jammu to combat rising crime

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 19: In light of the increasing incidents of thefts and other criminal activities in Jammu city, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Executive Member Raman Suri has strongly emphasized that the police's decision to install CCTV cameras must be implemented on the ground. While acknowledging the administration's good initiative, he stressed that it should not remain confined to paper but should be carried out with full commitment.

Suri remarked, "The increasing crime rate in Jammu, including murders, robberies, and thefts in broad daylight, highlights the urgent need for surveillance. Installing CCTV cameras in key locations such as public spaces, business establishments, banks, places of worship, and other vital areas is crucial to curbing these activities."

He pointed out that previous plans, including those by the Jammu Municipal Corporation to install CCTV cameras, had remained only on paper and had not translated into action.

"While the government has issued instructions many times in the past, the willpower to implement these decisions was lacking. The rising crime rate clearly indicates that stronger

measures are needed to address this issue," Suri added.

In light of Jammu and Kashmir's security concerns, Suri emphasized the importance of CCTV systems in creating a secure environment for both locals and visitors. "Surveillance will act as a deterrent to criminals and assist in the quick identification and apprehension of offenders. However, the success of such initiatives also depends on increased police vigilance. The people of Jammu deserve to feel safe in their own city, and the police and administration must work together to eliminate the fear created by rising crime."

Suri also urged business owners and residents to cooperate fully in the effort to install CCTV cameras outside their shops and homes. "This is not just for the safety of individuals but for the safety of the entire city. Cooperation from the people of Jammu is crucial for the success of this initiative."

He concluded by stressing that it is essential for the authorities to ensure that the CCTV installation is completed within the stipulated time frame, sending a strong message to criminals that Jammu is committed to ensuring the safety of its citizens.

## All communities to live in peace, harmony: APSCC



### Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Feb 19: All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee (APSCC) Chairman, Jagmohan Singh Raina has asked the members of both the majority and minority communities to live in peace and harmony so that the extremist elements are exposed and are prevented from fomenting trouble among the different communities.

In a statement issued after a joint meeting of Committee members of both Kashmir and Jammu divisions, Raina said that minority committee members should live in harmony with the members of the majority community.

He said that any problem being faced by any member of any minority committee can be solved only when the majority community is taken into confidence adding that the same cannot be done in isolation.

"There is no denying the fact that extremist elements are present

in every community and as such it is imperative that such people are exposed. Once these elements are exposed then the people will become aware about them and the extremist elements will be isolated. The onus lies more on minorities since they look upon their brothers in the majority community to solve the problems being faced by them," said Raina.

The APSCC Chairman lamented that the extremist elements are hell bent to defame the country and disturb the secular fabric so that their own interests are served. He said the beauty of India lies in co-existence adding that people irrespective of their faith and religion should be given due respect in the society.

"It is highly unfortunate that some politicians are exploiting the situation for their ulterior benefits. India has always been a pluralistic society where the people belonging to different faiths and religions practise their religion without any

interference. The politicians should stop playing politics of hatred and instead they should try to unite the people of different faiths," said Raina.

The APSCC Chairman expressed disappointment that Sikhs have not been recognized as a minority in Jammu & Kashmir despite fulfilling the laid down procedures. He said that like the previous stint chief minister Omar Abdullah in his second stint continues to ignore the Sikh community and the problems faced by the community.

Raina said that the Punjabi language should be given its due recognition since the same got lost in oblivion following the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir. The meeting was attended by senior APSCC leaders like Ajeet Singh Mastana, Jaipal Singh, Sardar Rajinder Singh, Sardar Gurdev Singh, Jagjit Singh Sudan, Navtej Singh, Dr. Rekhi, Davinder Singh and Lakhvinder Singh.

## SMVDU VC flags off team for SAE BAJA 2025

### Top News Report

KATRA, Feb 19: The Vice Chancellor of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Prof. Pragati Kumar, flagged off a team of 21 engineering students from School of Mechanical Engineering and School of Electrical Engineering to represent the university at the prestigious SAE BAJA 2025 competition in Hyderabad.

The event, scheduled from 20th - 25th Feb, 25 will witness the participation of universities from across the nation in the challenging motorsport event. Pertinently SAE BAJA 2025 is an event

hosted by Society of Automotive Engineers, India.

The SMVDU team "Crawlers", has successfully designed and fabricated an electric All-Terrain Vehicle on campus, showcasing the skills and knowledge gained through their coursework and hands-on experience.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, Prof. Pragati Kumar praised the team for their dedication and hard work, emphasizing the importance of such competitions in enhancing practical skills and fostering creativity.

"This is a proud moment for SMVDU. The team has put in an immense amount of effort,



and I have full confidence in their ability to excel at SAE BAJA 2025. It's an opportunity for them to showcase their talent on a national platform

and gain valuable industry insights," as per the faculty advisors of the event.

The faculty coordinators Dr. Ankush Raina (Assistant

Professor, SME) and Dr. Mir Irfan UI Haq (Associate Prof. SME) informed that SMVDU team is the only team from the UT to J&K to participate in the event.

Chandan Sharma and Kewal from central workshop, SMVDU assisted the fabrication of the ATV.

Prof. K.R. Jha (Dean Faculty of Engineering and Head School of Electrical Engineering), Prof. Balbir Singh (Dean Academic Affairs), Prof. R. K. Mishra (Dean Students Welfare), Dr. Yatheshth Anand (Head, SME), Er. Deepak Byotra (Workshop Superintendent) were present during the flag

off and lauded the efforts of the students.

The university community from all the departments and sections were present at the event and extended their best wishes to the team as they embark on this exciting journey and represent SMVDU on a prestigious platform.

The team, led by captains Divyansh Kale and Amod Kumar, expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the university administration and all event sponsors for their unwavering support.

The event was proudly sponsored by Frameinn (a start-up founded by SMVDU

alumnus Dhanajya Singh), T.V. Super Filter Industries, Jammu, and Nature Fab (a start-up founded by SMVDU alumnus Piyush Singla).

Pertinently, the SAE BAJA competition is one of the most sought-after motorsport events for engineering students, where teams design, build, and test off-road vehicles that can withstand challenging terrains and demanding tasks.

The vehicle, a culmination of months of research, design, and teamwork, is expected to compete in various technical and endurance challenges at the competition.

## International Conference on ETBCT-2025 concludes at SMVDU

### Top News Report

KATRA, Feb 19: The two-day International Conference on Emerging Trends in Biosciences and Chemical Technology (ETBCT-2025) held at the School of Biotechnology, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Katra, J&K, concluded successfully, offering a platform for cross-disciplinary discussions, knowledge-sharing, and global collaboration. The event attracted over 200 participants, including distinguished researchers, academicians, and industry professionals from across the world.

The conference was inaugurated by Shri Satish Sharma, Minister of Department of

Science & Technology, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, ARI & Training, Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

Dignitaries included Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancellor of SMVDU, and Dr. Yashpal Sharma, Executive Director, SMVD Institute of Medical Excellence, who joined as the Special Invitee.

The highlight of ETBCT-2025 was its exceptional lineup of international experts, whose plenary sessions and invited talks covered diverse and cutting-edge topics in the fields of Health Sciences, Molecular Biology, Microbial Biotechnology, Nano-



technology, and more. Dr. Indu Bhushan, the Convenor of the conference, played an instrumental role in bringing together over 25 internationally renowned

speakers and securing vital funding, making the conference an outstanding success.

His relentless dedication and exceptional networking capabilities

were pivotal in attracting top-tier experts and ensuring the participation of researchers from across the globe.

Dr. Bhushan's vision and tireless efforts

ensured the conference provided an inclusive platform where academia and industry could interact, fostering opportunities for collaboration and research exchange.

He successfully facilitated the involvement of key stakeholders and partners that ensured a rich scientific program and hands-on workshops, which allowed participants to gain practical experience in advanced bioscience applications such as sequencing, real-time PCR, and mass array analysis.

In his address, Dr. Bhushan emphasized the need for global collaboration in addressing the challenges of biosciences and chemical

technology, urging participants to work together toward innovative solutions that can impact global sustainability and health.

The two-day event also featured sessions on environmental sustainability, bioinformatics, genomics, proteomics, and more, offering researchers a chance to present their findings through oral and poster presentations.

The conference's concurrent Workshop on Skills in Biosciences provided participants with practical, hands-on experience, enhancing their technical skills for future advancements in biosciences.

