

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2025

Daily Evening Newspaper

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**John Abraham says actors' inflated fees, entourage costs are hurting Bollywood**



**India's approach to Africa based on mutually-beneficial ties, unlike 'extractive' models: EAM**



**Trump administration creates registry for immigrants who are in US illegally**

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## BRIEFLY

**"Wishing everyone a blessed & Happy Maha Shivratri": CM Omar Abdullah Extends wishes on Mahashivratri**

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26 : Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday extended his greetings to the nation on the occasion of Mahashivratri.

In a post on X, CM\_JKN wrote, "Wishing everyone a blessed and Happy Maha Shivratri! May this sacred occasion bring peace, prosperity, and divine blessings to all and guide us towards strength, wisdom, and harmony."

### Driver killed after truck plunges into deep gorge in Kishtwar

SRINAGAR, Feb 26 (Agencies): A driver was killed after his truck met with an accident in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, officials said.

A police official told agency that a truck rolled down a deep gorge on Kishtwar-Padder National Highway (NH244) at Banjwar, leaving the driver dead.

He identified the deceased as Mohammad Saleem.

### J&K Police registers first-ever e-FIR Via e-Mail

AWANTIPORA, Feb 26 (Agencies): In a sophisticated move toward digital policing, Police Station Khrew has registered its first electronic First Information Report (e-FIR) following an email complaint, according to the statement.

Mushtaq Ahmed Bhat, a resident of New Colony Khrew, filed the complaint against Adil Ahmad Bhat and Bilal Ahmad Bhat, both residents of New Colony Khrew.

The complainant stated that they allegedly assaulted his whole family causing injury to them. The complainant has supported the complaint with an OPD ticket from PHC Khrew and a copy of the Aadhaar card as evidential proof, said the statement.

Upon examining the complaint, cognisance

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## Army Chief visits French Army's 3rd Division, discusses joint training plans including Exercise SHAKTI

NEW DELHI, Feb 26 (Agencies): Indian Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi visited the French Army's 3rd Division at Fort Ganteaume, where he was briefed on its role and the future roadmap for joint training between India and France, including Exercise SHAKTI, set to take place in France later this year.

As part of his visit, the Army Chief will also witness a dynamic demonstration of the Scorpion Division, featuring live firing exercises on Wednesday, according to an official statement from the Ministry of Defence.

Exercise SHAKTI is an annual joint military drill conducted by the armies of both nations to enhance interoperability



and coordination in tactical operations.

"Exercise SHAKTI is an annual joint exercise held between the armies of the two nations aimed at promoting synergy in joint tactical operations and enhancing interoperability," the Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI) wrote in their

X post.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Defence, General Dwivedi arrived in France on an official visit from February 24 to 27 as part of efforts to "bolster" India-France defence cooperation.

On Tuesday, he travelled to Marseille to gain insights into the mission

and role of the 3rd Division, India-France training cooperation, and the French Army's modernisation programme, 'Scorpion.'

"The following day, General Dwivedi will visit Carpiagne to witness a dynamic demonstration of the Scorpion Division with live firing exercises," the MoD statement added.

Earlier, on Monday, the COAS met senior French military officials at Les Invalides. The day began with a Guard of Honour, followed by discussions with General Pierre Schill, Chief of Staff of the French Army. "The aim of the meeting will be to foster stronger military ties between the two nations," the Defence

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## Devotees throng Shankaracharya Temple, Srinagar to pay obeisance on Maha Shivratri



SRINAGAR, Feb 26 (Agencies): Amid rain, a large number of devotees thronged the Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar to pay obeisance on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, being celebrated with religious

fervour on Wednesday. In Kashmir, Shivratri is locally known as Herath, and as part of their unique traditions, Pandits observe nightlong prayers and offer walnuts, which are placed in a watum (earthen pot)

as a sacred ritual.

Despite the inclement weather, tourists and devotees, including men, women, and children, patiently queued up along the stairs of the Shankaracharya Temple, perched on a hill overlooking the picturesque Dal Lake. Braving the rain and dense fog since morning, they eagerly awaited their turn to offer prayers.

Authorities in Srinagar had made adequate arrangements to facilitate smooth and hassle-free visits for devotees at the temple and other places of worship.

A group of tourists from Mumbai, Himachal Pradesh, and Delhi was delighted after paying obeisance on a

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## Terrorists fire at Army vehicle in Rajouri

RAJOURI/JAMMU, Feb 26 (Agencies): An army vehicle came under fire from suspected terrorists in a forward village near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said.

There were no immediate reports of any casualties in the brief firing



near Phal village in the Sunderbani sector, they said.

They added that the terrorists, believed to be

hiding in a forest, fired a few rounds at the army vehicle passing through the area — considered a traditional infiltration route for militants.

The troops returned fire while reinforcements were rushed to neutralise the terrorists, the officials said.

The army has launched a cordon and search operation in the area.

## BSF foil infiltration bid along IB, intruder shot dead

JAMMU, Feb 26 (Agencies): Border Security Force (BSF) personnel foiled an infiltration bid along the International Border in Pathankot sector, officials said on Wednesday.

An official, said, "BSF personnel

observed a suspicious movement across the International Border at Tashpatan, Pathankot border area.

An intruder was observed crossing the IB, he was challenged by the alert troops but he paid no heed and kept on moving; BSF

troops sensing threat neutralised the intruder."

The official said that the identity of the intruder is being ascertained.

"Strong protest will be lodged with Pakistan Rangers at the highest level," the official added.

## Helicopter ride to Sunshine Point in Gulmarg thrills tourists



SRINAGAR, Feb 26 (Agencies): A helicopter ride to the breathtaking Sunshine Point in the

upper reaches of Gulmarg is fast becoming a major attraction for tourists, adding a new

dimension to adventure tourism in Kashmir.

Owned by Majeed Bakshi, a Kashmiri entrepreneur currently residing in a European country, the \$5 million helicopter was initially used for ferrying skiers to higher slopes. However, Bakshi told agency that they have now started offering helicopter rides for tourists, providing a unique aerial experience of Gulmarg's

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## Rains, snow to continue in Jammu and Kashmir till Feb 28: MeT

SRINAGAR, Feb 26 (Agencies): The Meteorological department today forecast more light to moderate rains and snow over both Jammu and Kashmir divisions till February 28.

An official told that in past 24 hours, the higher reaches of Jammu & Kashmir received light to moderate rain & snow, while heavy snowfall occurred over isolated higher reaches in the meanwhile.

He said the weather will likely remain generally cloudy with light to moderate rain & snow at most places with isolated heavy rain & snow

over both Kashmir and Jammu divisions till February 28.

The official while issuing advisory said that temporary disruption of surface transportation mainly over Sadhna Pass, Razdhan Pass, Sonamarg-Zojila-Gumri Axis, Mughal Road, Sinthan Pass and other major roads of hilly districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

He advised tourists, travelers and transporters to plan their journey accordingly while following advisories being issued from administration and traffic department. The official fur-

ther said that farmers are advised to suspend irrigation and other farm operations.

From March 1-2, the weather conditions will likely remain generally cloudy with light rain and snow at isolated to scattered places. While on March 3, there is a possibility of light to moderate rain & snow at many places of Jammu and Kashmir.

From March 4-6, the weather will remain generally dry, the official said.

The official maintained that there will be a significant fall in day temperatures in coming days.

# GupShup

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**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With tearful eyes and a heavy heart we inform our nears and dears that our dear father **Prof. (Dr) Surrinder Nath Koul** breathed his last on 18.02.2025. His **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed at "Akhnor Ghat" on 27.02.2025 (Thursday) and **Assembly** will be held at our residence ( H No. 33, Lane No. 1, Block-A, Roop Nagar Enclave, Jammu) on 27.02.2025 at 11.30 AM.



**Prof. (Dr) Surrinder Nath Koul**

**Grief Stricken :**

**(Daughters-in-law and Sons)**  
Ms. Anuradha and Mr Lalit Kumar Koul  
Ms. Hemlata Koul and Mr Surinder Kumar Jee  
Ms. Sunita Koul **(Daughter)**  
**Daughter and Son-in-law**  
Ms. Princy Koul and Mr Pankaj Jee  
**Grand Children**  
Akshay, Vatsala, Deepankar and Ishha  
**Mobile : 7006052065, 7889745153, 9811871349, 7006954517**

**Tenth Day Kriya**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of **Shri Dwarika Nath Dhar** of YK. Para, who left for his heavenly abode on 22nd February 2025 at his residence "House No. 23/3, Netar Kothian, Lower Bama, Jammu." The **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed on Sunday, 2nd March 2025, at Akhnor, Jammu and "assembly will be held at Muthi Ghat, Near Directorate of Education, Jammu, at 11.30 AM."



**Shri Dwarika Nath Dhar**

**Grief-stricken:**  
Smt. Poojy Dhar (Wife)  
Smt. Parmeshwan, Wife of Late Prem Nath Dhar (Sister-in-law)  
Smt. Veena Ji & Brij Lal Dhar (Sister-in-law and Brother)  
Smt. Ashu Ji & Bushan Lal Dhar (Sister-in-law and Brother) (Brother-in-law and Sister)  
Shri P. K. Sapru & Smt. Phoolia Dhar (Daughter-in-law and Son)  
Smt. Prana Dhar & Arter Krishan Dhar (Daughter-in-law and Son)  
Shri Ragandhar Dhar (Son)  
Shri Shadhi Lal Dhar & Shikha Dhar (Son and Daughter-in-law)  
Smt. Archana Dhar & Rakesh Dhar (Daughter-in-law and Son)  
Smt. Pitche & M. K. Hengoo (Daughter and Son-in-law)  
Smt. Kiran & Shri Nana Jee Pandita (Daughter and Son-in-law)  
Ms. Binny & Shri Sanjay Dhar (Daughter and Son-in-law)  
Ms. Renu & Shri Rakesh Pandita (Daughter and Son-in-law)  
Ms. Anita & Shri Sanjay Razdan (Daughter and Son-in-law)  
**Grandchildren:**  
Akhil, Ayush, Nikin, Nidhi, Riya, Arushi  
Malun side mourning will be held at the above-mentioned address.

**Contact:**

**9419929904, 7889983695, 9877365046**

**TENTH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Bimla Huku**, W/o Ashok Huku, 72 C/3, Om Nagar, opposite Elite Public School, Udhaywala, Borhi (J&K) who left for heavenly abode on 19-02-2025. **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed on Tuesday (28-02-2025) at Akhnor, followed by an Assembly at Muthi Ghat at 11:00 am Sharp.



**Smt. Bimla Huku**

**Grief Stricken:**  
**Smt. Bimla Huku (Husband)**  
Sh. Ishan and Smt. Priya (Son and Daughter in law)  
Smt. Esha Wali and Sh. Amit Wali (Daughter and Son in law)  
**Sister-in-law and Brother-in-law**  
Smt. Rita & Sh. Brij Nath Kaul  
Smt. Urmila and Sh. P.K. Raina  
Smt. Sunita and Sh. Rajiv Razdan  
**Grand Daughters**  
Aadya, Aahana, Nishtha & Krishna  
**Contact Numbers Ph:7006194209, 9419117620**

**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of **Sh. Sujeet Chiken** S/o Late Sh. Prem Nath Chiken, R/o H No. 66, Sec 4, Colonel's Colony, Bohri, Jammu, presently at, 408 A Shreeram Shivalay East, Lohegaon, Pune, Maharashtra, left for his heavenly abode on 18-02-2025.



**Sh. Sujeet Chiken**

**TENTH DAY KRIYA** will be performed on 27-02-2025 at 11:30 a.m. at Alandi Ghat, Pune.

**GRIEF STRICKEN:**

**CHIKEN'S, NAZIR'S, DHAR'S, BHAT'S**  
**MOB: 9419225773, 6006898778, 8855008243.**

**BARKHI**

*One Year has passed since you left us for the heavenly abode. The pain of losing you will never fade, but your blessings are always with us and we always feel your gracious presence around us.* **BARKHI** of **Sh. Romesh Chander Ji (Billa Ji)** S/O Sh. Dwarka Nath shall be performed on Thursday, 27th February at our residence, 192 Ashok Nagar, backside Sheelta Mata Mandir, Nai Basti, Jammu.



**Sh. Romesh Chander Ji (Billa Ji)**

**Deeply Remembered By**

**Darshana Gupta (Wife)**  
**Son and daughter in law**  
Aman Mahajan and Rimjim Mahajan  
**Daughters and sons in law**  
Sheetal Gupta and Kamal Mahajan  
Sarita Gupta and Rajeev Gupta  
Karishma Mahajan and Sahil Gupta  
**Brothers and Sisters in law**  
Bodh Raj Gupta and Pushpa Gupta  
Rakesh Kumar Gupta and Urnil Gupta  
Kewal Krishan Gupta and Anju Gupta and the whole Mahajan family.  
Ph no. 9469694697-[M/S DN Traders]

**10TH DAY/KRIYA**

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad & untimely demise of **Mrs. Remi Gupta (Teacher)** W/o Sh. Rajesh Gupta R/o H.No. 350-1/P Extn. Khoo Wali Gali Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, who left for her heavenly abode on 17-02-2025.



**Mrs. Remi Gupta (Teacher)**

**10TH DAY** will be performed on Wednesday 26th Feb at 11 AM at Laxmi Narayan Temple Gandhi Nagar (Back side).

**KRIYA** will be performed on Saturday 1st March 2025 at their residence.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

**Sh. Rajesh Gupta - Husband**  
Ranjay Gupta - Son  
Rachel Gupta - Daughter  
**Brothers-in-law and Sisters-in-law**  
Sh. Ashok & Smt. Suman Gupta  
Sh. Rajinder and Smt. Sunita Gupta  
Sh. Navesh and Smt. Veena Gupta  
Sh. Navesh Gupta - Brother-in-law  
Smt. Santosh Gupta - Sister-in-law  
Smt. Prem and Sh. Bishan Dass Gupta - Sister-in-law and Brother-in-law  
Smt. Sharda Gupta - Mother  
Smt. Rashmi & Sh. Inder Gupta - Sister and Brother-in-law  
Smt. Ruchi & Sh. Vikram Gupta - do-  
Sh. Anshul Gupta - Brother  
Mithila, Akhil, Vaishavi - Nephew & Niece  
**Mob No: 9419194186, 7006355345, 7006062765, 9419369353, 9419149296**

**10TH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Late Sh. Hans Raj Sharma** S/o Late Pt. Sh. Hari Saran R/o H.No. 310, Street No. 11, Shakti Nagar, Jammu.