The success of ETBCT-2025 would not have been possible

without the support and efforts of the organizing committee, led by Dr. Bhushan, Dr. Shafaq Rasool, Dr. P.S. Slathia, and Prof. Ratna Chandra, Head of the School of Biotechnology. Their collaboration and hard work ensured the seamless execution of this prestigious event.

The conference has created a lasting impact, paving the way for future research initiatives and fostering a strong network of global experts in the fields of biosciences and chemical technology.

As the event concludes, participants expressed their enthusiasm for future collaborations and knowledge exchange in this ever-evolving domain.

## From Alia Bhatt to Richa Chadha, here are actresses who are making waves with their own fashion labels



Bollywood actresses are not just ruling the silver screen, but are also making a mark in the world of fashion with their own labels. Balancing their successful acting careers with entrepreneurial ventures, these stars are redefining style and flair. Here's a look at some leading ladies who are proud owners of their own brands. From sustainable-wear to high-end fashion, they've got it all covered. Island-inspired aesthetics

Manushi Chiller, Dweep

Dweep is a sustainable fashion brand co-founded by former Miss World and actor Manushi

Chhillar, alongside renowned stylist Sheefa J Gilani. Rooted in their shared passion for art, oceans and clothing, Dweep embodies a harmonious blend of island-inspired aesthetics and environmentally conscious practices. The journey of Dweep began in 2016, during Manushi's tenure as a Miss India contestant. Heartfelt mission

Kritika Kamra, Cinna-bar

Actress Kritika Kamra has embarked on a heartfelt mission to support and revive local arts and artisan communities in Madhya Pradesh. Alongside her mother, Kritika has launched Cinna-bar, a fashion ini-

tiative aimed at empowering artisans from her hometown of Chanderi, a region renowned for its exquisite handloom craftsmanship. The initiative not only promotes traditional Chanderi handloom work, but also provides a platform for local weavers to showcase their exceptional skills. Empowering local artisans

Richa Chadha, Ehaab

Richa Chadha, in collaboration with husband Ali Fazal, co-founded Ehaab, a distinctive homegrown fashion brand. Drawing inspiration from the cultural heritage of Lucknow, Ehaab is devoted to celebrating India's rich

handcrafted traditions and empowering local artisans. More than just a fashion label, Ehaab embodies a mission to preserve and promote the artistry of craftsmen who have safeguarded India's cultural legacy for generations. Passion for sustainability

Alia Bhatt, Ed-a-Mamma

Alia Bhatt shared that during her pregnancy, she struggled to find stylish maternity clothing in India, which inspired her to launch Ed-a-Mamma. Combining her passion for sustainability and children, Alia envisioned a brand that nurtures young minds while sharing meaning-

ful stories. Meanwhile, Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd signed a joint venture with Ed-a-Mamma in 2023. Timeless elegance

Soha Ali Khan, House Of Pataudi

House of Pataudi is an ethnic-wear clothing brand co-owned by Soha Ali Khan and Saif Ali Khan, inspired by the rich cultural heritage and legacy of the Pataudi family. The brand encapsulates the essence of royalty with its exquisite designs, intricate embroidery and luxurious fabrics. Offering a wide range of traditional attire and sarees, House of Pataudi blends timeless elegance with modern aesthetics.

## Rasha Thadani on diminishing stardom in social media world

Rasha Thadani made her debut last month with Azaad, and being a part of the social media generation, the actor admits that it can be tricky managing its pros and cons. Rasha Thadani has seen the stardom of her mother, actor Raveena Tandon, at a time when there was no social media. But with the advent of the virtual world, the stars have become more accessible.

Does she feel the value of stardom has reduced due to that and it has become more temporary like a 15 second reel? "There's positives and negatives to that. The negatives may be that the recognition may

be temporary and everyone is easily accessible, but for the positives, you can communicate and interact with the audiences more. They can actually get to know you as a person and not only who you are on the screen, and they might like you for that as well, rather than just liking you for your on-screen persona," she responds, adding, "Sometimes people may watch your movie or even follow you because they feel like you are a sweet person from your social media, or they find you kind. So, I think it is a two-way thing."

However, she does admit to seeing the value of stardom chang-

ing due to social media: "At the end of the day, it is completely true. If you see either Prabhas sir or Allu Arjun sir, they walk in, and people are falling for them. It's a completely different world and that's because they are not available anywhere else but except the movie screen. If they post a single thing, the internet breaks because of the rarity of it."

Due to the pressure of being on social media, sometimes celebrities might put out a personality different from theirs online. Rasha agrees to that, but says, "People know superficiality and if you are trying to be fake, they get to know it. The minute you actually try to be yourself and be authentic, it will be appreciated. The audience is smart."

The actor gives a poignant example to make her point. "Why is Shraddha Kapoor ma'am loved so much on social media? It's because she is actually such a genuine, humble, kind and pure person, and that reflects. If you see her social media, she has very less done up or make-up pictures, she actually tries to post more of who she is. And that works so well for her. It makes even me appreciate her more," she ends.



## Jacqueline Fernandez: 'Resilience is the most important lesson that I have learnt over the years'

Before making her debut in Bollywood in 2009, Jacqueline Fernandez walked into the glamour industry as a model. And she loves every chance that takes her back to the ramp. The actor admits that she has found a lot about herself in the past 15 years.

In an interview with agency, Jacqueline got candid about going back to the ramp as a showstopper for designer Kanika Goyal at the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour in Chandigarh recently, finding her voice through fashion and her Bollywood career.

On going back to the ramp

Earlier this month, Jacqueline walked the ramp for designer Kanika Goyal at the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour in Chandigarh. The event was organised in collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI).

"It feels really great to be back. It is almost like home ground - walking on the ramp. I can see so many familiar faces. And of course, I feel very privileged to be part of the Blenders Pride Fashion Tour. There are so many iconic moments that they have created, and it feels so special. It is amazing to see how this platform brings together celebrated designers like Kanika, style icons, and creative visionaries to create an immersive fashion experience," Jacqueline tells us about walking the ramp.

The actor also revealed that she would love to have a "preshow ritual to be honest, but so much happens on that day that it's very difficult to follow it." "Also, that you do show so frequently that anxiety, the nervousness, it doesn't, really, affect you anymore," she shares.

On her fashion journey

For Jacqueline, who originally hails from Sri Lanka, her personal style journey has undergone a significant transformation over the years. Reflecting on her earlier days, she recalls being more experimental with her fashion choices. However, as time has passed, Jacqueline's priorities have shifted, and she now places comfort above all else when it comes to her style.

"I used to experiment a lot with my own personal style, my own personal fashion before. And I think now I feel comfortable being in something which is basic yet comfortable. Earlier, it was about experimenting more. Now it's, I truly understand what my sense of style is," she confesses.

Ask her if fashion can be used as a form of self-expression and empowerment, Jacqueline quickly notes, "We are all unique in our personalities, and I think if you're able to express that through fashion, that's what creates something very beautiful to see. Also, because the fact that you know that no one is alike, I think that that is when you



can bring it out through your fashion, that for me is something very stylish".

On promoting positive body image

As the adage goes, "with great power comes great responsibility", and Jacqueline firmly believes that this maxim holds especially true for actors. As influencers in the public eye, Jacqueline feels that actors bear a significant responsibility to promote positive body image and self-acceptance.

"I think by being as authentic to themselves as possible. And being honest as well about their bodies since they're public figures and they're role models to many. Their honesty affects a lot of people. So yeah, a lot more honesty and a lot more authenticity is definitely encouraged," says the actor, who was last seen in Fateh.

On her Bollywood journey

She made her debut in the Indian film industry with 2009 film Aladin opposite actor Riteish Deshmukh. The film turned out to be a dud at the box office, but Jacqueline got noticed. She went on to do films such as Housefull 2, Murder 2, Kick, Brothers, Dishoom, Judwaa 2 and Mrs Serial Killer.

What's the most important lesson you've learned about yourself and your capabilities over the years?

"I think, resilience for me, it has always been something I have been very capable of. That's my discovery," she shares.

In terms of upcoming projects and roles, Jacqueline is working on "two comedy movies coming up this year which is Houseful and Welcome".

"And another is also a web show which I did, which I shot last year and is going to be released this year. I'm really excited about it because it is my first show and it's all about like dance and music. So that would be something new to the table this year," she ends.

## Reema Kagti's directorial Superboys of Malegaon ready for its India release

Passion drives cinema. Only with Reema Kagti's new directorial Superboys of Malegaon, it's not just the makers of the film whose ardour is evident but also those whose story she is telling. Based on the life of Nasir Shaikh and other amateur filmmakers in the Indian city of Malegaon, it is indeed an aspirational story of an underdog's triumph. After the film's world premiere at Toronto International Film Festival last year, where it moved audiences to tears, the makers are now ready for its India release.

At the virtual launch of the trailer, Reema shares how filmmaking is only a backdrop, and Superboys of Malegaon is more importantly about friendship. Indeed, as she herself hails from small town, inspirational tales of hinterland do have an extra allure for her. She states, "Small town is my comfort zone. However, if I feel a connection to a story, whatever be the odds, I will go ahead and find means to make it."

Being authentic

Zoya Akhtar, whose Tiger Baby, along with brother Farhan Akhtar's Excel Entertainment, has produced the film, observes that they don't go out of the way to make their films raw and real. She adds, "Rather authenticity is inbuilt in our cinema for it comes from a truth. We only make it cinematic, may be add a lie to it." Of course, Nasir can only see truth in this celluloid adaptation of his life and is more than happy with BAFTA nominee



actor Adarsh Gourav's portrayal of him. Nasir says, "Adarsh has gone far beyond my expectations. Even before I could add anything to how he should play me, he would get it right as if he was reading my mind." For Adarsh having Nasir around was a blessing, not because he wanted to imitate him, but hoped to understand the space from which Nasir's dreams emanated and how he realised them.

Writer 'baap hota hai'

While spending time with Nasir, Adarsh even asked his real character to make a film which Adarsh produced. Adarsh laughs, "A lot of meta things were happening around us." Adarsh might be playing the main protagonist, however, he is not the only talented actor aboard the cast of the film.

Vineet Kumar Singh, Shashank Arora and Anuj Singh Duhan play significant parts in this film written by Varun Grover. Some of the film's dialogues like 'writer baap hota hai' drive home the importance of writers in the art of movie-making.

In answer to a query, Varun remarks tongue-in-cheek, "I have always felt that writer's role in cinema is very important, it is the first time I have verbalised it in so many words." Talking about his writing process, Varun shares, "Even when characters are imaginary, as in a film like Masaan, we try to find reality in them. But here the big plus was having access to Nasir's archives of his own life. He has preserved every small detail from press clippings to success parties of his films." Hence in his

words, "The film is not a by the numbers biopic, but one where emotional dimension was easy to tap into." While etching out even the smallest of characters, he had the blockbuster Sholay in mind, where each small cameo was memorable. Incidentally, among the many hit movies that Nasir made was Malegaon Ke Sholay too.

Indefatigable spirit

Cinema of the people for the people of his town... whoever heard of such novel ideas? Precisely the reason why earlier his remarkable journey leapt into a documentary Superman of Malegaon, and now has been frozen in the movie Superboys of Malegaon. In fact, Reema found many parallels, similar influences in her and Nasir's story.

As she puts it, "It was heartening to know his trials and tribulations. While I moved from a small town to Bombay to make my dreams come true, he achieved it all living in the same town and even made spoofs which were relevant to his milieu." Zoya sums up Nasir's indefatigable spirit thus, "Grabbing any opportunity with both hands rather than waiting for others to show the way is the real essence of his zeal for making films."

Come February 28, watch how Nasir and his friends' enthusiasm captured the magic of cinema with limited resources.

## Ameesha Patel-Hrithik Roshan's reunion ignites fans' wishes for Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai 2

Actors Hrithik Roshan and Ameesha Patel's recent reunion sparked a wave of excitement among fans on social media. The duo, which shared screen space in the iconic Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai, has left fans eagerly hoping for a sequel. As photos and videos from their reunion went viral, many are now demanding Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai 2. Ameesha

also took to her Instagram handle and shared a heart-warming photo of herself posing with Hrithik, adding their popular song Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai to the post. For the caption, the Gadar actress wrote, "About last night - lovely evening with Sonia's Rohit - for me, you'll always be my Duggu Brosnan first and then @hrithikroshan the

superstar later." Notably, fans were quick to react, with many demanding Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai 2.

Echoing similar sentiments, one fan commented, "Really looking forward to watching them together as a lead pair opposite each other! Really wish a producer-director is reading this!! Big fan of @ameeshapatel9 & @hrithikroshan." Another

said, "Vote for Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai 2." Directed and produced by Rakesh Roshan, Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai marked the Bollywood debut of both Hrithik and Ameesha.

Meanwhile, at the star-studded success bash of Netflix's The Roshans, Hrithik shared a heart-warming moment with Ameesha. The glitzy event was attended by

an array of celebrities, including Rekha, Neetu Kapoor, Ameesha Patel, Anu Malik, Saba Azad, Shabana Azmi, Javed Akhtar, Bhushan Kumar, Sam Kaushal, Mallika Sherawat, Pashmina Roshan, Jeetendra, Alka Yagnik, Jackie and Tiger Shroff, Anupam Kher, Vaani Kapoor, Siddharth Anand, Udit Narayan, and David Dhawan, among many others.

## PM Modi pays homage to Shivaji

NEW DELHI, Feb 19 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Maratha empire founder Chhatrapati Shivaji on his birth anniversary on Wednesday.

Modi said on X, "His valour and visionary leadership laid the foundation for Swarajya, inspiring generations to uphold the values of courage and justice. He inspires us in building a strong, self-reliant and prosperous India."

Born in 1630 in



Maharashtra, Shivaji combined military genius and political dexterity to challenge the Muslim sultans in the south and Mughals

in the north to expand his kingdom, which went on to become India's most powerful empire before the British defeated it.

## Centre sanctions Rs 1554.99 cr to five states hit by floods, landslides, cyclones

NEW DELHI, Feb 19 (Agencies): A committee headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah has approved Rs 1554.99 crore of additional central assistance under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to five states affected by floods, flash floods, landslides and cyclonic storms during 2024.

Out of the total amount of Rs 1554.99 crore, Rs 608.08 crore has been approved for Andhra Pradesh, Rs 170.99 crore for Nagaland, Rs 255.24 crore for Odisha, Rs 231.75 crore for Telangana



and Rs 288.93 crore for Tripura, according to an official statement.

In a post on X, Shah said, "The Modi government stands like a rock in support of the disaster-affected people. Today, the MHA approved an addition-

al central assistance of Rs 1554.99 crore to Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Odisha, Telangana, and Tripura under the NDR fund. This is in addition to the Rs. 18,322.80 crore released by the Centre to 27 states under the

SDR fund".

The high level committee approved central assistance of Rs 1554.99 crore to five states from the NDRF, subject to an adjustment of 50 per cent of the opening balance for the year available in the SDRF.

This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by the Centre to the states in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), already placed at the disposal of the states.

During the financial year 2024-25, the Centre has released

Rs 18,322.80 crore to 27 states in SDRF and Rs 4,808.30 crore from NDRF to 18 states, Rs 2208.55 crore from the State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) to 14 states and Rs 719.72 crore from National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) to eight states.

The Centre had deputed Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs) to these states, immediately after the calamities, without waiting for the receipt of formal memorandums, the statement said.

## Fadnavis hails Shivaji Maharaj as management guru and able administrator

PUNE, Feb 19 (Agencies): Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis paid tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his birth anniversary on Wednesday, hailing him as a management guru and an able administrator who set an example of running a welfare state.

Shivaji Maharaj not only established 'Swarajya', but also ignited a sense of national pride, Fadnavis said while paying homage to the Maratha king at Shivneri Fort in Pune.

The legendary warrior king was born on February 19, 1630 in Shivneri in the district's Junnar tehsil.

Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar attended various programmes to mark Shivaji Maharaj's birth anniversary, including the 'cradle ceremony' at the Shivneri Fort.

A large number of followers of the Maratha king also gathered at the fort to take part in his 395th birth anniversary event.

Addressing the gathering there, Fadnavis said Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was not just a warrior, but also an able administrator who set an example of running a welfare state.

"He was a management guru in the truest sense," the chief minister added.

Fadnavis said that setting foot on the land of Shivneri evokes the inspiration of 'Swarajya', and it is this very spirit that draws people to this place time and again.

"When many kings and kingdoms accepted Mughal rule, Mata Jijau envisioned Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as the leader who would end the exploitation and tyranny, guiding the people towards Swarajya," he



said.

"With the determination and values instilled by his mother, Shivaji Maharaj united people from all communities, wielded his sword, and built an army of Mavalas. He not only established 'Swarajya', but also ignited a sense of national pride," the CM said.