**Late Sh. Hans Raj Sharma**

**10th Day Kriya** will be performed on 27th Feb 2025.

**Kriya** will be performed on 28th Feb 2025 at 11 am.

**Uthala** will be performed on 3rd March 2025 (Monday) at 4 pm at Samiti Bhawan (Community Hall) Gurha (Bakshi Nagar), Jammu.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Sh. Kuldeep Sharma (Son)  
Smt. Mainka Sharma (Daughter-in-law)  
Sh. Ravi Sharma (Son)  
Smt. Shalvi Sharma (Daughter-in-law)  
Sh. Jai Kumar Sharma (Son-in-law)  
Smt. Kiran Bala (Daughter)  
**Grand Children:**  
Shubam, Deepali, Dhruv, Mehak, Shirali & Adhav  
**Mob.: 9906382664, 7889771626**

**10TH DAY /KRIYA/UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Late Sh. Prithvi Raj Abrol** S/o Late Sh. Des Raj Abrol R/o H. No. 251A, Lane No. 10, Shakti Nagar, Jammu.



**Late Sh. Prithvi Raj Abrol**

**10TH DAY** will be performed on 25th Feb 2025 (Tuesday) from 11 am at our residence.

**KRIYA** will be performed on 28th Feb 2025 (Friday) at 12 Noon.

**UTHALA** will be performed on 3rd March 2025 (Friday) at 4 pm at Arya Smaj Mandir, Bakshi Nagar, Opp. Relaxo Showroom.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

**Son & Daughter in law**  
Rakesh Abrol & Sapana Gupta  
Neel Kamal & Satish Gandotra - Daughter & Son in Law  
Neeru & Abdul Hafeez - Daughter & Son in Law  
**Grand Children:** Bharat, Gautam, Sharay, Ayat  
**MOBILE NO 9419164484, 9149705350**

**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved Mother **Smt. Shobawati Raina** W/o. Lt. Sh. Sham Lal Raina erstwhile of Shodpani Nawa, Pulwama presently residing at Qtr. No. 20, Block No 3, Lane No 01 Jagti Township.



**Smt. Shobawati Raina**

**TENTH DAY KRIYA** will be performed on 2nd March 2025 at Bhadrakali Temple Thalwal Mandal Jammu and assembly will be held at Muthi Gath Near Directorate of School Education at 10:30am.

**GRIEF STRICKEN :**

**Son's & Daughter in Law**  
Sh. Bushan Lal Raina & Smt. Tosha Raina (7006833945)  
Smt. Babita Raina & Lt. Sh. Gopi Krishan Raina (7006038300)  
Sh. Dwarika Nath Raina & Smt. Pinky Raina (7889918854)  
Sh. Kuldeep Raina & Smt. Babita Raina (8082899141)  
**Daughters & Son in Law**  
Smt. Tosha Kachroo & Sh. S. L. Kachroo  
Smt. Basanti Bhat & Lt. Sh. Kaka Ji Bhat  
**Grand Childrens :**  
Amit, Ashish, Anshu, Aman & Jatin Raina  
Sunil, Sandeep Kachroo & Ashwani Bhat

**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we would like to inform sad passing away of our dearly beloved **Mrs. Abha Sapru**, wife of Late Sh. Ashok Sapru, on 22nd February, 2024 at Pune.



**MRS. ABHA SAPRU**

**TENTH DAY KRIYA** will be performed at 504, Suncity-B, NIBM in Pune, on Monday 3rd March 2024.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

**SAPRUS, ZAIFRANIS, AND HINDUJAS**  
Sandeep Sapru: 9545569756  
Satish Sapru: 9818231740

**OBITUARY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the untimely demise of **Hari Krishan Kaul** S/o Shri Shyam Lal Kaul, originally resident of Indra Bhawan, Sonwar Bagh, Srinagar and presently residing at F 5/3, BPTP Villas, F Block, Sector 68, Faridabad. He left for the heavenly abode on 20th February 2025. He has left behind memories which will be cherished forever. May he attain Moksha in Vaikuntha and continue to bless us forever.



**Hari Krishan Kaul**

**Tenth Day Kriya** shall be performed on 28th February at Chota Haridwar, Muradnagar, Ghaziabad at 7 am, **Assembly** at our Faridabad residence at 11:30am

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

**Khemlata Kaul : Wife**  
**Monika & Gopal Kaul : Daughter-in-law & Son**  
**Meenakshi & Yashvir Kaul : Daughter-in-law & Son**  
**Anupurna & Deepak Kaul : Son-in-law & Daughter**  
**Jawahar Lal Kaul : Brother**  
**Meesa Kaul : Sister-in-law**  
**Mohini & Jawahar Lal Bhat : Sister & Brother-in-Law**  
**Lalita Kaul : Sister**  
**Tribawan Kaul : Brother**  
Ayush, Pujan, Vaibhav, Luv & Kush, Kartik : Grand Children  
**Contact Numbers : 9582214198, 9818162922**

**REMINISCENCE/ TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With heavy heart, we inform the heavenly abode, a journey to celestial home, of our revered and beloved father **Sh. Poshkar Nath Zaroo** on 18th February 2025 at C-328, B-3, Shalimar Garden-II, Ghaziabad, UP. The **10TH DAY KRIYA** of the pious soul will be performed on 27th February 2025 at Murad Nagar Ghat, Ghaziabad at 9:30 am.



**SH. POSHKAR NATH ZAROO**

**Remembered by:**

**Mr. Omkar Nath Zaroo (Brother)**  
**Mrs. Geeta and Vijay Zaroo (Sister-in-Law and Brother).**  
**Mrs. Rekha Sumbly and Mr. Neeraj Sumbly (Daughter and Son-in-Law)**  
**Mrs. Anamika Zaroo and Mr. Rajiv Zaroo (Daughter-in-Law and Son)**  
**Samast Zaroo and Zutshi Parivar, Nephews, Nieces and Grandchildren.**  
**MOBILE NO: 9958013489, 9419187076**

**UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of **Smt Madhu Bala** W/o Late Sh. Subhash Chander Gupta R/o H.No. 1135 Sec 8 Near R.N. Tagore High Sec. School Nanak Nagar Jammu.



**Smt Madhu Bala**

**Uthala** will take place at 4 to 5 PM Shiv Mandir, Sector 1, Railway Road Nanak Nagar on 26 Feb. 2025

**Grief Stricken**

**Mr Avinash Gupta (90188 32697)**  
**Daughters and Sons-in-Law**  
Mrs. Manjula and Mr. Parshotam  
Mrs. Ashu and Mr. Sunny  
Mrs. Arti and Mr. Amish  
**Brothers and Sisters-in-Law**  
Smt. Shobha and Sh. Devi Dass Gupta  
Smt. Kamla and Late Sh. Brij Mohan Gupta  
Smt. Anila and Sh. Rajinder Gupta  
Sh. Rakesh Gupta  
Smt. Abhilasha W/o Late Sh. Bansil Lal Gupta - Sister-in-Law

**CHOUBARSI**

Words fall short whenever we want to tell you how special you are to us, but all we can say is, that our world is full of smiles whenever we think of you. "U" always missed.



**Late Sh. Mohan Lal Kangotra (Retired Head Assistant DSE Jammu)**

It has been four years since you left us for heavenly abode. Your sweet memories shall remain with us as a source of inspiration. We deeply miss you yet still feel your presence in every moment of life.

**CHOUBARSI** of our beloved **Late Sh. Mohan Lal Kangotra (Retired Head Assistant DSE Jammu)** H/o Smt. Mangla Devi (Retd. Master) will be performed on 27th February, 2025 (Thursday) at 12PM at our residence H.No.23 Deep Nagar A/D Kunjwani, behind Petrol Pump Jammu.

**DEEPLY REMEMBERED BY**

**Daughters & Son in law**  
Nisha Kangotra & Mr. Ashwani Kumar  
Kiran Kangotra & Mr. Raj Mahotra  
Sonia Kangotra & Mr. Sanjay Kumar  
**Sons**  
Pankaj Kangotra, Rohit Kangotra  
**Grand Children :** Ayaan, Ahaana & Shriyanti  
**Mob: 9419303821, 9697174534**

**OBITUARY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform sad demise of **Sh. Bushan Lal Bhat** S/o Late Sh. Sham Lal Bhat of Tergupna Pulwama at present H No. 157/3, Sector 2, Ward 65, Dreamcity Muthi, near Kidzee School on 25-02-2025.



**Sh. Bushan Lal Bhat**

**GRIEF STRICKEN :**

**Smt. Shosta Ji W/o Late Sh. M. L. Bhat (Bhabhi)**  
**Smt & Sh. Chaman Lal Bhat (Brother & Bhabhi)**  
**Sons and Daughter-in-law**  
Rinkoo Bhat & Anita Bhat  
Ajay Bhat & Anupama Bhat  
**Daughter and Son in law**  
Rajni & Arvind Bhat  
**Grand Children, near and dears**  
**SAMAST KOUL AND BHAT PARIVAR**  
**8803175309, 9004015168**

**BARKHI**

In loving memory of **Late Sh. Rajinder Singh Siathia** (son of Lt. Sh. Ishwar Singh Siathia). A year has passed since you left us for your heavenly abode. The pain of losing you will never fade, but your blessings continue to guide us, and we always feel your gracious presence around us.



**Late Sh. Rajinder Singh Siathia**

The **Barkhi** of **Late Sh. Rajinder Singh Siathia** will be performed on Thursday, 27th February 2025, at our village Gurha Siathia, Mandi Udh at 10:00 AM

**DEEPLY MISSED & REMEMBERED BY:**

**Smt. Shivani Rani (Wife)**  
**Smt. Savita Devi (Mother)**  
**Sh. Nariender Singh Siathia & Smt. Arti Siathia (Brother and Bhabhi)**  
**Sh. Virender Singh Siathia & Renuka Siathia (Brother & Bhabhi)**  
**Contact no:- 9419122340**

**BARKHI**

Chaiti, a year has passed, yet your love and memories remain. Though you are gone, your presence is felt in every moment.



**SMT. MAYA DEVI**

Forever missed, forever loved.

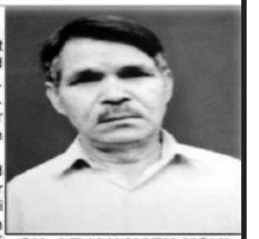
**BARKHI** of our beloved **Smt. Maya Devi** W/o Lt. Sh. Des Raj Abrol shall be performed at our residence 12/102, Chabutra Bazar, Jdhampur on 27th February, 11:00 am onwards.

**DEEPLY REMEMBERED & MISSED BY:-**

**(Sons & Daughters-in-law)**  
Sh. Vijay Abrol & Smt. Sudarshana  
Sh. Ashok Abrol & Smt. Sunita Devi  
**(Daughters & Sons-in-law)**  
Smt. Neelam Anand & Lt. Sh. Ashok Anand  
Smt. Nisha Puri & Sh. Pawan Puri  
**(Grand Son & Grand Daughter-in-law)**  
Mr. Sahil Abrol & Mrs. Radhika  
**(Grand Daughters & Grand Sons)**  
Miss Anshika Abrol, Miss Hital Abrol  
Mr. Suhail Abrol, Mr. Sushant Abrol  
**(Great Grand Daughter)**  
Baby Shrinika  
**Mob: 9419378867, 9697166661, 9906097077**

**10TH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved father **Sh. Arjan Nath Koul** S/o Lt. Sarwanand Koul, R/o Damjan, Anantnag, A.P. Trikuta Lane No. 2, Sector -1 Near Krishna Palace Durga Nagar Jammu on 20/02/2025.



**SH. ARJAN NATH KOUL**

The **10TH DAY KRIYA** will be performed on 01/03/2025 (Saturday) at Akhnor Ghat and **Assembly** will be held at Muthi Ghat near Directorate of School Education Office at 11:00 AM on 01/03/2025 (Saturday).

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

**Rajender Nath Koul and Kiran Koul (Son and Daughter in law)**  
**Hira Lal Koul and Romi Koul (Son and Daughter in law)**  
**Dileep Koul and Dolly Koul (Son in law and Daughter)**  
**Rajender Kumar Bhat and Rosta Bhat (Son in law and Daughter)**  
**Deeply Remembered by Grand Children :**  
Vishal, Rupesh, Sheenu, Chahat, Pranav and Parth .  
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# Munish calls on Dr. Jitendra, discusses issues concerning youth

## Top News Report

JAMMU /NEW DELHI, Feb 26: Jammu and Kashmir BJP senior leader and former general secretary, Munish Sharma, on Wednesday called on Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, MoS (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Space, Personal, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh and discussed extensively on pressing issues, especially youth employment and the need to capacitate young people through exchange programmes.

Munish Sharma thanked the Union Minister for his support in all round development of Jammu and Kashmir. Sharma hailed this financial year's budget by terming it visionary & inclusive that will cater to the needs of various sections of society.

He discussed IT Corporate parks in Jammu to generate job avenues for thousands of IT trained professionals.



The meeting was focussed on concern over the increasing unemployment, substance abuse among the youth leading to addiction and depression. Sharma expressed the need to organise district level job fairs in J&K to bridge the gap between local talent and industry requirements.

Need of the hour is to collaborate with organizations, institutions, govt agencies enhancing the role of premier educational institutions in shaping the future of young aspirants.

During the discussion, Munish

Sharma emphasized that J&K has great potential in terms of skill development and could emerge as a hub of Skill development programmes if adequate training facilities are provided to empower the youth of J&K.

He also highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has established AIIMS, IIT & IIM in Jammu to help meet requirement of quality living and transforming the education landscape in J&K.

Munish also underscored the importance of central govern-

ment schemes and initiatives in uplifting the youth and ensuring that BJP is concerned about the future of the youth in J&K. We are committed to work for the welfare of the youth who are the backbone of the society and country.

He also urged Dr. Jitendra to promote start-up culture in every region of J&K. Introduce more job-oriented programmes, amalgamate science technology and humanities in a way to redefine learning and make our youth future ready to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

Dr. Jitendra assured full support to address the concerns raised and reiterated that youth is our strength, for which the central government is fully committed to providing the necessary facilities.

He highlighted the ongoing efforts under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to make J&K youth at the forefront of Viksit Bharat ensuring every youth regardless of geography or background has an equal opportunity to contribute and develop Jammu and Kashmir to new heights.

# Three drug peddlers arrested with 9.81 gms heroin



## Top News Report

REASI, Feb 26: Reasi Police continues its aggressive campaign against drug abuse under Operation Ek Yudh Nashe Ke Virudh, successfully arresting three notorious drug peddlers and recovering 9.81 grams of heroin during a surprise naka checking.

During routine checking at Nangal Katra, a police team from Police Station Katra intercepted an autorickshaw (JK14D-6064) traveling from Kakraj, Katra town. Upon frisking the driver, identified as Vinod Kumar, son of Madan Lal, a resident of Paroh, Arli Katra, officers found 1.64 grams of heroin in his left pocket.

Further checks on two passengers led to more

significant recoveries. Mumtaz Ahmed, son of Basheer Ahmed, a resident of Serwad, Katra, was found with 1.69 grams of heroin wrapped in pink-colored polythene in his right pant pocket. Meanwhile, Roshan Lal, son of Kartar Chand, a resident of Akhli Butan, Katra, was carrying 6.48 grams of heroin in the left pocket of his blue jeans.

With a total seizure of 9.81 grams of heroin, the police registered FIR No. 50/2025 Under Sections 8/21/22/29 NDPS Act at Police Station Katra, launching further investigations to trace the drug supply network.

This successful operation was spearheaded by SHO Katra, Inspector Khyatimaan Khajuria, under the supervision of SDPO Katra,

Bhisham Dubey and SP Katra, Vipran Chandran. SSP Reasi, Paramvir Singh, while detailing the operation, emphasized a multi-pronged approach to combat drug abuse. Beyond law enforcement actions, the police are actively conducting awareness programs throughout the district to educate and safeguard the youth from falling prey to substance abuse.

To encourage public participation in this fight, Reasi Police has launched an Anti-Drug Helpline: 9070907017, where citizens can report drug-related activities anonymously. This initiative aims to foster a collaborative effort between law enforcement and the community in eliminating the drug menace.

Sending a stern warning to drug traffickers, SSP Reasi reaffirmed that there is no place for drug dealers in the district. He urged them to renounce their illicit trade and return to the mainstream, failing which they would face strict legal action.

# IIM Jammu concludes Authors Workshop



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu in collaboration with the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti under the aegis UGC, New Delhi, Ministry of Education, Government of India, concluded the Authors Workshop on Academic Writing for Higher Education in Indian Languages (Dogri) at Vedanta MDP Block, Jagti.

This initiative, aligned with NEP 2020, aims to enhance academic content in Bharatiya languages and improve accessibility to quality education.

The valedictory ceremony graced by Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, IIM Jammu, along with Dr. Purnendu from Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, New Delhi.

The workshop fea-

tured sessions on NEP 2020 insights, textbook writing principles, quality assurance, terminology standardization, interdisciplinary development, and a panel discussion on future action plans.

Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, IIM Jammu invited feedback from participants and discussed the roadmap for moving forward, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts in strengthening academic writing in Bharatiya languages.

Purnendu Debnath, Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, New Delhi, interacted with participants and encouraged them to share their requirements, ensuring they could be effectively addressed and put forward.

The workshop concluded with a valedic-

tory ceremony followed by certificate distribution recognizing participants' contributions a, marking a significant step in promoting Bharatiya languages in academic writing, research, and higher education.

The workshop includes sessions on insights from NEP 2020, textbook writing principles, quality assurance, terminology standardization, interdisciplinary textbook development, and a panel discussion on future action plans.

The workshop aimed at promoting academic writing in Dogri and strengthening higher education in Indian languages.

Experts and scholars engaged in insightful discussions and hands-on sessions to enhance academic writing skills.

The initiative aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasizing the promotion of regional languages in higher education.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation, reflecting a strong commitment to fostering linguistic diversity and academic excellence.

# Diva International Foundation organises free medical camp at Shiv Khori



## Top News Report

REASI, Feb 26: Diva International Foundation, a National NGO, in association with Directorate of Health Services, CMO Reasi and BMO Block Pouni on Wednesday organised Free Health Check Up Camp and Medical Camp at PHC, Ransoo, Shiv Khori, here for the benefit of general public and pilgrims on Holy Maha Shivratri Festival. In this health camp near about 576 patients took benefit.

Amardeep Singh Sasan, CEO & Director of Diva International Foundation, thanked local administration, Police Department, Management of Shiv Khori, CMO Reasi, Dr Rajneesh Kumar BMO Pouni, Dr Ashu Rajput MO PHC Ransoo, Dr

Tawheed Qadir MO & volunteers for making this camp a grand success.

# IIT Jammu hosts workshop on Modern Pedagogical Techniques for Student-Centric Learning in Engineering Education

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu hosted a two-day workshop on 'Modern Pedagogical Techniques Emphasizing Student-Centric Learning in Engineering Education.'

The workshop aimed at equipping educators and research scholars with innovative teaching methodologies that enhance student engagement, active learning, and skill development—critical aspects of modern education.

The workshop was graced by distinguished academicians, including Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director, IIT Jammu; Prof. Sivaji Chakravorti, Vice President, Indian National Academy of Engineering; Prof. C. S. Upadhyay, Professor, Department of Aerospace Engineering, IIT Kanpur; Prof. Abhay Sharma, Dean, Education and Outreach, IIT Jammu; and Dr. Chembolu Vinay, PIC, Centre for Essential Skills (CES), IIT Jammu.

Their presence and insights added significant value to the discussions on contemporary pedagogical strategies.



The first day commenced with a session on Teaching and Learning Styles, led by Prof. C. S. Upadhyay, where participants explored different pedagogical approaches to enhance teaching effectiveness.

This was followed by a session on the importance of soft skills in professional success, conducted by Prof. Sivaji Chakravorti.

In an engaging discussion, he emphasized the significance of communication, collaboration, and adaptability in the rapidly evolving professional landscape.

Dr. Sanchita Srivastava from IIT Jammu took the stage for the session on Learner's Development and Educational Psychology, providing insights into cognitive and emotional aspects of student learning.

This was followed by an interactive session on Effective Presentation Skills, conducted by Dr. Gaurav Ashok Bhaduri, who highlighted the role of visual aids and communication techniques in teaching.

The day concluded with an exciting breakout session where participants engaged in discussions on key aspects of engineering education, including assessment techniques, hybrid learning models, student attention spans, and cognitive aspects of pedagogy.

The second day of the workshop began with an insightful session on Leadership in Pedagogy, led by Prof. Bijoy Boruah from IIT Jammu. He underscored the importance of educators as leaders who inspire

students and shape their academic journeys.

This was followed by a session on Inclusive and Equitable Education by Prof. Shyam Narayan Lal, who shed light on bridging regional and cultural gaps in learning to create an equitable educational environment.

The event also featured an engaging participant brainstorming session, where attendees collaborated to develop innovative ideas for enhancing student engagement in engineering education. Later, groups presented their insights, which were evaluated by an esteemed panel comprising Prof. Abhay Sharma, Dr. Sanchita Srivastava, Prof. Shyam Narayan Lal from IIT Jammu.

The workshop concluded on a high note, leaving participants enriched with practical insights into modern teaching methodologies.

During Valedictory, Prof. Sivaji Chakravorti joined for certificate distribution. IIT Jammu continues to uphold its commitment to academic excellence and student-centric learning, reinforcing its role as a leader in engineering education.

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2. Associate Professor	4	M.Sc (N) with 8 years of experience including 5 years of teaching experience.
3. Asstt. Professor	5	M.Sc(N) with 3 yrs teaching experience
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Tele/Fax: 01962-261654/E-Mail - xenphemrajouri@gmail.com

**SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

**e- NIT No. PHE/MDR/ 376 of 2024-25 Dated:-24/02/2025**

For and on behalf of The Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir (UT), Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Mechanical Division Rajouri invites e-tenders from Approved contractors/ Registered firms /Original pump manufacturer/ their authorized dealer/ Workshop owners having experience in Electromechanical Works for following jobs: -

S. No.	Name of work	Qty	Cost of tender document	Period of completion	Estimated cost (in lakh)	Class of contractor
01.	Providing, installation, testing and commissioning of submersible pump set 4000 GPH X 180 Meter Head x 17.5 HP motor along with allied mechanical works at pumping station Gurdan bala Base of Rajouri and providing, installation, testing and commissioning of LT Control Panel for 10 HP submersible motor at pumping station Nagrota Ziarat Base and 5 HP for monosubmersible motor at pumping station Dhanore Tindian alongwith allied works	01 Job	Rs. 200.00 (Non-Refundable) in the shape of Treasury Challan or under Major Head, MH: 0215 (Revenue head) or through RTGS in J&K Bank branch Rajouri bearing bank A/C No 002001020000096, IFSC code JAKA0RADISH in favour of Executive Engineer PHE Mech Division Rajouri	20 Days	2.20 lacs	Registered/ Reputed firms/Workshop owners having experience in Electro-mechanical Works

- The bidding documents can be seen and downloaded from the website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> from **24/02/2025 (18:00 PM) to 07/03/2025 (14:00 PM)**. Bidding document contains instruction for bidders, bill of quantities, general terms and condition and other details.
  - The Bids shall be uploaded in electronic format on the website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> from **26/02/2025 (10:00 AM) to 06/03/2025 (14:00 PM)**.
  - The complete bidding process will be through electronic mode.
  - A pre-bid meeting will be held on **25/02/2025 (15:00 PM)** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Mechanical Division Rajouri to address any queries from the firms.
  - Cover-I of the bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on **07/03/2025 (12:00 PM)** in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti PHE Mechanical Rajouri in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- As per the Govt. Order No. O.M. No. A/24(2017)-651 Dated. 07-06-2018.**
  - Furnishing of hard copies of bids immediately after submission of e-Tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the bidders who is declared as L1 after opening of Financial Bids
  - The cost of the tenders should be collected by introducing e-challan by simply uploading a copy of necessary treasury challan/Receipt.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding document.
- The guidelines regarding submission of bid in electronic mode can be downloaded from website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>
- The bidders shall go through the tender specific instructions sheet also.
- The bidders for any clarification can contact the department through e-mail [xenphemrajouri@gmail.com](mailto:xenphemrajouri@gmail.com)

**No: -PHE/MDR/10183-85**  
**Dated: 24-02-2025**

**Sd**  
**Executive Engineer**  
**Jal Shakti (PHE) Mech. Division**  
**Rajouri**

DIP/J-10551/24



## EDITORIAL

## Maha Shivratri: Sacred Night of Devotion

Maha Shivratri, meaning "The Great Night of Shiva," is one of the most revered festivals in Hinduism, celebrated annually in honor of Lord Shiva, the Supreme Deity of Destruction and Transformation. This auspicious occasion falls on the 14th day of the dark fortnight in the Hindu lunar month of Phalgun (February-March), and is observed with great devotion, fasting, prayers, and night-long vigils across India and in many parts of the world.

Maha Shivratri is a festival that symbolizes the union of Shiva and Shakti, the cosmic forces of the universe. According to Hindu beliefs, this night is especially powerful for those who seek spiritual enlightenment, self-discipline, and inner transformation. It is said that on this night, Lord Shiva performs the divine cosmic dance, Tandava, which represents the rhythm of creation and destruction.

Devotees believe that worshipping Lord Shiva with sincerity on Maha Shivratri can help overcome darkness and ignorance in life, leading to wisdom, peace, and salvation (moksha). It is also regarded as an occasion for self-reflection, penance, and devotion.

One of the most popular legends of Maha Shivratri is that it marks the sacred wedding of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Devotees celebrate this occasion as a symbol of divine love and marital bliss. Married couples pray for a strong and happy relationship, while unmarried women observe fasts and rituals to seek a husband as devoted and powerful as Lord Shiva.

Another significant legend states that during the great cosmic churning of the ocean, Samudra Manthan, a deadly poison called Halahala emerged. The gods and demons feared that this poison would destroy the universe. In his infinite compassion, Lord Shiva consumed the poison to save creation, holding it in his throat, which turned blue, earning him the name Neelkanth (The Blue-Throated One). Maha Shivratri is believed to be the night when Lord Shiva displayed this act of supreme sacrifice and courage.

According to another belief, Maha Shivratri is the night when Shiva became one with Mount Kailash, entering a state of deep meditation. Devotees stay awake all night, chanting "Om Namah Shivaya" and meditating on his divine energy, seeking spiritual elevation and liberation from worldly illusions.

Devotees observe a strict fast (vrat) on Maha Shivratri, abstaining from food and water in some cases, or consuming only light sattvic meals like fruits, milk, and nuts. The fast is believed to cleanse the body and mind, bringing spiritual purity.

Unlike other Hindu festivals celebrated during the day, Maha Shivratri is observed throughout the night. Devotees visit temples, perform Abhishekam (ritual bathing) of Shiva Lingam, chant mantras, and meditate until dawn. Staying awake symbolizes overcoming ignorance and embracing wisdom.

A key ritual of Maha Shivratri is the bathing (Abhishekam) of the Shiva Lingam with sacred substances, each representing a unique offering: Milk, Honey, Ghee, Water from the Ganges and Bael leaves and flowers.

Devotees engage in the continuous chanting of "Om Namah Shivaya," one of the most powerful mantras dedicated to Lord Shiva. Reciting the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is also believed to bring protection, health, and spiritual growth.

The Bilva leaf is considered sacred to Lord Shiva. It is believed that offering these leaves with devotion can purify the soul and fulfill desires.

In many temples and spiritual gatherings, Shiv Vivah, the reenactment of Shiva and Parvati's divine wedding, is performed with great enthusiasm. This tradition is especially observed in North India, where people sing devotional songs and enact the celestial wedding ceremony.

Maha Shivratri is observed with grandeur and devotion across India, with each region having its unique customs:

In Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, the Kashi Vishwanath Temple witnesses an influx of devotees performing rituals along the ghats of the Ganges.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the festival is celebrated as Herath by the Kashmiri Pandit community, with a special focus on family prayers and feasting.

In Tamil Nadu, the Arunachaleswarar Temple in Thiruvannamalai hosts a grand festival where devotees perform Girivalam (circumambulation of the sacred Arunachala Hill).

In Madhya Pradesh, the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga in Ujjain holds special Maha Shivratri celebrations, including traditional Rudrabhishek rituals.

In Gujarat, the Somnath Temple organizes large spiritual gatherings, with night-long bhajans and devotional programs.

Shiva, the Destroyer of Evil, reminds us that destruction is not an end but a new beginning. Maha Shivratri encourages us to embrace change, shed negativity, and move towards light, wisdom, and self-realization.