Fadnavis stressed the importance of preserving Shivaji Maharaj's forts, saying they hold a greater significance than

an initiative taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"In the coming days, a team of the Maharashtra government, led by minister Ashish Shelar, will make a presentation highlighting these forts as exemplary architectural marvels at the UNESCO event in Paris," he said.

On the occasion, Deputy CM Ajit Pawar said special attention was being given to the restoration work of Shivneri, the birthplace of the Maratha king.

"All these forts in the state are places of inspiration and we derive power and energy from them, and the state government is giving special attention to their restoration," he said.

Shinde said there are many ideals for youth, but Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj will be the greatest ideal for generations to come.

## 3 Women, including a teenager, found dead with slit wrists at home in Kolkata



KOLKATA, Feb 19 (Agencies): The bodies of three members of a family with their wrists slit were found under mysterious circumstances at their residence in the Tangra area of eastern Kolkata on Wednesday. The victims included two women and a girl in her teens.

The bodies have been sent for post-mortem purposes and after the autopsy report is available it would be clear whether this was a case of suicide or murder, said the officials here.

The cops of the local police station have started an investigation into the case. They

questioned the neighbours whether they noticed any unnatural behaviour on the part of the victim individuals during the last couple of days.

The police recovered the bodies in the morning after they reached the residence in connection with an investigation of a road accident.

It is learnt that the husband of one of the two women met with an accident near Ruby Crossing on the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass early Wednesday morning. From the identity cards of the husband, the cops attached to the traffic department

of the city police came to know of the address at Tangra.

Accordingly, the cops reached the residence at Tangra soon after the accident without being aware that a bigger shock was waiting for them there. On entering the house they found the bodies of the three females with their wrists slit.

Considering the sensitivity of the matter, a team of cops from the homicide department of the city police reached the spot. Even the joint commissioner (crime) also arrived at the spot soon.

On being questioned by the cops, sources from the city police said, the neighbours so far have informed that they did not notice anything unnatural in the behaviour of the victims during the last couple of days.

More details were awaited as the probe was on.

## Modi has already declared Adani issue personal matter, will he oblige US SEC: Cong

NEW DELHI, Feb 19 (Agencies): The Congress on Wednesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already declared the Adani issue to be a personal matter and asked whether he would oblige the US Securities and Exchanges Commission's (SEC) request in the ongoing probe against the business group.

The opposition party's assertion came after the SEC told a federal judge in New York that its efforts to serve its complaint on Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani in the alleged bribery scheme are "ongoing". This included a request for assistance to the Indian authorities.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the SEC has just informed a New York district court that it has sought the assistance of the Modi government to serve complaints on the violations of US laws by Gautam Adani and some of his colleagues.

"The PM has already declared the Modani issue to be a personal matter. Will he oblige the SEC?" Ramesh said on X.

To a question on whether the issue relating to Adani figured in the talks, Modi said at a



joint media briefing with Donald Trump in Washington last week: "India is a democracy and our culture is 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. We consider the whole world as one family. I believe every Indian is mine."

"Two prominent leaders of two countries never discuss such individual issues," he said.

The SEC submitted a status update Tuesday to Judge Nicholas Garaufis at the United States District Court, Eastern District of New York, regarding its efforts to serve its complaint on Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani.

It said both "are located in India, and the SEC's efforts to serve them there are ongoing, including through a request for assistance to the Indian authorities to effect service under the Hague Service Convention for Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters."

The SEC said its complaint dated November

20 last year alleges that Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani violated the anti-fraud provisions of the federal securities laws by "knowingly or recklessly making false and misleading representations concerning Adani Green Energy Ltd in connection with a September 2021 debt offering by Adani Green."

In a parallel action, the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York unsealed criminal charges against Gautam and Sagar Adani, among other individuals connected to Adani Green and Azure Power.

Adani is being indicted by the US Department of Justice for his role in an alleged years-long scheme to pay USD 250 million bribes to Indian officials in exchange for favourable solar power contracts.

The Adani group has denied the allegations by the Department of Justice and the SEC and said they are "baseless".

## You will be accountable for poll results: Kharge to top office-bearers

NEW DELHI, Feb 19 (Agencies): Days after a major organisational rejig in the party, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday did some plain-speaking with top office-bearers, stressing that they will be held accountable for future election results in states under their charge and asking them to be wary of ideologically weak turncoats.

Addressing general secretaries and in-charges, including those appointed last week, at a meeting held at the party's headquarters at Indira Bhawan here, Kharge emphasised the importance of promoting those people who are committed to the ideology of the Congress and stand with us like a rock even in adverse circumstances.

Kharge also hinted at some more changes in the organisation, saying some changes have already taken place and some more are in the offing.

"I want to talk to you about the most important thing of accountability. You all will be held accountable for revamping the organisations in states and for all future election results," he told the office-bearers.

The party recently brought in new office bearers in the revamped organisation.

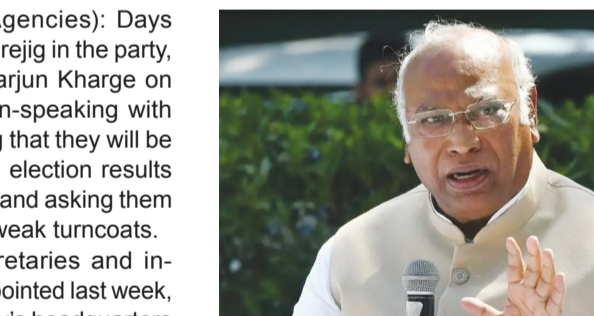
Among those who attended the meeting were former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, senior leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, K C Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh, and all general secretaries and in-charges in various states.

At the meeting, Kharge also flagged the issue of alleged "voter list manipulation" and claimed that it is happening on a large scale in elections.

He noted that Rahul Gandhi also raised a question about this in the Lok Sabha.

"All of you will realise that these days the names of our supporters are deleted from the voters list. Or the name is removed and added to the adjacent booth. New names are added by the BJP just before the election. This rigging has to be stopped at all costs," the Congress chief asserted.

Kharge pointed out that earlier the Chief Justice was also included in the selection committee of Chief Election Commission (CEC) by the order of the Supreme Court



but the CJI was removed from the panel by the Modi government.

"The government does not even trust the impartiality of the Chief Justice of the country. This matter was to be heard in the Supreme Court, but the government announced the new CEC before that. Rahul Ji also said that what is the use of such a selection committee, where you are using Leader of Opposition only for certification?" he said.

Kharge also raised the issues of inflation and unemployment, alleging the Modi government has completely failed on that front.

He urged the office-bearers to strengthen the organisation.

"It is your responsibility to strengthen the organisation from state headquarters to booth as soon as possible. You will have to go to the booth yourself for this work, work hard, interact with the workers. Our Frontals - Cells will have to be involved. I especially want to say about the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), that they are an important part of us, involve them too in organisation building," Kharge said.

"If you yourself go to the booth, division, block, district, state level at the grassroots level, then you will be able to add new people there. You will be able to bring trustworthy and ideologically strong people with you. You can bring forward those people who can be very useful for the party but did not get a chance," he said.

Kharge called for promoting those people who are committed to the ideology of the Congress and "stand with us like a rock even in adverse circumstances".

Many times, to strengthen the party, people are inducted in a hurry, he said, adding that they could be weak in ideology and run away

in difficult times.

Using a Hindi proverb, he advised the office-bearers to be wary of choosing "imitations over original".

In his opening remarks at the meeting, Kharge said Delhi voted for change and lauded the efforts of the state leadership in putting up a good fight despite lack of resources.

The B JP returned to power in Delhi after more than 26 years, winning 48 of the 70 assembly seats. The AAP won 22 seats while the Congress drew a blank in the polls held on February 5.

The Congress chief said the party leaders must raise issues of public interest in the next five years and strive to make the organisation emerge as the principal opposition party in Delhi.

Hitting out at the government, he said the prime minister failed to stop the insult of Indians deported from the USA.

"Despite Modi ji's visit, America is sending back Indian citizens handcuffed as before. Vegetarians were given non-vegetarian food. Our government also failed to protest this insult properly," Kharge alleged.

"America is also hurting us deeply in economic matters. They imposed reverse tariff on us, but the prime minister did not even protest against it. They are forcibly imposing a loss-making deal on us, which our government is silently accepting. This is clearly an insult to India and the people of India," the Congress chief claimed.

Noting that the "Jai Babu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan" programme will continue for the next one year, Kharge said under this, activities such as padyatra, dialogue, corner meetings can be conducted.