## Mahashivratri – A Divine Night of Prayer, Awakening &amp; Bliss

By: Omkar Dattatray

There is an unknown and mysterious energy that is driving all of us. Scientists have not been able to give it a name, yet. However, saints of yore have called this unknown energy Shiva which is the energy believed to make every living being alive. We are able to breathe, eat, walk and carry out our day to day activities because of Shiva. Not only does this energy drive living beings, but it also resides in non living things - as their energy. Shiva, thus drives existence. Shiva literally means nothingness but it is nothing which creates everything and thus it is Shiva which is behind creating everything. So Shiva implies nothing out of which everything is created and thus Shiva is manifest in each and everything. Shiva in fact thus represents cosmic energy which makes all the people to work and perform all the activities and drives all of us. Mahashivratri is the night of awakening and bliss. In our hustle and bustle of life, we forget our source of energy-that which is running all of us. In a year there are 12 Shivratri's but the Mahashivratri is the darkest night in month of Faguna. This night should not become just an ordinary night and a night of wakefulness but a night of awakening. India is the land of festivals and fairs and we celebrate many festivals but the festival of Mahashivratri is an important festival and it is celebrated across the length and breadth of the country. But the festival of Mahashivratri has special importance for the Kashmiri pandit community and they celebrate this festival in a unique, special and different way. Mahashivratri is the festival to remember and to take our awareness to the basis of our existence. The pertinent question is as to why is the Shivratri celebrated. There is more than one Mahashivratri story behind the celebrating of this festival.

1. One is that Lord Shiva married Parvati on this day. So it is the day of the celebration of this sacred union.

2. Another story is that when Gods and demons churned the ocean together to obtain ambrosia that lay in its deft, a pot of poison emerged. Lord Shiva consumed this poison, saving both the Gods and the mankind. The poison lodged in the Lords throat turning him blue. Thus to honor the savior of the world, Shivratri is celebrated.

3. One more legend is that as Goddess Ganga descended from heaven in full force, Lord Shiva caught her in his

matted locks, and released her on to Earth as several streams. This prevented destruction on Earth. As a tribute to Him, the Shivalinga is bathed on this auspicious night.

4. One more legend is that as Goddess Ganga descended from heaven in full force, Lord Shiva caught her in his matted locks, and released her on to Earth as several streams. This prevented destruction on Earth. As a tribute to Him, the Shivalinga is bathed on this auspicious night.

Also, it is believed that the formless God Sadashiv appeared in the form of a Lingodhbhav Moorthi at midnight. Hence, people stay awake all night, offering prayers to the God. These are some of the stories that can possibly answer why we celebrate Shivratri. But, what do we do during Shivratri? Mahashivratri is very significant for people who are on the spiritual path. It is also very significant for people who are in family situations, and also for the ambitious in the world. People who live in family situations observe Mahashivratri as Shiva's wedding anniversary. Those with worldly ambitions see that day as the day Shiva conquered all his enemies. But for the ascetics, it is the day he became one with Mount Kailash. He became like a mountain- absolutely still. In the yogic tradition, Shiva is worshipped as a God, but considered as Adi Guru, the first Guru from whom the science of Yoga originated. That day is Mahashivratri. All movement in him stopped and he became utterly still, so ascetics see Mahashivratri as the night of stillness. Mahashivratri is an opportunity and a possibility to bring you to that experience of the vast emptiness within every human being, which is the source of all creation. On the one hand, Shiva is known as the destroyer. On the other, he is known as the most compassionate. He is also known to be the greatest of the givers. The yogic lore is rife with many stories about Shiva's compassion. The ways of expression of his compassion have been incredible and astonishing at the same time. So Mahashivratri is a special night for receiving too. It is our wish and blessing that you must not pass this night without knowing at least a moment of the vastness of this emptiness that we call as Shiva. Let this night not just be a night of wakefulness, let this night be a night of awakening for us all. Maha Shivratri is one of the most auspicious festivals of Hindus and is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is being celebrated this year on 26 February [Wednesday] all

over the country. However Kashmiri Pandits celebrate it as Hearat a day earlier that is on 25th February - Tuesday. It holds a great significance for Hindus all across the globe and is one of the most celebrated festivals across the country. This day marks Lord Shiva's marital union with Goddess Parvati. Devotees visit Shiv-Parvati temples to seek blessings and also observe fast on this day. Maha Shivratri this year falls on Tryodashi Tithi during Krishna Paksha in the month of Magha in the South Indian calendar or the Amavasyant Hindu lunar calendar. However, according to North Indian calendar or the Poornimant lunar calendar, Maha Shivaratri is the Masik (monthly) Shivratri in the month of Phalguna. The day is celebrated as Goddess Parvati and Shiva's marriage. This is the most popular legend associated with Maha Shivratri. The day marks the marital union of the Lord with his consort. After his wife Sati's death, Shiva lived like a hermit. He was immersed in meditation and undertook severe penance. Sati took rebirth as Parvati in order to win Shiva's heart once again and become his consort. She did rigorous penance for years and did all that she could to win his attention. On seeing her dedication, devotion and immeasurable love, Shiva accepted her as his wife. They married on the 14th day of the dark fortnight in the month of Phalguna. It is related with Samudra Manthan episode. In a contest of one-upmanship, the Devas and the Asuras - started churning the Samudra or ocean to obtain the divine nectar (Amrita) to gain immortality. While churning the ocean with Mount Mandara as the rod and Vasuki, the King of serpents as a rope, a number of beneficial things emerged from the ocean but with it also surfaced the Halahala or the poison. Halahala was so toxic that it could ruin the creation. In order to save life and the universe, Lord Vishnu asked the Devas to reach out to Lord Shiva, who alone could consume the poison. Lord Shiva readily agreed to consume Halahala. Fearing it could harm him, Goddess Parvati pressed his neck with her hands thereby preventing the Halahala from going down his throat. This made Halahala find refuge in his throat. Though it failed to cause harm to Shiva, it turned his neck blue. Hence Shiva is also known as Neelakantha. In order to ensure, Halahala has no other impact on the Lord, the Devas and devotees of the Lord kept him awake all night singing praises and performing dances. Shivlinga came into being this way,

Once, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma had an argument over their supremacy. This created much disturbance in the Devaloka and the Devas reached out to Lord Shiva for help. In order to make Brahma and Vishnu realize that there was a supreme power governing them, Shiva appeared as a fiery flame shaped like a lingam and challenged the two to trace the beginning and the end of the beaming light. Vishnu transformed into a boar and headed underground while Brahma took the form of a Swan to fly upward. The search turned out to be so tiring that Brahma persuaded Ketaki flower to play witness to his "achievement" of tracing the origin of the beam and convey the same to Lord Vishnu. This is when Lord Shiva emerged in his full form from the beam. Realising that their argument was futile and their claim to supremacy meaningless, Brahma and Vishnu bowed to Lord Shiva and pleaded forgiveness. Since Shiva appeared in a Linga form on this day, people celebrate his supremacy by remaining awake and chanting mantras honoring him on Maha Shivaratri.

As already mentioned Shivratri is celebrated in a unique, different and special way by the Kashmiri pandits and the festival has great importance for the Kashmiri pandits. The Kashmiri Hindus start the preparations for this yearly festival a fortnight before the day of Shivratri and on this day the head of the family observes fast and breaks it after the pooja at midnight. They fill some pots with water and walnuts and perform pooja. These pots are symbolized as Lord Shiva. His consort Parvati and their son Ganesh and also the Bhavaas. It is said that the four kernels of the walnut represent the four Vedas. After three days the walnuts are distributed to the relatives and neighbours. The Kashmiri pandits cook many vegetarian and non vegetarian dishes and offer them to the Baravas on the auspicious night and after pooja they eat the specially prepared food and dishes.

May Lord Shiva bestow his blessings to the humanity.

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

## Restore the 'spring' in your skin

By: Shahnaz Hussain

As the chill of winter fades away and the world around us begins to bloom with new life, there's no better time to rejuvenate the skin and lighten up the skin regime.

Spring has officially sprung, and that means summer is well on its way too.

The breezy air may be pleasant, but you should be careful of the skincare products you use for your skin during spring.

Spring brings a sense of renewal, and with it, the opportunity to rejuvenate your skincare approach.

With the increasing temps of spring come new demands for your healthy skin regimen.

Transitioning from the cold, dry winter months means your skin will face new environmental factors, such as increased humidity and more potent UV rays.

Spring is the time when you get to lighten up and amp up your skincare regimen. It is time to give your skin some love and replenish it after months of itchy skin and dryness.

Some small changes in your skincare routine will keep your skin healthy, glowing and radiant without any breakouts or dullness.

Adapting your skincare routine is crucial to address these changes effectively.

1---Opt for Lightweight Moisturizers  
Moisturising is essential if you want healthy, glowing skin.

It's always essential to stay hydrated, and you should switch up your moisturiser according to the season.

As temperatures rise, heavy winter creams can feel too rich and may clog pores. So it is advised to

choose a lightweight moisturiser with elements like hyaluronic acid and glycerin.

As the weather warms up, so too can our skin's oil production. We tend to sweat more during the spring season. A lighter non-comedogenic lotion will help to keep pores clear to avoid overloading.

Apply a creamy moisturiser that will immediately soothe your skin. You could also opt for a dry oil or plant-based oil such as shea butter, sweet almond oil or argan oil.

Make sure you moisturise morning and night. In the morning, apply a light formula that also contains sunscreen. And at night, treat your skin to a richer texture that suits its needs.

2---Hydrate ----  
Hydrating and rehydrating the skin is crucial for maintaining skin health, especially in spring

when the weather can be unpredictable.

Carry a water bottle with you whenever possible and take regular water breaks, even if you don't feel thirsty. Water with electrolytes can help hydrate/ rehydrate you quickly and effectively—and taste great at the same time!

Proper hydration begins with understanding how much water you should consume each day. Drink 8-10 glasses of plain water daily besides soups, juices and smoothies.

Smoothies can be extremely hydrating because you get the water naturally from the fruits and vegetables in the smoothie.

Adding high-water-content snacks like fresh fruits and vegetables to your daily diet helps maintain proper hydration levels. Watermelon, cucumber, and oranges are excellent hydrating snacks. Juices can be a great source of hydration. When picking out a juice, look for no sugar added juices that are paired with nutrients for hydration, like sodium and electrolytes.

3---Apply Retinol at Night  
Retinol is a form of vitamin A that's regularly available over the counter and typically contains a lower concentration of the active ingredient.

During spring, the sun's intensity is not as strong as in the summer months. Starting retinol in spring allows your skin to acclimate to the ingredients and minimises the risk of sunburn.

Protect your face from brighter, longer days by using Retinol products near bedtime.

Retinol is typically applied to the skin topically and can come in the form of gels, lotions, serums, and more. If you are new to Vitamin A and experiencing dryness, use it every other night initially and slowly increase the usage to allow your skin to build up a tolerance.

When using a retinol serum for the first time, start with a low percentage and work your way up steadily. The same is true for those with darker skin tones or skin sensitivities. As you monitor your skin's reaction and tolerance, you may be able to increase the strength.

Retinol can strengthen your skin's natural defences and inspire visibly rejuvenated skin. It can be used on all skin types: dry, oily, and combination skin. Apart from its protecting abilities, it's beneficial for visibly uneven skin tone, clogged, enlarged pores, and ageing skin.

By incorporating retinol into your spring skincare routine, you're prepping your skin for the sun-exposed days of summer. It helps in achieving a smoother and more even complexion, making your sunscreen and makeup application easier and more effective.

4---Incorporate Antioxidants-----  
As we move from winter to spring, it means more exposure to UV light, pollution, and free

radical damage.

Spring presents an ideal opportunity to rejuvenate your eating habits by prioritizing nutrient-rich foods that can enhance your overall health and wellness.

From juicy strawberries and sweet cherries to tangy kiwis and refreshing citrus fruits, spring brings an array of colorful fruits to enjoy. These fruits are not only delicious but also rich in vitamin C, fiber, and other essential nutrients. Snack on them fresh, blend them into smoothies, or add them to salads for a burst of flavor and nutrition.

Superfoods such as Kale, asparagus, green onions, pepitas, avocados, strawberries, and radishes make excellent additions to green salads.

Eat the Rainbow. Reds, oranges, purples and pinks and greens. They can add flavor, texture, and a nutritional boost to your meals, making a great, leisurely lunch.

Superfoods such as Strawberries, Blueberries, Cherries, Bananas, Pineapple, Papaya, Avocado, Beets, Kale, Spinach can be blended into smoothies for a quick and easy breakfast. Try adding them to your favorite smoothie recipe for a nutrient-dense boost.

Roasting vegetables such as asparagus and radishes can bring out their natural sweetness and add depth of flavor to your meals. Try roasting them with a bit of olive oil and seasonings for a delicious and healthy side dish.

Antioxidants like Vitamin C protect against environmental aggressors, such as pollution and UV radiation, that are more prevalent in spring. They also help in brightening the complexion and evening out skin tone.

Fresh herbs like mint, chamomile leaf, and rosemary are abundant during the spring season and can be incorporated into your skincare routine for their antioxidant properties. These herbs help protect the skin from environmental damage, soothe irritation, and promote a clear, healthy complexion. Try picking some fresh and making a tea. Let it cool and apply to your skin after cleansing or soak some cotton pads and apply it as an eye mask.

5---Treat Seasonal Allergies:  
Runny nose, itchy eyes, brain-rattling sneezes... must be spring!

Spring is beautiful, but it's also a key time of year for seasonal allergies.

During spring, certain trees, grasses, plants, and fungi begin releasing pollen into the air to fertilize other plants. When people inhale this pollen, they send the body's defenses haywire.

Pollen counts tend to be particularly high on breezy days when the wind picks up these sneeze-inducing grains and carries them through the

air. Rainy days, on the other hand, wash away the allergens. Warm days increase plant growth and fertilization, whereas rainy days dampen the spread of pollen.

With climate change, spring pollination has gotten worse in the last few years. As the seasons get hotter, we're seeing more pollen, longer and more intense pollination seasons. This seems to be a worldwide trend.

Spring allergies can cause irritation, redness, and inflammation. You can take Quercetin which is abundantly found in various fruits and vegetables. Include quercetin-rich foods into your diet—especially apples, honey, raspberries, onions, red grapes, cherries, citrus fruits, and green leafy vegetables.

6---Try a HydraFacial  
You can be doing everything right in your skin care routine, yet your skin is still lacking that springtime glow we all want. The HydraFacial is a great way to freshen your appearance, hydrate the skin, remove impurities from your pores, and fight off early signs of aging.