"But the aim of every such program should be the empowerment of the organisation," he said.

In a major organisational revamp, the Congress on Friday appointed former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel as general secretary in-charge of Punjab and Rajya Sabha MP Syed Naseer Hussain as general secretary for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

## President Donald Trump signs executive order to expand access to IVF

WASHINGTON DC, Feb 19 (Agencies): President Donald Trump signed an executive order aimed at expanding access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) for Americans, with a focus on reducing the high costs associated with the treatment.

The White House in a fact-sheet titled 'President Donald J. Trump Expands Access to In Vitro Fertilization (IVF),' said, "Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order expanding access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) for Americans."

The Order directs policy recommendations to protect IVF access and aggressively reduce out-of-pocket and health plan costs for such treatments.

The recommendations will focus on how to ensure reliable access to IVF."

It added, "Priority will also be



placed on addressing any current policies, including those that require legislation, that exacerbate the cost of IVF treatments.

The Order recognises the importance of family formation and that our Nation's public policy must make it easier for loving and longing mothers and fathers to have children."

The factsheet further stated

that the cost of IVF treatments can range from USD 12,000 to USD 25,000 per cycle and multiple cycles may be needed to get pregnant.

"Department of Health and Human Services data reports that more than 85,000 infants were born as a result of IVF in 2021.

The general US fertility rate is at another historic low. The

rate dropped 3 per cent in 2023 from 2022. From 2014-2020, the rate consistently decreased by 2 per cent annually," White House factsheet added.

Meanwhile, Karoline Leavitt, White House Press Secretary praised the President's signing of the executive order aimed at making IVF more accessible, and said that the order directs policy recommendations to reduce out-of-pocket costs and improve health plan coverage for those seeking fertility treatments.

In a post on X, she wrote, "PROMISES MADE. PROMISES KEPT: President Trump just signed an Executive Order to Expand Access to IVF! The Order directs policy recommendations to protect IVF access and aggressively reduce out-of-pocket and health plan costs for such treatments."

## Pakistan: Gunmen kill 7 passengers in Balochistan



ISLAMABAD, Feb 19 (Agencies): At least seven passengers were killed by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, officials confirmed on Wednesday.

The attack occurred at 11:45 p.m. on Tuesday (1845 GMT) at a highway in the Barkhan

district of the province, where around 11 armed assailants stopped a passenger bus, police sources from the district told Xinhua.

The passengers were traveling from the provincial capital city of Quetta to Faisalabad district of eastern Punjab province.

"The gunmen appeared to have specific intelligence about their targets, as they only stopped this particular vehicle and selectively killed the victims," the sources added.

The assailants fled the scene before security forces arrived.

Barkhan is a bordering district between Punjab and Balochistan, making it a key transit route for travelers between the two provinces, the sources added.

Following the incident, law enforcement agencies launched a search operation in the area to track down the perpetrators.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet.

## Taiwan records increased Chinese military activity around its territory

TAIPEI, Feb 19 (Agencies): Taiwan recorded 36 sorties of People's Liberation Army aircraft and seven naval vessels operating near its territory till 6 am (local time) on Wednesday, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND).

As per the Taiwan Defence Ministry, 33 out of 36 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, eastern and southwestern ADIZ.

"36 sorties of PLA aircraft and 7 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 33 out of 36 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern, eastern and southwestern ADIZ. We have monitored the situation and responded accordingly", Taiwan's MND posted on X.

On Tuesday, Taiwan recorded 8 sorties of People's Liberation Army aircraft, 9 naval vessels and one official ship operating near its

territory till 6 am (local time).

In recent weeks, China has visibly increased its capacity to conduct amphibious assaults on Taiwan's beaches with new naval equipment. This includes the formal launch of a unique advanced landing helicopter assault (LHA) vessel and the mass production of floating bridge docks to aid ship unloading during beach landings.

On Tuesday, the Ministry of National Defence (MND) had strongly asserted that the Taiwan Strait is not under the sovereignty of China, emphasising that the freedom of navigation exercised by like-minded countries proves its legal status.

The MND further criticised China's military actions against Taiwan and its neighbouring countries, saying that these actions only highlight China's role as the greatest threat to regional peace and stability.

Sharing a post on X

on Monday, MND said, "The Taiwan Strait is by no means under PRC sovereignty! Like-minded countries' freedom of navigation proves its legal status. #PLA military actions against #Taiwan and its neighbors only reaffirm that the PRC is the greatest threat to regional peace and stability."

The Taiwan-China conflict remained a longstanding geopolitical issue centred on Taiwan's sovereignty. While Taiwan functioned as a de facto independent state with its own government, military, and economy, Beijing considered it a breakaway province under the "One China" policy.

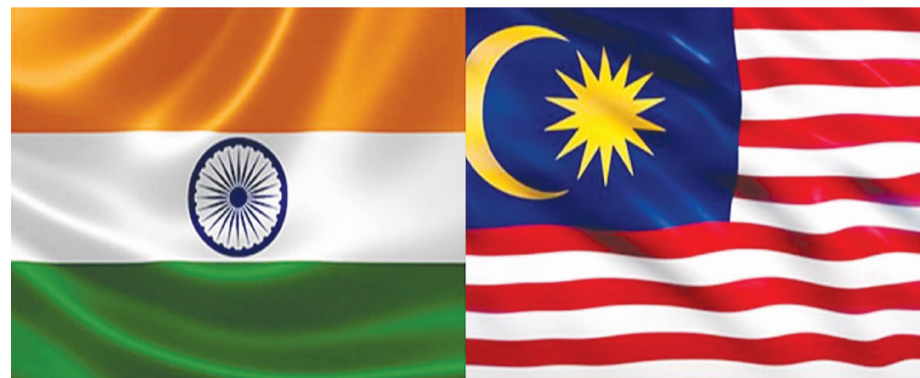
Since the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949), when the Republic of China's government retreated to Taiwan, China had used diplomatic, economic, and military measures to pressure Taiwan, which continued to assert its independence with strong domestic support.

## Malaysia: Defence Secretary co-chairs 13th Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 19 (Agencies): The 13th meeting of Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM) took place in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday and was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Secretary General of Ministry of Defence of Malaysia, Lokman Hakim Bin Ali, the Ministry of Defence noted.

Both of the sides expressed happiness at the growing bilateral defence cooperation with regular engagements between the two Armed Forces in recent years.

As per the Ministry of Defence, the two sides held wide-ranging discussions on effective & practical initiatives to further expand bilateral defence engagements and regional & global issues. Both chairs identified steps to further enhance cooperation in emerging areas



such as cyber security and AI. They also identified ways to deepen the existing collaboration, particularly in the defence industry, maritime security, and multi-lateral engagements and agreed to form a joint focus group to address non-traditional maritime security threats.

India and Malaysia reaffirmed their commitment towards fully implementing the new initiatives under the defence pillar of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, as envisioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and his Malaysian counterpart Dato' Seri

Anwar Ibrahim during the latter's visit to India in August 2024.

The Defence Ministry noted that India and Malaysia also exchanged the finalised Terms of Reference (ToR) on the establishment of Strategic Affairs Working Group. This forum will act as a consultative mechanism intermediate between the MIDCOM and the two sub-committees to progress all aspects of bilateral defence cooperation.

In a significant development, both sides also exchanged the finalised ToR on the

establishment of Su-30 forum as an outcome of MIDCOM. Su-30 Forum will enable closer cooperation between the two Air Forces in exchanging expertise and best practices in Su-30 maintenance.

According to the Defence Ministry, the Defence Secretary highlighted the capability of the Indian defence industry, particularly its potential to collaborate with the Malaysian companies and the Armed Forces in their capability enhancement and modernisation. He congratulated Malaysia on assuming the chair-

manship of ASEAN and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus and wished MoD, Malaysia the best for conduct of ADMM Plus and ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting meetings this year.

India supports ASEAN centrality and unity, which is a crucial element of India's Indo-Pacific Vision. The Defence Secretary reiterated India's support to Malaysia's endeavours as ASEAN chair in promoting a stronger, unified, and prosperous ASEAN that plays a central role in shaping the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region.

India considers Malaysia as an important partner in the Indo-Pacific as Malaysia lies at the confluence of three key foreign policy visions i.e. Act East Policy, SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.

## UK government cracks down on online knife sales after spate of high-profile crimes

LONDON, Feb 19 (Agencies): A new law introduced after a spate of high-profile knife crimes will make it harder for young people to purchase knives online, the UK government announced Wednesday.

The stricter regulation follows several fatal knife crimes involving young people, including the 2024 murder of three girls by teenager Axel Rudakubana, who was able to purchase the blade he used on Amazon, bypassing age verification rules.

"Ronan's Law", named after a 16-year-old murdered in 2022, will require retailers to report "suspicious" and bulk blade purchases to authorities, as well as bolster age verification checks.

The jail terms for retailers who sell knives to under-18s will also be increased from six months to up to two years under the new law.

The punishment "could apply to

an individual who has processed the sale or a CEO of the company", according to a Home Office press release.

"It is horrifying how easy it is for young people to get hold of knives online even though children's lives are being lost, and families and communities are left devastated as a result," interior minister Yvette Cooper said in a statement.

The current law states that retailers must verify the age of the customer before selling a knife and, for those bought online, at the point of collection or delivery.

Under the new rules, online sellers will be required to verify photo identities and ages at the point of sale and delivery.

UK PM Keir Starmer's administration has pledged to halve knife crime in the next decade and has banned zombie-style knives and machetes.

While Britain has some of the strictest gun controls in the world, rampant knife crime has been branded a "national crisis" by Starmer.

In the year leading up to March 2024, there were 262 murders in England and Wales using a knife or sharp instrument, according to the Ben Kinsella Trust, an anti-knife crime charity.

Of those murdered, 57 were under the age of 25.

The new law is named after Ronan Kanda, who was killed three years ago by teenagers who bought knives online and collected them from a post office, without having their identities or ages checked.

The government is also considering a registration scheme that would allow "responsible" online retailers to sell knives.

## Hong Kong and Uyghur communities in Ireland urge govt to address Chinese transnational repression with Wang Yi

DUBLIN, Feb 19 (Agencies): Members of the Hong Kong and Uyghur communities in Ireland have urged the government to bring up the issue of transnational persecution during their scheduled meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Dublin.

According to a report by The Irish Times, Wang, who is also a member of the Chinese Communist Party's Politburo, attended the Munich Security Conference and spoke with top European leaders over the weekend before flying to Dublin to meet with Taoiseach Micheal Martin and Tanaiste Simon Harris.

"Demand concrete actions concerning acts of transnational repression, genocide, and politically motivated imprisonment perpetrated by the People's Republic of China [PRC]," said a statement from organizations that represent Uyghurs and

Hongkongers residing in Ireland as quoted by The Irish Times.

They stated that they wished to bring Chinese governmental surveillance and harassment of diaspora populations in Ireland to the attention of the government, The Irish Times reported.

"It is a matter of Ireland's security as much as it is about the security of [the] person and freedoms of speech, of thought, of assembly being impeded on Irish soil when it comes to dissidents of the Chinese state. We do not feel we can openly exercise our right to protest, for fear of retribution by the regime to our family members back home or within Ireland itself, or to lose our chance to visit our homelands, if the Government's failure to address clandestine activities by the PRC means that individual dissidents and their families could be identified and harassed by the Chinese state," quoted a

The Irish Times report.

They claimed that the European Union has acknowledged China's use of transnational repression against members of the Tibetan, Taiwanese, Hongkonger, and Uyghur minorities, Irish Times reported.

"Just this past week, the Hong Kong authorities detained the aunt and uncle of an exiled Hongkonger activist for interrogation, to punish her for taking part in a community-wide, legal protest in London the previous Saturday," the statement said, as quoted by The Irish Times.

According to the report, incidents such as these have caused a chilling impact on diasporic Hongkongers residing in Ireland and other countries. The European Hong Kong Diaspora Alliance, the Irish Uyghur Cultural Association, and Stand With Hong Kong released a statement

urging the Taoiseach and Tanaiste to bring up issues of repression and human rights with Wang.

"Diplomatic ties and economic growth should be predicated upon a commitment to protect the security of residents in Ireland and to stand up for subjugated communities," they said. "People in Ireland have a right to live free from fear," as quoted by The Irish Times.

Wang is the second top-level Chinese political figure to visit Ireland in just over a year, following a trip by Premier Li Qiang in January 2024, The Irish Times reported.

"Ireland is China's strategic partner for mutually beneficial cooperation. Over recent years, bilateral relations have enjoyed a sound growth momentum," the Chinese foreign ministry said last week when announcing the visit, which is taking place at the request of the Chinese government.

## No point in changing Panama Canal toll system – Vice President

PANAMA CITY, Feb 19 (Agencies): The system of collecting toll from ships in the Panama Canal has proven its effectiveness for 25 years of work, and there is no point in changing it now, Boris Moreno, vice president for operations at the Panama Canal, told Sputnik.

"We see no need in changing the system because it has been

working well for 25 years," Moreno said.

The system of setting a price for passing through the canal based on a vessel's load capacities is confirmed by its authorities and the Panamanian government after a public hearing, he said, adding that all potential clients may attend the hearing and express their wor-

ries and disagreements, which "are being taken into account."

Only two countries have the benefit of free transit through the Panama Canal. Apart from the US, Colombian military vessels also have a right of free passage, the executive also said, adding that "apart from those two exemptions, all countries pay the same."





## GDC Kathua organises lecture on “Stress Management Through Spirituality in Younger Generation”

Top News Report

KATHUA, Feb 19: The Department of Computer Science at Govt. Degree College Kathua organised an expert lecture on “Stress Management through Spirituality in the Younger Generation” on Wednesday.

The distinguished speaker was Colonel Manoj Sharma, Commanding Officer of the 126 TA Battalion at Madhopur.

Col. Manoj Sharma, whose career includes service along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, the western borders of Punjab, and with the United Nations Peacekeeping force in Congo and as part of Mobile Training Team in Myanmar to train the Myanmar Army for the UN mission, shared invaluable insights and practical guidance on navigating the challenges of stress in today's world. Drawing from his extensive real-life experiences, he emphasized the importance of integrating spirituality into



daily life as a powerful tool for stress management and mental well-being. His anecdotes and wisdom resonated deeply with the audience, inspiring a holistic approach to wellness.

Prof. Seema Mir, Principal of Govt. Degree College Kathua, emphasized the importance of creating a supportive environment for students to address mental health concerns and encouraged future events of

this nature.

She noted that the lecture provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and reflection on stress management among young people, highlighting the importance of acknowledging these challenges for holistic development.

Prof. Mir stated that by fostering conversations about spirituality and mental health, the college aims to empower students

to lead balanced and fulfilling lives.

Prof. Shiv Kumar, Head of the Department of Computer Science, delivered the vote of thanks.

He emphasized the role of such motivational lectures in guiding students on the profound impact of spirituality in navigating modern life.

He reiterated the college's commitment to providing students with the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in all aspects of their lives, recognizing the importance of mental health and holistic well-being.

The program was coordinated by Dr. Gotam Singh, Prof. Deepak Gupta, Prof. Bharat and Dr. Deepshikha Jamwal. Also present were senior faculty members including Prof. Sanjay Karulupia, Prof. Ravinder Kaur, Dr. Ram Singh, Dr. Yash Paul Sharma, NCC ANO's Dr. Pinky, Prof. Ajay Sharma and NSS Programme Officer, Dr. Kulbir Singh.

## GDC Ramgarh commemorates 75 Years of Adoption of Indian Constitution



Top News Report

RAMGARH, Feb 19: To commemorate the 75 years of the adoption of the Indian Constitution, the Department of Sociology at Government Degree College (GDC) Ramgarh organized a Panel Discussion on “Fundamental Duties” to the Constitution.

The event was held under the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Geetanjali Andotra, Principal of the College.

Priya Sharma, Head of

the Department of Sociology, began the event with a brief introduction, highlighting India's constitutional journey and the significance of Constitution Day.

She emphasized the key features of the Indian Constitution, describing it as the bedrock of the nation's democracy.

The panel discussion focused on the fundamental duties enshrined in the Indian Constitution, with distinguished speakers shedding light on their importance in

fostering a sense of responsibility and civic duty among citizens.

The panelists (students) including Alisha Menia, Abiseik Bhagat, Amit Kumar, Kamini Chib, Tamana Attri, Aruna Kumari, Taniya Kumari, Vanshika Sharma, Ruhi Devi, Guljar Bibi, Neeru Bala and Rahul Kumar deliberated on various aspects of fundamental duties, including their relevance in contemporary society and the role they play in upholding the values and principles of the Constitution.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Priya Sharma, expressing heartfelt gratitude to everyone for their contributions, which made the celebration a resounding success.