A HydraFacial is one of the most popular non-invasive skin treatments that uses special devices to cleanse and hydrate your skin. It usually uses HydraPeel Tip, a pen-like device with patented technology for cleansing, exfoliating, extracting, and hydrating the skin with serums to get rid of the skin's dead skin cells creating an instant "wow factor" in terms of brightening and firming skin. This magical painless treatment tackles everything from dehydration to discoloration, aging to acne, and uneven skin texture.

The treatment starts with loosening and opening the pores and then prepping the skin using a mix of glycolic acid, salicylic acid, and several botanical ingredients for better cleansing.

Once the pores are open enough, the professional uses vacuum-powered extraction equipment that gets rid of the dirt and oils clogged inside the pores. It is a non-invasive procedure and is practically painless.

*(The author is international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India)*



## Three schools from J&K and Ladakh recognised at Wipro Earthian Awards 2024

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: Wipro Limited, a leading technology services and consulting company, held the 14th edition of Wipro earthian Awards for the year 2024 recently, at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. The awards are a conclusion of an annual program designed to foster integrated sustainability education and recognize Indian schools and colleges that actively promote sustainable action and thinking.

Winners from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh: Government Boys Higher Secondary school, Manigam, Jammu & Kashmir; The school from the valley of Kashmir produced an award-winning submission on solid waste. The struggle to manage the growing issue of solid waste was well represented and documented by the students. The difference between linear disposal of waste, and circular recycling/ reuse management was well represented by them. They developed a good understanding of the solid waste journey in the local area.



Lamdon School (Tsong Chu), Ladakh: The school team brought in a different perspective on water management in the cold desert environment of Ladakh. Similar to hot deserts, water is in short supply there. However, the requirement is less, due to the low temperatures. Water management remains an issue. Challenges of storage and distribution were highlighted by the team.

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Leh, Ladakh: The team documented changes in the attitudes of people. There is increased awareness due to climate change. The team explored how ice stupas play an important role in the conservation of glacial

water. Climate change is causing huge disruptions in people's day-to-day lives. Drip and sprinkler irrigation is practiced on the campus. The school is residential. Therefore, water consumption is higher than a day school.

Anurag Behar, Chief Executive Officer, Azim Premji Foundation, and Narayan P.S., Global Head of Sustainability and Social Initiatives, Wipro Limited, and Managing Trustee, Wipro

Narayan P.S., Global Head of Sustainability and Social Initiatives, Wipro Limited, and Managing Trustee, Wipro

Foundation, said, "The annual Wipro earthian awards is the culmination of the 14th edition of Wipro's long-running program that seeks to ignite interest and foster learning in young minds on humanity's unique relationship with nature. Bringing students and teachers together from schools spread across the country, the Wipro earthian program is designed to generate action-based learning that celebrates the underlying connectedness of the individual with the larger fabric of community and nature. We continue to be inspired by the spirit of resilience and optimism we see in our young citizens as they get ready to face the multiple chal-

lenges of sustainable development the world faces."

The Wipro earthian program is one of India's largest sustainability education programs for schools and colleges. The 2024 edition of this program received over 1,500 project submissions, of which 23 winning and 43 shortlisted entries were selected by an independent jury. The teams from the winning schools demonstrated a deep understanding of biodiversity, waste and water, through a combination of activity-based learning programs and written essays.

Since 2011, Wipro earthian has engaged with over 50,000 schools, 4,000 colleges, 2,00,000 students, and 40,000 teachers. This year, participation remained high with more than 1,500 submissions from schools and over 700 from colleges. Support from Wipro's education partners, including CEE, CPREEC, Wild Ecologues, IIT Madras, IIM Bangalore, state governments, and educators in the SEN, has expanded the program's reach.

## JKPDP leader Narinder Sharma felicitated for his outstanding social work



### Top News Report

R S PURA, Feb 26: Management of Shiv Temple Simble Morh, RS Pura on Wednesday felicitated JKPDP leader Narinder Sharma for his outstanding social work on the occasion of Maha Shivratri.

This recognition is a testament to his dedication and commitment to serving the community. Sharma has been actively involved in various social initiatives, and his efforts have made a positive impact on the lives of many.

Head of the Temple Committee, Shastri Bishan Dass Maharaj speaking on the occasion said that as a leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (JKPDP), Sharma has been working tirelessly to address the needs and concerns of the people in his constituency. His social work has focused on improving the lives of marginalized communities, promoting education, and advocating for social justice. Sharma's felicitation on Shivratri is a well-deserved recognition of his selfless service to the community. It serves as an inspiration to others to follow in his footsteps and work towards creating a positive impact in society, said Shastri.

Speaking on the occasion, JKPDP leader Narinder Sharma reaffirmed his commitment to prioritizing and highlighting public issues

that affect the community.

As a responsible and dedicated leader, Sharma recognizes the importance of addressing the concerns and needs of the people, he said.

By prioritizing public issues, Sharma aims to ensure that the concerns of vulnerable sections of society are heard and addressed, demand answers from those in power and promote transparency in governance.

Sharma said he would continue work towards finding solutions to pressing issues, such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and social welfare.

Sharma's commitment to highlighting public issues demonstrates his dedication to serving the people and upholding the principles of democracy. By keeping the needs and concerns of the community at the forefront, he aims to create a better future for all.

Sharma has assured the public that he will continue to voice the grievances of the common man. This commitment was reaffirmed on the occasion of Shivratri, where Sharma reiterated his dedication to serving the people and addressing their concerns.

Sharma recognizes the importance of being a voice for the voiceless and amplifying the concerns of the common man.

He has pledged to hear the grievances and concerns of the common man and understand their struggles, highlight the issues affecting the community and bring them to the attention of the authorities. I shall work towards finding solutions to the problems faced by the common man and push for policy changes that benefit the community.

By assuring the public that he will voice their grievances, Sharma has demonstrated his commitment to being a true representative of the people. His dedication to serving the community and addressing their concerns is a testament to his leadership and character.

Sharma has warmly invited the public to approach him with their concerns and grievances, stating that his doors are open 24x7.

This welcoming gesture reflects Sharma's commitment to being accessible and responsive to the needs of the community. By keeping his doors open 24x7, Sharma is showing that he is answerable to the people and willing to listen to their concerns at any time, encouraging open communication and transparency in his interactions with the public.

Sharma's invitation for the public to approach him at any time reflects his dedication to serving the community and being a leader who is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people.

## IGGDC Jammu celebrates Oral Pathologist Day with enthusiasm



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: The Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Indira Gandhi Government Dental College (IGGDC), Jammu, celebrated Oral Pathologist Day with great zeal, emphasizing the crucial role of oral pathology in early disease detection and patient care.

The event commenced with a ribbon-cutting ceremony by Dr. Parveen Akhtar Lone, Principal & Dean, and Dr. Sanjay Sharma, Medical Superintendent, IGGDC, Jammu, marking the formal inauguration of the celebrations.

The event, led by Dr. Rubeena Anjum, Professor & Head of

the Department, featured various activities, including an awareness talk and screening of patients at the Home for Aged & Infirmit, Amphalla, a historangoli competition for undergraduate students, and a photomicrograph competition for postgraduate students.

A special tribute was paid to Late Dr. H. M. Dholakia, a pioneer in oral pathology, for his immense contributions to the field. His legacy continues to inspire future generations of oral pathologists in shaping the future of diagnostic pathology and patient care.

The celebration concluded with a felicitation ceremony for the Princi-

pal, Dean, winners, and organizers, followed by a cake-cutting ceremony. Additionally, a plantation drive was conducted to promote environmental sustainability, symbolizing growth in both nature and the field of oral pathology.

The event saw active participation from undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as faculty members, including Dr. Mandeep Kaur (Assistant Professor), Dr. Nidhi Khajuria (Lecturer on A/A), Dr. Ettishree, and Dr. Namita Sepolia.

The celebrations reinforced the department's commitment to education, research, and community service, fostering awareness and excellence in oral healthcare.

## HC's toll order brings major relief to people, will reduce muscle power: PHDCCI, HRAK

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PHDCCI), Jammu Region Chapter and Hotel & Restaurant Association Katra (HRAK) jointly in a meeting held here on Wednesday besides hailing the decision of the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court with regard to Toll Plazas from Lakhampur to Udhampur discussed in detail the positive impacts of that order which are going to be seen in future in details.

Rakesh Wazir, Chair PHDCCI & President HRAK, while welcoming the decision wherein the Court directed that toll fees at Lakhampur and Ban Toll Plazas be reduced to 20% of previous rates until the Lakhampur-Udhampur highway is fully operational and also instructed authorities to reassess the current toll charges, noting they are excessively high and prohibited the establishment of new toll plazas within 60 kilometers of existing ones on National Highway-44, said that this order will have far reaching impact in whole society and J&K people as well as Vaishnodevi ji pilgrims will get benefitted from it.

He while referring the decision wherein respondents i.e. NHAI as well as the contractors of the Toll Plazas are directed not to employ any person at the Toll Plazas having criminal background and the respondent as well as the contractors should deploy the persons at the Toll Plazas only after verification of such employees by the concerned police

agency and in case of any deviation in this regard, the concerned SHO/Incharge shall be personally responsible for the same will change the equation not only in J&K but this decision's impact would be seen in whole India in coming days and rule of muscle power which we used to see on Toll Plazas will get reduced because people will refer that order and asked the authorities for its strict implementation.

Shyam Lal Kesar, Executive member PHDCCI and Chairman HRAK, said that residents in the vicinity of toll plazas have faced unfair overcharging as they commute through the points very frequently and used to face problems in getting the Local passes which are given to people residing within 20 Kms as per NHAI guidelines particularly at Ban Toll Plaza just on basis of muscle power and even asked the authorities for having prove of all the irregularities which are routine matter over there.

Sanjay Gupta Co-Chair PHDCCI and Virender Kesar Convener (Head) Katra PHDCCI said that this historic decision delivered long-awaited justice to the public and emphasized that these type of decisions and interventions of Courts make the society a real place to live in otherwise some time common man loose hope from the system and asked for immediate and effective implementation of the court's directives to ensure genuine relief for commuters and residents.

## Ajeet demands employment for land-affected families in Chenab Valley Power Projects

### Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Feb 26: Senior National Conference leader and spokesperson of Chenab Valley Zone, Ajeet Bhagat, has demanded permanent employment for one member of each family affected by the Pakal Dool, Kiru, Kawar, and Rattle hydroelectric power projects. He urged that these families should be provided jobs at par with those affected by Dool Hasti, Uri, and Salal hydroelectric projects.

Bhagat highlighted the uncertain future of land losers, stating that many affected families have



been given temporary jobs by contractors but will face retrenchment once these projects are completed. He stressed that these families sacrificed their ancestral land and properties for the development of power projects, and their livelihood must be secured beyond the project completion phase.

In addition to employment assurances, Bhagat called for the establish-

ment of the Managing Director's office of Chenab Valley Power Projects (CVPP) in Kishtwar district. He argued that since Kishtwar is the hub of major hydroelectric projects, having the CVPP office in the region would ensure better governance, accessibility, and grievance redressal for the affected people.

The National Conference leader urged the government and concerned authorities to take immediate steps to safeguard the rights and future of the land-affected families and ensure their long-term financial stability.

## Four-day training program on Natural Farming begins at SKUAST-Jammu



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: The Directorate of Extension, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-J), in collaboration with the Directorate of Research, SKUAST-Kashmir, commenced a four-day training program on 'Natural Farming' from 25th to 28th February 2025.

The program is organized under the National Mission for Natural Farming and is specifically designed for Scientists and Professors from Krishi Vigyan Kendras (VKVs) of SKUAST-J from Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, Kishtwar, Kathua, Ramban,

and the Centre for Organic and Natural Farming (CONF).

Prof. Vikas Sharma, Head, Division of Soil Science, is the Coordinator, while Prof. Parshant Bakshi, Head, Division of Fruit Science and In-Charge of CONF, is serving as the Co-Coordinator of this training initiative.

During the inaugural session, Prof. Vikas Sharma extended a warm welcome to Prof. R K Salgotra, Director, Institute of Biotechnology, Head, CONF, and all participants.

He expressed gratitude to the Director Extension, SKUAST-J, for entrusting them with this significant endeavor.

Prof. Sharma also provided a comprehensive overview of the training program, highlighting its objectives and expected outcomes.

Prof. Ramesh Salgotra, in his address, emphasized the relevance of natural farming in the current agricultural landscape. He shed light on the potential of gene editing in developing crop varieties tailored to local agro-climatic conditions, aligning with sustainable and natural farming practices.

Prof. Parshant Bakshi discussed the ongoing activities and initiatives of CONF in promoting natural farming practices. He also extended the vote of thanks, acknowledging the contributions of all stakeholders involved in making this program a reality.

The training program features interactive sessions where participants are encouraged to share their practical experiences and insights on natural farming.



## Celebs from the telly world share what Mahashivratri means to them and how they celebrate it

Surreal experience: Raviraa Bhardwaj

Mahashivratri is a deeply spiritual occasion for me. It is a time for reflection, meditation and devotion to Lord Shiva. I have even celebrated Mahashivratri once at the Pashupatinath Temple, which was a surreal experience filled with divine energy. Personally, it strengthens my spiritual connection and brings inner peace. Professionally, I believe that devotion and positivity help me stay focused and navigate challenges with clarity and strength. Yes, I do observe a fast. Despite my busy shooting schedule, I manage it by planning well.

Inner peace: Sherleen Dutt

For me, Mahashivratri is deeply spiritual. It's a time for reflection, devotion, and connecting with Lord Shiva's energy. I celebrate it by fasting, meditating, and chanting a mantras. I also visit a temple if possible. It's more about inner stillness than external celebration. Mahashivratri holds immense significance in my life. Personally, it strengthens my spiritual connection. Professionally, I believe the discipline and devotion practiced during this time help me align my thoughts and energy.

Great energy: Hritik Yadav

It's a day for connecting with Mahadev through meditation, prayers and reflection. I start the day by visiting a temple. The energy of this day is so powerful. I feel closer to



Lord Shiva and become more aware of my inner self. Personally, it's a reminder of Mahadev's strength, calmness and wisdom. Professionally, I believe Lord Shiva's guidance keeps me grounded and focused. This day inspires me to stay patient and dedicated to my craft, no matter how tough things get.