## Mission Director JJM, Khurshid Shah takes comprehensive review of JJM in Kulgam

Top News Report

KULGAM, Feb 19: Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), J&K, Khurshid Ahmad Shah along today reviewed the implementation of JJM in district Kulgam through virtual mode. The chair was appraised about the various components under execution through a power point presentation.

As per the figures 143 schemes are in different phases of execution in the district out of which 102 schemes have been completed so far.

337 civil works which include Dug wells, bore wells, Rapid sand filtration plants, Slow Sand Filtration plants, Over Head Tanks and laying of pipe networks have been allotted out of which 244 works stand



completed.

The chair took a comprehensive review of all components and directed the concerned officers to give a new impetus to the works stalled due to harsh weather conditions. The Mission director emphasized the need to complete the schemes on time so that the beneficiaries of these schemes are benefitted.

The Chair directed all officers to speed up the process of Har Ghar

Certification of reported villages within 10 days, as per the guidelines of National Jal Jeevan Mission, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India.

The meeting was attended by top Jal Shakti Officials of the district, Consultant JJM, and Project Manager DPMU besides representatives of Third Party Monitoring Agency (TPIA) also attended the meeting.

## BLK-Max Super Speciality Hospital launches Ortho Spine Surgery OPD Services in Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 19: BLK-Max Super Speciality Hospital, today announced the launch of its dedicated Ortho Spine Surgery Services OPD services, in partnership with the city-based Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity Hospital. The OPD launch is yet another patient-centric step taken by the hospital to empower patients with accessibility and quality healthcare services without the inconvenience of travelling to another city.

The OPD Services were launched in the presence of Dr. Puneet Girdhar, Principal Director & Head, Ortho Spine Surgery, at BLK-Max Hospital along with Dr. Harmeet Singh Kapoor – Managing and Medical Director, Group Director – Emergency & Trauma, Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity Hospital, Jammu. Dr. Puneet Girdhar will be available for OPD at Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity Hospital, Jammu on 2nd Wednesday of every month from 11 am to 1 pm for primary consultations.



During the OPD launch Dr. Puneet Girdhar, Principal Director & Head, Ortho Spine Surgery, at BLK-Max Hospital said “The launch of this OPD reflects our mission to improve healthcare access and outcomes for residents in Jammu and surrounding areas. From non-surgical management to minimally invasive surgical techniques, the OPD will offer a full spectrum of treatments to address various ortho and spinal disorders. By bringing specialized orthopaedic and spinal care to the local community, we aim to enhance the quality of life for our patients and reduce the

need for long-distance travel to receive top-tier medical attention.”

The new Orthopaedic Spine Surgery OPD is part of BLK-Max Hospital ongoing commitment to providing exceptional medical services and addressing the growing needs of the community. It will offer a comprehensive range of services, including advanced diagnostic tools, personalized treatment plans, and innovative surgical procedures.

Dr. Harmeet Singh Kapoor – Managing and Medical Director, Group Director – Emergency & Trauma, Ujala Cygnus

JK Medicity Hospital, Jammu said “We are really happy to have collaborated with one of the best Orthopedic and Spine Surgery Centres in the country and strive to raise awareness about the related issues. The newly launched OPDs will offer consultation and encourage people to lead a healthy lifestyle as well as provide access to the best of technology. This OPD is going to be a valuable addition to the healthcare infrastructure of Jammu by providing world-class treatment solutions to patients in the city right at their doorsteps. Our services will include all consultations and investigations and provide end to end services for the treatment”

BLK-Max Hospital is dedicated to raising public awareness about important health issues and providing accessible solutions to promote healthier, happier lives. The hospital emphasizes a preventive approach to healthcare, with a strong focus on combating obesity and its related risks.

## GDC Samba hosts Intra-District Volleyball Tournament

Top News Report

SAMBA, Feb 19: A two days Intra-District Volleyball Tournament was organised at SPPND GDC Samba. The event was graced by Prof. (Dr.) Twinkle Suri, Principal of the College as Chief Guest.

The welcome address was given by Dr. Pankaj Bandhoria, Convener, Sports Board, GDC Samba.

The participating col-

leges included GDC Samba, GDC Vijaypur, GDC Ramgarh and GDC Ghagwal.

The Tournament commenced with an exciting match between GDC Samba and GDC Ghagwal followed by second match between GDC Vijaypur and GDC Ramgarh. The matches ended with a decisive 2-0 victory for GDC Samba and GDC Ramgarh.

The Principal con-



gratulated the winning teams for their exceptional performance and exhorted that the sports

tourney is an initiative to encourage teamwork, discipline and a self-confidence thereby

channelizing the energy of our young students towards fostering physical fitness and mental well-being.

Assoc. Prof. Narayan Dutt, HOD Physics and Dr. Banpreet Kour, IQAC Coordinator were also present on the occasion. The whole event was coordinated by Prof. Meenakshi Thakur, Co-Convener Sports Board and Pradeep, PTI.

## GDC Marheen organizes awareness programme on ‘New Criminal Laws’



Top News Report

MARHEEN, Feb 19: Jammu & Kashmir Police Department in collaboration with IQAC, GDC Marheen organized awareness programme on the theme “New Criminal Laws”. The occasion was graced by Chief Guest Anshuman Dubey (CPO) and Special Guests were Nitish Sharma (DySP), Ajay Chib (SHO, Rajbagh).

The whole programme was organized under the patronage of Principal of the college Prof. (Dr.) Anupama Gupta.

The programme covered the three topics such as Cyber Crime and Digital Safety, Women's Safety and

Empowerment and Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation.

The programme started with the lighting of the lamp along with the recitation of Saraswati Vandana by the students. In the event students and police officials raising awareness regarding Zero FIRs/ E-FIRs, online Protecting Privacy, safeguarding personal information, online scams and exploitation, cyber bullying.

Further, they also highlighted the current state of women's safety in India, the initiatives taken by the government, the challenges faced, and the role of technology in enhancing safety measures.

Moreover, they also

discussed Juvenile Justice System in India, Current Legal Framework, Operational Aspects and Challenges and Important sections of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.

Students actively participated and clear their doubts by highlighting a number of questions after their discussion.

The event was managed by Dr. Balbinder Singh, Prof. Anoop Sharma, Dr. Munisha Devi and Prof. Manu Saini. The other members presented in the event were Dr. Arun Dev Singh, Prof. Diksha Sharma, Prof. Suman, Dr. Meenu Sharma, Prof. Naresh Kumar, Prof. Naresh Kumar, Prof. Saquib and Prof. Arpana.

## Speedball Camp organized at Divine Light Convent School

Top News Report

R S PURA, Feb 19: Divine Light Convent School hosted an engaging and energetic Speedball Camp, bringing a new wave of enthusiasm among students.

The camp was conducted by Sunny Nanda, General Secretary of the J&K Sports Speedball Association, and witnessed an overwhelming response from students eager to learn and participate in this fast-paced sport.

The event was graced



by the esteemed presence of Chairman Engineer Vivek Gupta, Principal Dr. Anita Sharma, and the school's sports faculty, who actively encouraged students

to embrace this emerging sport. The Speedball session introduced students to the fundamentals of the game, enhancing their agility, coordination, and

reflexes. Expressing their gratitude to Sunny Nanda for his valuable guidance and support, the school administration announced its intent

to introduce Speedball into the school curriculum under the CBSE framework from April onwards.

This step aims to provide students with an excellent opportunity for skill development, physical fitness, and engagement in modern sports.

The successful execution of the Speedball Camp reaffirmed Divine Light Convent School's commitment to holistic education, promoting sports excellence alongside academic achievements.



## Awareness Lecture on 'Career Prospects in Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Microbiology' held at GGM Science College

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 19: The department of Biotechnology and NSS unit of Govt. Gandhi Memorial Science College, Jammu, successfully organized an Awareness Lecture on 'Career Prospects in Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Bioinformatics' in the college's Conference Hall.

The event, aimed at guiding students about emerging career opportunities in these dynamic fields, was well-attended by faculty members and students from various disciplines.

The lecture featured two distinguished speakers, Dr. Ankit Mahajan, Assistant Professor, School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu and Dr. S. Bharathiraja, Assistant professor, School of Biotechnology, University of Jammu who provided deep insights into the latest advancements, research opportunities, and career pathways in Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Bioinformatics.



chemistry, Microbiology, and Bioinformatics.

The session was highly interactive, with students and NSS volunteers actively engaging in discussions and seeking guidance on academic and professional growth.