Seeking blessings Anupama Solanki

Mahashivratri is one of the biggest celebrations for me because I am a devoted follower of Lord Shiva. Recently, I visited the Mahakaleswar Jyotirlinga in Ujjain

and the Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga. Lord Shiva always protects and helps me overcome negative energies, but I have never expected anything from Mahadev. I only seek his blessings. I have been fasting for the last 10 years, so I don't feel any pressure during Mahashivratri fasting.

It's an experience: Sneha Jain

Years ago, I used to keep a fast on Mahashivratri—it was the only fast I observed in a year. But due to my work schedule and the fact that I'm already

underweight, my body doesn't support fasting anymore. Mahashivratri is one of the most important and cherished celebrations for me. It's not just a festival; it's an experience that brings me peace and happiness. I usually visit a temple with my family.

Focused & grounded Shivangi Verma

Mahashivratri is a very special and spiritual day. While some people see it as a big celebration, I take it as a day for self-reflection and inner peace. I believe Mahashivratri is not just about rituals but about

understanding Shiva's energy and wisdom. On a personal level, this festival brings a sense of calm and positivity into my life. It reminds me to stay strong, just like Shiva, and to find peace even in chaos. Professionally, it helps me stay focused and grounded.

True devotee: Saanand Verma

Mahashivratri is very important to me because I am a devotee of Lord Shiva. I believe that Shiva is the ultimate truth. Fasting doesn't cause any problems for me; in fact, I've observed that my energy levels don't drop significantly during a fast. I feel great, stay happy, and focus my energy on my creativity. So, there's no stress on me. Shivratri is a monumental occasion for me. I'm someone who keeps chanting Har Har Mahadev again and again. Everything I am, whatever I have, and whatever I've achieved is all because of Mahadev. It's all his doing.

Being thankful

For Subha Rajput and Ram Yashvardhan, from Colors' Shiv Shakti- Tap Tyag Tandav, Mahashivratri is a special day too. Says Subha, "I consider this show as a blessing from Lord Shiva. It's a day to show gratitude towards him and be thankful." Adds Ram, "When you stay in the same character for one-and-a-half years, like I was in the role of Shiva, it's not easy to detach from it. I am thankful to Lord Shiva for everything."

## John Abraham says actors' inflated fees, entourage costs are hurting Bollywood



Actor John Abraham has taken offence to his fellow actors in the Hindi cinema 'sucking the system dry' with their inflated fees and 'mental' entourage costs. In the past, filmmakers Karan Johar and Farah Khan have also raised the issue of actors' rising entourage costs. Now, John has added to the debate by urging actors in the Hindi film industry to change that.

John Abraham on actors' fees

In conversation with agency, John was asked to comment on 'heroes asking for 100 crore

per day and their stylists' demanding 2 lakh per day', and the actor called it 'mental'. John added, "It's already hurting Hindi cinema. At this point in time, we shouldn't be paying people to act in films because we don't justify those huge budgets, the huge fees that we get paid. We can't load a film with entourage costs as well. It's ridiculous. I don't know if actors are thinking this way or is it their agent making them think differently. I don't get that space. I understand you are put in a bubble, but you can't be so daft. You

need to get out and see the real world. If people are blowing sunshine from your backside, you need to wake up and smell the coffee. As an industry, we are really suffering."

The actor then shared advice for his fellow performers in the Hindi cinema. He sharply said, "Actors should admit that we are down the deep black hole, and actors should go to the backend and work on the film. Actors should say that if the films make profit, we make profits because we have earned our millions. How much more will you suck the system dry? But again, you can't clap with one hand. There are producers who are willing to pay those obscene amounts as well."

The debate about actors' fees and the rising budgets of films in Hindi cinema has been ongoing for a few years now. Lately, the non-performance of many big-budget films at the box office has put it back in the spotlight.

John Abraham's upcoming work

John will next appear in The Diplomat, an action thriller directed by Shivam Nair. In the film, John plays an Indian diplomat who tries to repatriate an Indian girl from Pakistan, where she was presumably forced and deceived into marrying against her will. The film is slated to be released in theatres on March 15.

## Parineeti Chopra, Jennifer Winget to star in Netflix's mystery thriller series

Actor Parineeti Chopra is set to star in an upcoming mystery thriller series on Netflix.

The yet untitled project, to be directed by Rensil D'Silva, marks another collaboration of Chopra with the streaming platform after her 2024 film "Amar Singh Chamkila" with Diljit Dosanjh.

The series is produced by Siddharth P Malhotra and also stars Tahir Raj Bhasin, Anup Soni, Jennifer Winget and Chaitanya Choudhry.

Malhotra and D'Silva, who are also creators of the series, said in a joint statement, they are thrilled to collaborate on the project. "Working with Netflix has allowed us the creative freedom to push boundaries and bring a unique narrative to life. With a cast as talented as this and Parineeti choosing to foray into series with



our production, we are excited for what lies ahead and cannot wait for the world to watch the mystery unfold," their statement read.

Tanya Bami, series head of Netflix India, said the project is a gripping thriller that unravels "secrets, emotions, and the depths of human nature with unmatched intensity."

"With the creative vision of Rensil D'Silva and Siddharth P. Malhotra, and a powerhouse cast featuring Tahir Raj Bhasin, Anup

Soni and Harleen Sethi, the series captivates from the very first scene. We are delighted to welcome Parineeti Chopra back to Netflix following her stellar performance in 'Amar Singh Chamkila', now in her first-ever series and we're equally excited to have Jennifer Winget join us. Prepare for a journey that will keep you on the edge of your seat, hooked and guessing until the very end." Sumeet Vyas, Soni Razdan and Harleen Sethi round off the cast of the series.

## In Amritsar, spoken word poet and writer Priya Malik talks about her love for Amrita Pritam and her ishq with poetry

Unfiltered, gutsy, thoughtful. The words seem apt to describe Priya Malik and her poetry, which made us millennials teary-eyed and warm in heart with her now famous lines, "iPhone ke zamane mein Nokia 3910 dhoond rahi hoon, soy milk coffee ke zamane mein adrak wali chaai dhoond rahi hoon...main 2024 mein 1999 dhoond rahi hoon." Malik shot to fame instantly with her piece, 2024 Mein 1999, as the poem hit all the right spots with simple words that this generation could easily relate to.

Performing at the third edition of Sacred Amritsar festival this year, Priya, this time, charmed the audience by reminding them of Amrit Pritam wala ishq with her another famous piece,



Ishq Hai, Ishq Hai, Ishq Hai. The poem began with 'Marme Ke Baad Bhi Usse Phir Milne Ki Aas Lagana, (a reference to Pritam's iconic 'Mein Tenu Pher Milangi'). It celebrated the idea of eternal love, transcending lifetimes. "I am a big fan of Amrita Pritam and you would find that a lot of my poems have her reference. I first read her when I was in Australia

and it moved me so much," said Priya. Interestingly, Priya being a student of Hindi literature shared that she had not been familiar with Pritam's work till 2015. "Not everyone is connected to books or literature as we ought to. The reason why the process of poetic discourse has evolved now. From being a page to visual media poet, the process

has reversed, at least in my case, as I got recognised on social media first and now my books will be out soon. But as long as you inspire people to read, to pick up a book and get familiar with Gulzar or Amrita Pritam, it all works out," she says.

Personal reflections

A spoken word poet, who often faces criticism from the purists for the lack of form or behr (rhythmic pattern), Priya says all that matters is if people relate to it. "2024 Mein 1999 started as an Instagram caption. I cannot write until I feel passionately about the subject and most of my poems are a reflection of my personal observations. The thought and intent matters the most."

Performing in Amritsar was special for her as her family has roots in

Lahore and she is the only one from her generation to make an attempt to trace them. "My dadi was eight months pregnant when they were forced to migrate from Lahore in 1946 and settled in Dehradun. I have grown up listening stories of Bano bazaar, about Surraiya's songs and the big vedha at my dadi's home in Lahore. The home we have in Dehradun was built resembling the one they left in Lahore. My dadi's graduation certificate has mention of Undivided Punjab as she graduated from Panjab University, which was in Lahore at that time. So I really want to once visit Lahore and Amritsar is the closest one can get, at least for now," she says, of course, with a promise of crossing that border at least once!

## Here is what Govinda said on divorce rumours with Sunita Ahuja

Bollywood actor Govinda is again in the news after the accidental shooting incident in October last year.

This time, reports claim that his wife Sunita has filed for separation and has also sent a legal document regarding the matter.

However, the actor's manager has now stated that the reports of the actor's wife Sunita filing for separation are being circulated to gain public attention.

When agency contacted Govinda, he responded saying, "These are only business talks going...I am in the process of starting my films."

Speaking to Pinkvilla Hindi Rush, Sunita had said, "We have two houses, we have a bungalow opposite our apartment. I have my temple and my kids in the flat. We live in the flat whereas he gets late after his meetings. He loves talking so he'll

gather 10 people and sit chatting with them. Whereas me, my son and my daughter live together, but we hardly talk because I feel if you end up wasting your energy by talking too much."

The actor's manager, Shashi Sinha, told IANS, "Right now, the news is being spread everywhere. So we are keeping an eye on it. Yes, she has sent a legal notice to the court. I am aware of that. But there is no



concrete information regarding its contents. The legal notice hasn't yet reached us."

The manager also said that Sunita has been making statements that pique the audience's

interest regarding Govinda for the past few days. He continued, "You must have seen that something or the other has been coming up. This or that. Sunita ji has said something or the other about Govinda ji. She said she taught him acting or dance."

The manager said that Govinda lives in the bungalow most of the time while Sunita lives in a flat, but there is no lack of interest on the actor's part when it comes to

taking care of Sunita and his family.

"There are certain things that are going on. But they are on their own terms. But it is not like there is a poet in a book or something. Govinda is a man of a different nature. He stands for others, and for his family," the manager shared.

However, Shashi refused to call this arrangement (the actor spending a significant amount of time in his

bungalow and Sunita living in a flat) as the couple living separately.

"They don't live separately. Govinda lives in his bungalow. Most of the time, he lives there. Yes, he comes and goes to his house. He lives in a bungalow for a few days. He works in a political party, he is in the ministry. He is associated with the government. So, it's very natural for him to spend some time in his bungalow," he added.



## PM Modi pays homage to Savarkar on his death anniversary



NEW DELHI, Feb 26 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Hindutva ideologue Veer Savarkar on his death anniversary on Wednesday. His invaluable sacrifice, courage and struggle in the independence movement can never

be forgotten by the grateful nation, Mr. Modi said in a post on X. Savarkar was also a prolific writer and many of his ideas, especially on Hindutva, have grown in influence since his death in 1966, becoming tenets of Hindu nationalism.

## Shah slams Stalin over central funds, delimitation, says Centre gave Rs 5 lakh cr in 10 yrs

COIMBATORE, Feb 26 (Agencies): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday denied any injustice to Tamil Nadu by the Centre as claimed by M K Stalin over fund allocation and described as diversionary attempts, the Chief Minister raking up the delimitation issue.

Refuting Stalin's claims, Shah said the Narendra Modi government has provided Rs 5,08,337 crore to the state during the 2014-24 period.

Also, he accused Stalin of spreading a misinformation campaign on the delimitation exercise. Seeking



to put to rest speculation on the subject, he asserted no southern state including Tamil Nadu would see a reduction in the Parliamentary representation when delimitation will be done on pro-rata basis.

Lashing out at the ruling DMK dispensation on the 'failure' of law and order in the

state, Shah, speaking after inaugurating the BJP party office here, said "the anti-national tendency is at all-time high in Tamil Nadu." "Tamil Nadu government provided security during the last journey of 1998 bomb blast accused and mastermind (SA Basha)," the Home Minister said. He claimed the drug

mafia enjoyed a free hand in selling drugs in the state and that illegal mining mafia was making politics corrupt here.

"All the leaders of DMK have got Master's degree in corruption," he charged at the event.

While the people of the state were anguished over a number of issues, "the CM and his son (Udhayanidhi) have taken up some issue to divert public attention." "They are going to do a meeting on delimitation saying we won't allow any injustice to south," Shah said about the March 5 all-party meet-

ing convened by the TN government over the issue.

The Modi government has made it clear in the Lok Sabha that no southern state will lose even one seat after delimitation, the BJP veteran said.

He exuded confidence the NDA will come to power in Tamil Nadu next year after the Assembly elections and that the win would be bigger than the saffron bloc's Maharashtra and Haryana victories.

On the occasion, Shah virtually inaugurated the party offices at Tiruvannamalai and Ramanathapuram.

## Maha Kumbh's final 'snan' underway on Mahashivratri, 81 lakh devotees take dip

MAHAKUMBH NAGAR, Feb 26 (Agencies): Amid chants of 'Har Har Mahadev', a multitude of pilgrims from across the country on Wednesday took a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam on Mahashivratri as the 45-day Maha Kumbh inched towards its closure.

Maha Kumbh, a mega religious gathering that takes place once in 12 years, began on January 13 (Paush Purnima) and saw grand processions of Naga Sadhus and three Amrit Snans. As per official figures, over 65 crore devotees have so far visited this year's Kumbh in Prayagraj.

According to government data, by 2 am on Wednesday, over 11.66 lakh devotees immersed themselves in the Sangam on Mahashivratri, which marks the last day of the Kumbh. The number surged to 25.64 lakh in the next two hours and 41.11 lakh by 6 am. By 10 am, 81.09 lakh people had taken the final 'snan' at the Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati rivers.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath began monitoring the arrangements at the Kumbh Mela at 4 am from Gorakhpur with senior government officials.

In a post on X, the CM said, "Hearty congratulations to all the revered

saints, Kalpvasis and devotees who have come to take a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam today on the holy bathing festival of Mahashivratri dedicated to the worship of Lord Bholenath in Maha Kumbh-2025, Prayagraj....Har Har Mahadev!" The state government arranged for showering of petals over devotees from a helicopter at the Kumbh. Twenty quintals of flower petals were showered on the devotees in five rounds.

Being the last auspicious 'snan' of the Maha Kumbh, a large number of devotees had begun to gather on the banks of the Sangam from close to midnight, and while some camped and waited patiently to take the dip at the 'Brahma Muhurt', scores of them performed the bathing rituals well before the appointed time.

Billed as the world's largest spiritual gathering on earth, the mega religious festival on its last day attracted pilgrims from all four corners of the country.

Rajvir Singh Jhala (20), a BBA student from Rajkot took the holy dip right at the Sangam nose, as did his mother and other family members who arrived in Prayagraj from Gujarat in a bus on Wednesday night.

"Lord Shiva for me means 'Shunyata', one must feel that he or she is nothing in front of him. Besides, one must



have goodness inside. If one has dirt inside, washing oneself in holy Sangam will not even cleanse any sin," Jhala told agency right after his 'snan'.

As pilgrims milled around and took the holy dip at various ghats at or near the Sangam, security personnel kept a vigilant eye, not allowing crowding at any place for long duration, as they sought to manage the sea of pilgrims pouring into the mela grounds.

Pilgrims also came from West Bengal, Karnataka, Bihar, Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, covering literally the length and breadth of the country.

A group of devotees also came all the way from Nepal to witness the Maha Kumbh on its closing day and take the holy dip on Mahashivratri.

Pinki Devi from Kolkata who performed the bathing rituals around 3.30 am was ecstatic that she could take the dip on the auspicious day. Chants of 'Har Har Mahadev' or 'Jai Mahakal' rang throughout the Mela ground.

Mahashivratri commemorates the divine union of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati and holds special significance in the context of the Kumbh Mela.

According to Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva played a crucial role in the Samudra Manthan (churning of the ocean), which led to the emergence of the Amrit Kumbh (nectar pitcher), the very essence of the Kumbh Mela.

The day draws large crowds of devotees to the sacred confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati, considered holy by Hindus.

The Uttar Pradesh government said the total number of visitors to the fair exceeds the population of all countries in the world except India and China, both of which have populations exceeding a billion.

The Maha Kumbh has witnessed six special bathing dates — Paush Purnima on January 13, Makar Sankranti on January 14, Mauni Amavasya on January 29, Basant Panchami on February 3, Maghi Purn-

ima on February 12, and Mahashivratri on February 26 — including three 'Amrit Snan'.

Given the scale of the event and the sheer volume of attendees, authorities have enforced a "no vehicle zone" in the mela area and Prayagraj besides implementing strict crowd control measures and logistical support to facilitate a seamless culmination of Maha Kumbh 2025.

A stampede on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya last month led to the deaths of at least 30 people and left 60 injured, as per the government. Overseeing preparations on the ground, DIG (Kumbh) Vaibhav Krishna said expansive police deployment has been made in the Mela area. "We are prepared particularly to handle a two-pronged situation, one is the rush of devotees at the ghats, including the Sangam, and the other is crowd management at five main 'shivalayas' in the mela area where devotees will offer sacred water to Lord Shiva," Krishna told agency on Wednesday.

He added that the entire mela area has been designated a "no-vehicle zone" since Tuesday evening and "no VIP treatment" will be accorded to anyone. "We are expecting the footfall on Wednesday to be higher than it was on Tuesday (1.33 crore)," the DIG added.

## India's approach to Africa based on mutually-beneficial ties, unlike 'extractive' models: EAM



NEW DELHI, Feb 26 (Agencies): India's approach towards Africa has been guided by a deep-rooted commitment to build mutually-beneficial partnerships, unlike "extractive" models of engagement, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday, amid China's relentless attempts to expand influence in the continent.

India and Japan, with their complementary strengths, are well-positioned to support Africa's development in a sustainable and inclusive manner, he said.

The external affairs minister was delivering a lecture at the Japan-India-Africa Business Forum.

"India's approach to Africa has always been guided by a deep-rooted commitment to building long-term, mutually-beneficial partnerships," he said.

"Unlike extractive models of engagement,

technology parks and railway infrastructure generated local employment and changed lives in Africa.

India's deep and long-standing engagement with Africa can make it a natural bridge, whether geographically or in the industrial value chain, he argued.

"With India set for continued rapid economic growth, it serves as an ideal hub for Japanese companies seeking to expand into Africa and the Middle East," he said.

"Japanese investments, India's solid industrial base and digital capacities and Africa's talent and consumption can come together to create beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders," he added.

Jaishankar is of the view that India and Japan can also collaborate to strengthen resilient supply chains for African countries, particularly in critical and emerging sectors.

"The growth and prosperity of Africa will not only benefit its people but also contribute to broader global stability and economic progress," he said.

"India and Japan, with their complementary strengths, are well-positioned to support Africa's development in a sustainable and inclusive manner," he said.

Jaishankar said India's development projects sectors such as power plants, transmission lines, cement, sugar and textile factories,

## Five drown in Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh

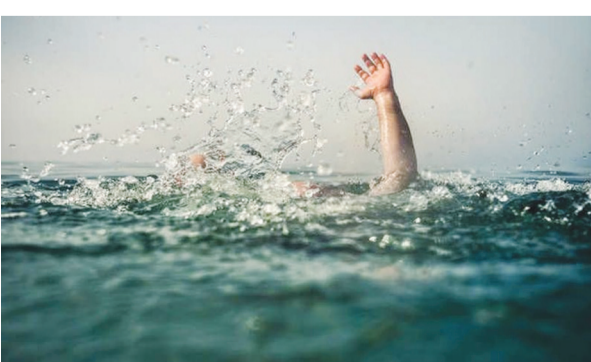
Tragedy occurred around 8:30 am at Tadipudi village in Tallapudi mandal

TADIPUDI, Feb 26 (Agencies): Five persons drowned in the Godavari river here in East Godavari district on Wednesday morning when they went for a bath, said a police official.

Out of a group of 12 men, five drowned while seven managed to survive, they added.

The tragedy occurred around 8:30 am at Tadipudi village in Tallapudi mandal, police said.

"Five persons drowned in the Godavari river out of a group of 12 when



they went to take bath," the official told agency, adding that the group was intending to go to a nearby temple after the bath for the Shivaratri festival.

Most of the deceased

persons and survivors were less than 20 years old.

Police, fire service, locals and others are searching to recover the bodies of the deceased persons.

## Lawrence Bishnoi gang member with Rs 1 lakh reward killed in UP encounter

MEERUT, Feb 26 (Agencies): In a major police operation in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, a notorious criminal with a bounty of Rs one lakh and linked to Lawrence Bishnoi Gang, was killed in an encounter with the Special Task Force (STF) on Wednesday.

The criminal, identified as Jeetu alias Jitendra, was injured during the gunfight and was rushed to a hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries.

According to police sources, the STF had an intense encounter with a gang of criminals in the Mundali police station



area of Meerut. During the encounter, one of the criminals sustained severe injuries and was sent to the hospital for medical treatment.

The injured criminal was identified as Jeetu, who later died during treatment.

Jeetu, a resident of

Asounda village in Haryana's Jhajjar district, was involved in several criminal activities. He had eight criminal cases registered against him under various charges.

In 2016, Jeetu was sentenced to life imprisonment for a double murder case in Jhaj-

jar. However, he was granted parole in 2023, during which he fled from custody.

After escaping, he carried out a murder in Ghaziabad's Tilamod area, where he shot and killed a person on contract. Since then, he had been on the run.

While in jail, Jeetu made contact with members of the notorious Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Following his escape, he joined the gang and became involved in their illegal activities. The police had announced a reward of Rs one lakh for any information leading to his capture.

Jeetu's criminal history included several cases in Haryana, Delhi, and Ghaziabad. Notably, he had been sentenced to five years in prison by the Bahadurgarh Court in Haryana (August 29, 2018) for a case registered in the Bahadurgarh police station.

He was also sentenced to life imprisonment on February 3, 2018, by the same court, and to ten years in prison in a different case. His criminal record includes multiple charges in areas like Jhajjar, Kanjhwala, and Vikas Puri in Delhi, as well as Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh.



## Nepal observes Maha Shivaratri with devotion, prayer and rituals

*Serpentine lines stretching far and wide leading to the Pashupatinath temple, Hindu devotees have been observing Maha Shivaratri with devotion, prayer and rituals.*

KATHMANDU, Feb 26 (Agencies): Serpentine lines stretching far and wide leading to the Pashupatinath temple, Hindu devotees have been observing Maha Shivaratri with devotion, prayer and rituals.

From early morning, the Hindu devotees offered incense sticks, butter and oil-fed-lamps, milk, sacred water and other delicacies to Lord Shiva, one of the principal deities of Hinduism.

"Early in the morning, I took a bath, came to the temple to worship- this is the place where our minds get free, relieves the stress and give a sense of freedom. This pilgrimage also is undertaken for peace and happiness as well as salvation," Tek Raj Khanal, a devotee who performed rituals at the temple told agency.

Maha Shivaratri, translated as "Great Night of Lord Shiva" is observed by staying awake, lighting oil lamps, praying, worshipping, and meditating, especially in the Pashupatinath temple area, as a mark of reverence for Lord Shiva.

On this sacred occasion, Shiva temples nationwide are filled with worshippers. Thousands of Hindu pilgrims, including ascetics known as sadhus, travel from Nepal, India, and other parts of the world to pay homage to Pashupatinath.

"I am feeling really blessed for being able to visit the Pashupatinath Temple. The atmosphere here is full of fervor. There is no word to express the feeling, I am elated," Manoj Kumar, a devotee from India told agency.



The name Pashupatinath originates from Sanskrit, combining Pashu (living beings), Pati (master), and Nath (god), signifying Shiva as the supreme lord of all living beings. The Pashupatinath Temple is built in the classic Nepali pagoda style. It features a double-tiered, gold-plated roof with a gilded spire at the top.

Believed to be around 2,000 years old, the temple is a testament to Nepal's rich cultural and religious heritage. Hindus and Buddhists visit Pashupatinath Temple for prayer, a long-standing tradition that strengthens religious harmony among the people.

Every year, devotees worship Lord Shiva on the midnight of Falgun Krishna Chaturdashi. Religious scriptures state that the Supreme Being assumed the form of Shiva at midnight on this day.

Following Vedic Sanatan

Hindu traditions, devotees take holy baths in rivers, ponds, and lakes early in the morning before visiting Shiva temples for prayers. Scriptures such as the Shiva Purana mention this festival as one of the four sacred nights-Kalaratri, Moharatri, Sukharatri, and Shivaratri.

People consider Falgun Krishna Chaturdashi an auspicious day when Lord Shiva grants mercy to the poor and distressed. Many believe that Mahadev's destructive force in Magh, which causes trees and plants to shed leaves, transforms into a benevolent force in Falgun, bringing new life. This cycle symbolizes the reason for celebrating Shivaratri.

"God always has been blessing and protecting our family. Everything is dependent on gods. Following this belief, devotees have flocked to the Pashupati area, everyone are devoted to god," Bhawani Kunwar, another devo-

tee told agency.

Devotees purify themselves, visit Shiva temples, and offer Lord Shiva his favorite items, including milk, Dhatura flowers, and Bel leaves. They believe that observing a fast and staying awake all night in devotion grants spiritual fulfillment and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Many communities light bonfires and sing sacred chants and hymns while preparing offerings.

As a national cultural festival, Maha Shivaratri features four phases of worship throughout the night at Pashupatinath Temple. Grand offerings of lamps, continuous deep-lighting ceremonies, and the dedication of 100,000 Bel leaves accompany the rituals.

Traditional music and dance performances take place at the Kailashkut and Kirateshwar music ashrams. Devotees from Nepal and neighbouring India gather at Pashupatinath for darshan and festivities.

As per the rituals, the first of the four-phased worship begins at 6 PM, followed by the second phase at 9 PM, the third phase at midnight, and the final phase from 3 AM to 6 AM. These worship involve chanting, meditation, offerings, and Rudrabhishek rituals.

Temples with consecrated Shiva idols across Nepal, including Rudreshwar Mahadev Temple in Chabahil, Trigajur Shiva Temple in Gaurighat, Gokarneshwar Mahadev Temple, Nageshwar, and Doleshwor, conduct similar worship.

## Trump administration creates registry for immigrants who are in US illegally



WASHINGTON, Feb 26 (Agencies): The Trump administration is creating a registry for all people who are in the United States illegally, and those who don't self-report could face fines or prosecution, immigration officials announced.

Everyone who is in the US illegally must register, give fingerprints and provide an address, the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement. It cited a section of the Immigration and Nationality Act — the complex immigration law — as justification for the registration process, which would apply to anyone 14 and older.

The announcement comes as the administration seeks to make good on campaign promises to carry out mass deportations of people in the country illegally and seal the border to future asy-

lum-seekers.

"An alien's failure to register is a crime that could result in a fine, imprisonment, or both," the statement said. "For decades, this law has been ignored — not anymore."

On its website, the US Citizenship and Immigration Service said it would soon create a form and process for registration.

In one of his 10 inauguration day executive orders related to immigration, President Donald Trump initially outlined plans for creating a registry and required that Homeland Security "immediately announce and publicize information about the legal obligation of all previously unregistered aliens in the United States to comply".

It was not immediately clear how many people living in the country illegally would voluntarily come for-

ward and give the federal government information about who they are and where they're living. But failure to register would be considered a crime, and the administration has said its initial priority target for deportation is people who've committed crimes in the US.

The National Immigration Law Center, an immigration advocacy group, said in a posting on its website before the Tuesday night announcement that "the Alien Registration Act of 1940 is the only time the US government carried out a comprehensive campaign to require all noncitizens to register".

The organisation said under that process, people had to go to their local post office to register, and the goal was to identify "potential national security threats broadly characterised as communist or subversive".

The group warned that the registry was meant to help find potential targets for deportation.

"Any attempt by the Trump administration to create a registration process for noncitizens previously unable to register would be used to identify and target people for detention and deportation," the organisation said.

## Sudanese military plane crash kills 46 amid ongoing conflict

CAIRO, Feb 26 (Agencies): The death toll from a Sudanese military plane crash in the city of Omdurman increased to at least 46 people, officials said Wednesday.

The Khartoum Media Office said the crash also injured 10 others.

The Antonov aircraft crashed Tuesday while taking off from the Wadi Sayidna air base north of Omdurman, the military said in a statement. Omdurman is the sister city of the capital, Khartoum.

The military said that armed forces personnel and civilians were killed in the crash. It didn't say what caused the crash.

The ministry said that the aircraft crashed over a civilian house in the Karrari district in Omdurman, suggesting that there were people



dead on the ground.

Sudan has been in a state of civil war since 2023 when tensions between the military and a notorious paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces, exploded into open warfare.

The fighting has wrecked urban areas and has been marked by atrocities, including mass rape and ethnically motivated killings, that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, especially in the western region

of Darfur, according to the United Nations and international rights groups.

The war has intensified in recent months, with the military making steady advances against the RSF in Khartoum and elsewhere in the country.

The RSF, which controls most of the western region of Darfur, said that it downed a military aircraft on Monday in Nyala, the provincial capital of South Darfur province.