Principal Prof. (Dr.) Romesh Kumar Gupta appreciated the initiative, emphasizing the importance of such awareness programs in shaping students' futures.

He expressed gratitude to the resource person for their valuable contribution and encouraged students to explore these fields for promising career opportunities.

Prof. Kiran Bala, Head of the Department, Biotechnology coordinated the event and ensured the smooth execution of the program.

Prof. Neha Sharma, NSS Pro-

gram officer made significant contributions in coordinating the event and facilitating student participation. Her dedication and efforts were instrumental in making the program a success.

The proceedings of the event were conducted by Dr. Nancy Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Biotechnology.

Other faculty members present during the event were Prof. Gourav Gupta, Prof. Neha Sharma, Prof. Arti Heer, Prof. Suram Singh, Prof. Asha Sharma and Dr. Richa Sharma.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Neha Mahajan, Assistant Professor, Department of Biotechnology acknowledging the efforts of the organizing team and the enthusiastic participation of students.

GGM Science College continues to be committed to providing its students with exposure to the latest career trends and educational opportunities in science and technology.

## ABDPSS organizes Shri Ramstuti, Hanuman Chalisa



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 19: Akhil Bhartiya dharam Prachar Sewa Samiti (ABDPSS) organized a grand Shriram-stuti and Hanuman Chalisa program at Channi Himmat, Jammu.

The event was led by Vinay Sharma Social Worker and Aayushman Sharma. Special Guest Sunil Sharma, National Coordinator Akhil Bhartiya Dharam Prachar Sewa Samiti graced the occasion with his esteemed presence alongwith Swami Mahesh diwedi.

The program commenced with the recitation of Vedic mantras, Prarthna "Hey Prabhu Ananad-data Gyan Humko Dijiye" and thereafter Samoohik Path of Shriram-stuti and Hanuman Chalisa, in which a large number of devotees participated alongwith family members. Specially young generation also attended the event, adding to

its significance. After the path, the speakers highlighted the devotion of Lord Hanumanji, his incredible contribution towards society, and his selfless service to Lord Rama.

They emphasized how Hanumanji's exemplary deeds in difficult circumstances continue to inspire society and remain relevant today.

After the completion of Shri Ram stuti and the Samoohik Hanuman Chalisa, a Sat-sang session was held where devotees gained spiritual knowledge and inspiration from the Acharya Manoj Kumar coming from Ayodhya. The gathering provided the attendees with an opportunity to engage deeply in worship, fostering inner peace and devotion to Lord Ramji and Hanumanji.

Sunil Sharma informed that over the years, many initiatives have been launched by Samiti to expand the knowledge of the sacred

scripture- Bhagwat Gita which can infuse the feelings of love for humanity and God in every body. For the last 10 years Akhil Bhartiya Dharam Prachar Sewa Samiti launched one more service towards society i.e. free distribution of Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta Granth (not book) in the society to spread the message of Lord Krishna on the directions and teachings of Bhrahmgyani Guruji.

The event saw active participation from key figures such as Kewal Krishan Sharma Bhuvneshwari Sharma, Aayushman Sharma, Rohit verma, Sanjeev Sharma, Prateek Kumar, Sandeep kumar Sounanya, Om parkash Sharma, Manmohan Sharma, Sanjay Yadav, rahul yadav, Vimbo Devi, Seema jamwal, Sonia Kumari, shalini devi, Sawitri Sharma, vimal kumar, srinjan devi whose active contributions were pivotal in making the event a grand success.

## NMOPS Ramban announces key leadership Changes

### Top News Report

RAMBAN, Feb 19: The District Executive Committee meeting of National Movement For Old Pension Scheme (NMOPS) Ramban convened on Wednesday through virtual mode.

This significant gathering witnessed pivotal decisions, including the elevation of Vijay Singh, District President, to the esteemed State Executive Council.

Furthermore, Mohd



Irfan Shan was unanimously elected as the new District President of NMOPS Ramban.

The meeting drew an impressive attendance of esteemed



leaders, including UT Convenor Jalil Ahmed Sheikh, Senior Leader Nasir ul Haq Bhat, UT Vice President Ajeet Singh, Ashraf Hussain, Vijay Singh, Rafiq Bhat

Nasir Ahmed Mir, Mohd Iqbal Mugal, Mohd Amin Dev, Shabir Ahmed bhat, Zakir Hussain, Mustafa Kamal, Wasim Sajad Wani, Farooq bhat, Atta ul Rehman, Mahinder Chib, Satinder Singh, Vaqur Shaan, Asif Iqbal, Farooq Mir, Maqsood Naik, Muktar bhat, Mushtaq Ahmed Dar, Fareed Ahmed, Iqbal Sheikh, Azar ul haq, Manzoor Ahmed, Altaf Hussain, Shabir Bhat, Akib Muneer, Zakir Hussain, and several others.

This strategic move is anticipated to bring fresh momentum to the organization. The team eagerly looks forward to working under the guidance of the new leadership.

UT Convenor & Prabhari Ramban, Jalil Ahmed, congratulated Irfan Shan on his elected as District President Ramban and Vijay Singh on his elevation to the State Executive Council JKUT.

## All MLAs shall hold deliberation on growing Drug Menace, pass resolution of death penalty to drug mafia in J&K: Team Jammu



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 19: Making a fervent appeal to all the elected Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to cut their party lines and unanimously hold serious deliberation on increasing Drug menace and number of unreported deaths of youth due to suspected drug overdose, here in Jammu and Kashmir, Chairman, Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal on Wednesday demanded death penalty for those who are proved guilty for smuggling and selling Narcotics and ruining lives of future generation.

Addressing a press conference at Press Club Jammu, here today, Team Jammu chief along with Dr Ashish Gupta and Rajesh Kapoor today voiced their serious concern over increasing drug menace and despite number of initiatives taken by J&K Police and other allied agencies.

Zorawar Singh Jamwal urged J&K administration to fulfil its commitment of dealing drug peddlers with iron hands.

Team Jammu chief observed that ahead of the upcoming Assembly Budget Session in Jammu and Kashmir, a fierce debate is unfolding over the proposed liquor ban.

Several MLAs from the PDP and National Conference are preparing to introduce a private member's bill advocating for a state-wide prohibition on liquor.

Zorawar Singh Jamwal

who is heading an organization that has been fighting against drug abuse for over a decade, stated that if the government introduces a clear policy on liquor prohibition, Team Jammu will welcome it.

He appealed to all the MLAs, though, from different political parties to hold series debate on Drug Menace in Assembly and unanimously pass a resolution that includes death penalty for those who are proved guilty for smuggling and selling Narcotics and ruining lives of future generation.

However, Team Jammu has also raised serious concerns about the government's stance on the rising drug abuse in Jammu. He pointed out that hundreds of young lives have been lost due to drug addiction, and the crime rate has surged as a result of the increasing prevalence of drugs in the region.

Team Jammu has urged the government to address both liquor prohibition and the worsening drug crisis simultaneously. They demanded that authorities identify and take strict action against those responsible for the spread of drug abuse.

Expressing concern over the growing addiction among youth, Chairman, Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal, emphasized the need for constant police surveillance at known drug-selling hotspots in Jammu and called for a comprehensive crackdown on drug smugglers. Coming down heavily


on those "black sheep" in administration who are taking sensitive issue of drug menace lightly, Zorawar Singh Jamwal pointed out that "Despite years of law enforcement efforts, the drug mafia remains deeply entrenched in Jammu and Kashmir. Why authorities have been unable to completely dismantle drug networks and urged the government to ensure transparency by maintaining accurate records of drug-related deaths. We call for concrete measures to break the supply chain and intensify anti-narcotics operations".

A key issue highlighted during the press conference was the lack of reliable data on youth affected by drug addiction. Many cases go unreported due to social stigma, while drug-related deaths are often misclassified under other causes, such as accidents or health conditions.

Furthermore, inadequate coordination between law enforcement, healthcare institutions, and social agencies makes it difficult to assess the true extent of the crisis. Without a dedicated tracking system, policymaking remains ineffective.

Team Jammu also emphasized the international dimension of the crisis, asserting that Pakistan has hatched a deep rooted conspiracy in fueling Narco-Terrorism in J&K.

Zorawar Singh Jamwal urged the government to take a firm and proactive stance against cross-border drug smuggling, which directly contributes to the rising tide of drug-related violence. He further said that "direct fall out of this conspiracy is that "hundreds of young lives have been lost due to drug addiction, and the crime rate has surged as a result of the increasing prevalence of drugs in the region".



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