## Hamas to turn over bodies of four Israeli hostages in exchange for release of hundreds of prisoners

TEL AVIV, Feb 26 (Agencies): Hamas will return the bodies of four dead Israeli hostages on Thursday in exchange for Israel's release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, the group said, just days before the first phase of the ceasefire between the warring parties was to expire.

Israel has delayed the release of some 600 Palestinian prisoners since Saturday to protest what it says is the cruel treatment of hostages during their release by Hamas.

The militant group has said the delay is a "serious violation" of their ceasefire and that talks on a second phase are not possible until the Palestinians are freed.

Hamas spokesman

Abdul Latif al-Qanou told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Hamas would hand over the bodies of four Israelis the next day.

In exchange, Israel would release the Palestinian prisoners, as well as an unspecified number of women and minors detained since the militant group's Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel that sparked the conflict.

An Israeli official confirmed that the bodies of four hostages were expected to be turned over but provided no further details. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Israel and Hamas had already said on Tuesday that an agreement had

been reached to return the bodies of the hostages, but no date had been announced.

Hamas has released hostages, and the bodies of four dead hostages, in large public ceremonies during which the Israelis were paraded and forced to wave to large crowds.

Israel, along with the Red Cross and U.N. officials, have said the ceremonies were humiliating to the hostages, and Israel last weekend delayed the scheduled prisoner release in protest.

The deadlock over the exchange had threatened to collapse the ceasefire when the current six-week first phase of the deal expires this weekend.

The latest agreement would complete both sides' obligations of the first phase of the ceasefire — during which Hamas is returning 33 hostages, including eight bodies — in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners.

It also could clear the way for an expected visit this week by the White House's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, to the region.

Witkoff has said he wants the sides to move into negotiations on the second phase, during which all remaining hostages held by Hamas are to be released and an end to the war is to be negotiated. The Phase 2 talks were supposed to begin weeks

ago, but never did.

The ceasefire, brokered by the United States, Egypt and Qatar, ended 15 months of heavy fighting that erupted after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack that killed some 1,200 people in Israel and took about 250 people hostage.

Israel's military offensive has killed over 48,000 Palestinians, according to Palestinian health officials, displaced an estimated 90% of Gaza's population and decimated the territory's infrastructure and health system. The Hamas-run Health Ministry does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths, but it says that over half of the dead have been women and children.

## Russia reports massive Ukraine drone attack on strategic port and logistics hub

MOSCOW, Feb 26 (Agencies): Russia's Defense Ministry claimed to have shot down 130 Ukrainian drones on Tuesday night into Wednesday morning, in what appears to be among Kyiv's largest ever long-range strike into Russian territory.

Moscow said that 85 Ukrainian drones were shot down over the southern Russian region of Krasnodar Krai, with 30 more over Crimea. Another eight drones were downed over the Sea of Azov, five over the Black Sea and one each over Bryansk and Kursk regions, the min-

istry said.

The drones over Krasnodar appeared to mass around the Black Sea port of Tuapse, which sits between the resort city of Sochi and the Russian naval base at Novorossiysk.

Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev said several houses in the Krasnodar Krai region were damaged by drone strikes or falling debris.

Andriy Kovalenko, the head of the Counter-Disinformation Center operating as part of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, said on Telegram that Russian authorities "report-



ed an attack on the seaport in Tuapse," which he described as "one of the key cargo ports of the Russian Federation on the Black Sea."

"There is an oil terminal there -- one of the largest in Russia," Kovalenko added. "Oil and oil products are transported through the port, which makes it important for the Russian energy

industry." Kovalenko said the port processes significant volumes of coal, mineral fertilizers, metal products and grain, plus serves as a rail and logistics hub for Russia's central and southern regions.

"The port plays an important role in supporting military logistics," Kovalenko wrote.

"It is used to transport equipment, ammunition and fuel for military needs. It provides logistical support to the ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, in particular those involved in the war against Ukraine."

Ukraine's air force, meanwhile, reported another night of Russian cross-border attacks on Tuesday night. The air force said Russia fired 177 drones into Ukraine, of which 110 were shot down and 66 were lost in flight.

The air force reported engagements in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kirovohrad and Sumy regions.

## 18 Killed after double-decker bus in Thailand crashes due to brake fail



BANGKOK, Feb 26 (Agencies): A bus crashed and killed 18 people in Thailand on Wednesday after the brakes apparently failed as it went down a hill, police said.

The vehicle was one of three double-decker buses carrying local government officials on a field trip when it veered off the road

in Prachin Buri province, east of the capital Bangkok. "There were 17 people found dead at the scene and one more later died in hospital," said Police Lieutenant Colonel Siwapass Phuripatchaiboonchu.

"We have questioned the driver and he said the brakes failed as the bus went down the hill." A total of 49 people

were on board when the bus crashed, and the survivors have been taken for treatment to two hospitals.

Thailand has one of the worst road safety records in the world, with around 20,000 people killed every year according to the World Health Organization.

Unsafe vehicles and poor driving are major factors contributing to the high toll.

In October, a school bus crashed and caught fire in a Bangkok suburb, killing 23 people -- most of them children -- in the kingdom's deadliest road accident in a decade.



## Student politics, unions not banned in Kashmir Valley: RTI reveals

### Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Feb 26: The Jammu and Kashmir government has not officially banned student politics, Associations or unions in the Kashmir region, as revealed by an RTI response. Earlier, in its reply to the same RTI, it also stated that there is no ban on student politics in the Jammu region. Officials from the Higher Education Department confirmed that no communication or official order has been issued by the authorities imposing such a restriction.

The RTI was filed by Nasir Khuehami, National Convenor of the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association, who sought a photocopy of any official order banning student activism and student associations in universities and educational institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

In response, officials from the Higher Education Department clarified that no circular or directive exists prohibiting student associations or restricting their formation and functioning in the Union Territory. The government has not imposed any ban on student politics anywhere. The RTI response dispels misconceptions about a potential ban on student activism, affirming that there are no official restrictions on

campus politics in J&K. Khuehami said that he filed an RTI to sought information whether any official order prohibits student unions associations in Jammu and Kashmir or campus politics at Kashmir University. He submitted similar requests to various universities in Kashmir, and the response from Kashmir University was particularly striking. While other universities simply stated that no official ban exists on campus politics, Kashmir University's reply stood out.

Several institutions, including the University of Jammu, Central University of Jammu, Government College for Women Gandhi Nagar Jammu, Central University of Kashmir, Islamic University of Science and Technology, and other educational institutions in Jammu and Kashmir, have confirmed in their respective responses that no official order banning student politics has been issued, either by the universities themselves or by the government. They further clarified that they have not prohibited the formation of student associations or unions.

However, the RTI reply from the University of Kashmir states that there is no need for a student union in the university because

a transparent system is already in place. The University of Kashmir specifically said that it has not issued any circular or formal order banning student unions. There is also no official communication from the Government or university restricting the formation of student associations. However, in its response to the applicant, the university's Proctor mentioned that student unions were verbally banned in 2009 by the then Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Riyaz Punjabi. This decision was not implemented through any written or official order but was conveyed as a verbal directive. The reply goes on to say that the university has a proper grievance mechanism in place.

Reacting to this, Khuehami said that the university can gaslight with the "proper grievance cell" reply, but not anyone who is privy to Kashmir University's defunct system—especially a student who is a daily sufferer. "Which Kashmir University student doesn't know that when a student speaks about university issues, he is summoned by the Chief Proctor the next day? They fear the University Chief Proctor more than the people of North Korea fear Kim Jong Un. Students say he is anything but an

academician."

He further said that the University of Kashmir justified the absence of student unions and associations by claiming it had a "transparent" grievance redressal system. "But the counter-question is: who accredited the university as 'transparent'?" The question is, who gave them the accreditation of being 'transparent'? Isn't this reply laughable to those students who have to endure hardships daily due to the lack of an operational student union? That is the first point. The second is that student unions and associations are part and parcel of a vibrant higher education system. Just because the system is transparent does not rule out the necessity of a student union.

Every major institution in India—be it Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Delhi University (DU), or TISS—operates within transparent frameworks while also having active student unions. Transparency and student representation are not mutually exclusive. If anything, they strengthen each other. Does that mean they will stop having student unions?

From what I gather, "law and order" has been a convenient excuse for Kashmir Univer-

sity authorities to avoid accountability. Student unions and associations hold university authorities accountable, and Kashmir University is not ready to be accountable to its own students. They fear being questioned for their unbridled onslaught on the quality of education at the university.

Universities have long functioned as incubators of debate—spaces where ideas can be nurtured and challenged. Only a functional student body can act as a watchdog against the wrongs committed by university authorities. Only it can provide the necessary corrective measures to restore the university's credibility. Only it can once again make Kashmir University the highest seat of learning it was meant to be.

If the University of Kashmir is serious about upholding democratic values and fostering an environment of free expression, it must immediately revoke its informal, unofficial, and arbitrary stance on student representation. The institution must align itself with the principles of academic freedom and student participation rather than maintaining an outdated, undemocratic, and unaccountable restriction that has no legal or moral standing.

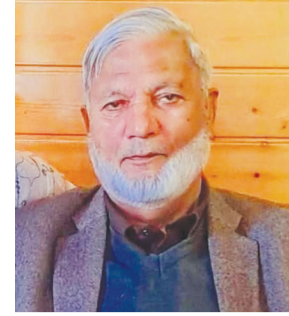
## Bukhari mourns passing of Kitchama's Bashir Ahmad Shah

### Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Feb 26: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has expressed profound grief over the passing of Bashir Ahmad Shah, a retired Chief Horticulture Officer and a resident of Kitchama Narvar in the Baramulla district.

In a statement issued here, Bukhari described Shah's passing as a personal loss.

He said, "I am deeply saddened and grieved by the death of Bashir Ahmad Shah Sahib, as I recall the cherished moments we have spent together over the



years. Our families have shared a close relationship and a decades-long history of association. I vividly remember the memorable moments we spent together on various occasions over a long period."

"Like his esteemed father, Mohammad Yousuf Shah Sahib, Bashir Sahib was a

noble soul, known for his integrity and dedication. I pray to the Almighty to grant him the highest place in Jannah and to shower his grave with His blessings," he added.

Expressing solidarity with the bereaved family, Bukhari said, "In this hour of grief, I stand in solidarity with his bereaved family, extending my heartfelt sympathies, especially to his sons—Irrshad Ahmad, Aijaz Ahmad, Tariq Ahmad, and Tanveer Ahmad—and to all his loved ones. May Allah grant them strength and patience to bear this immense loss.

## Kakora Cricket League concludes with DSK Mafia XI wins trophy



### Top News Report

RAJOURI, Feb 26: The Kakora Cricket League (KCL) 2025 culminated in a thrilling final match at the breathtaking Kaniyal Gali Cricket Ground, delivering an electrifying contest between Mafia X1 and DSK Mafia X1, wherein batting first, Mafia X1 put up a total of 90/10

in 11.4 overs. Their innings was driven by an explosive knock from Mohd Sami (34 off 18 balls, SR 188.8) and a solid contribution from Fazan (14 off 7 balls, SR 200.0). However, disciplined bowling from DSK X1, led by Pervaiz Ahmed and Mukhtar Prince, kept them in check.

Chasing 91, DSK dominated with a stunning innings from their captain Ruksar Anjum, who played a match-winning knock of 80 runs off 41 balls at a strike rate of 195.1. Supported by Anaz Khan (26 off 4 balls), DSK comfortably secured victory at 94/1 in 11.4 overs, lifting the KCL 2025 Trophy in style.

The grand finale was a testament to the fierce competition and sportsmanship that defined KCL 2025, organized by Indian Army. Cricket fans can now look forward to even bigger and better action in next year's edition.

## KVK Reasi organizes live webcast of PM-Kisan Samman Samaroh

### Top News Report

REASI, Feb 26: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Reasi under the administrative control of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technologies Jammu (SKUAST-J) organised live webcast on PM-Kisan Samman Samaroh here at KVK Reasi campus which was attended by number of farmers of the area.

The programme was organized under the dynamic leadership of Vice Chancellor, Prof. B.N Tripathi and guidance of Director Extension, Prof. Amrith Vaid of SKUAST-J.

During the programme Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi released the 19th installment of PM-KISAN scheme from Bhagalpur, Bihar. This installment provided financial aid of Rs.22,000 crores for 9.7 crore farmers across the country through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

The programme was inaugurated by the MLA Katra, Baldev Raj Sharma as the Chief Guest.

He visited the different stalls exhibited at KVK and appreciated the efforts of farmers for commercial farming. He also visited the hydroponics unit of KVK Reasi and appreciated the efforts of KVK for promotion of technology.

He stressed on the value addition in crops and guided farmers on PM-KISAN scheme. He also discussed on women empowerment and stressed on marketing of SHGs products. He applauded the efforts of KVK Reasi for the welfare of farmers.

Earlier Chief Scientist and Head of KVK, Reasi, Dr. Banarsi Lal welcomed the participants and briefed the objective of the programme.

He elaborated the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-

KISAN) Scheme. He said that PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a flagship scheme of Govt. of India launched in 2019.

He added that through this scheme Rs.6000 is provided to the farmers in three installments so that they can purchase quality seeds, fertilizers and other agro-inputs to increase their crop quality and production.

He also spoke on various other agricultural schemes and gave a detail view on scientific agriculture.

He stressed on commercial agriculture and guided farmers on organic formulations for more profits.

Dr. Mandeep Singh Azad spoke of the scientific dairy farming and encouraged farmers on adoption of new technologies in agriculture and allied sectors.

Dr. Arvinder Kumar elaborated the scientific farming for enhancing the farmers' income and stressed on SHGs/

FPOs for more profits.

Dr. Rakesh Kumar from Department of Agriculture, Reasi discussed on monkeys menace management and emphasized on spices and marigold cultivation.

Participants thanked PM, Narendra Modi for their financial support for agricultural development.

During the programme various departments and SHGs also displayed their exhibition which were highly appreciated by the Chief Guest.

The programme was also attended by Sardari Lal, Sukhdev Singh and Bodh Raj. The proceedings of the programme were carried by Dr. Mandeep Singh Azad.

The programme was assisted by Jagdish Kumar, Manohar Lal and Mohd. Iqbal and concluded by Dr. Mandeep Singh Azad with formal vote of thanks.

## JU organizes training program on Plant Root Architecture Analysis



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: The Department of Botany, University of Jammu, successfully organised a one-day training program on "Plant Root Architecture Analysis for Climate Resilience" under the DST-Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) project of Dr. Sikander Pal, Principal Investigator. The program, organized as part of the Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR) initiative of the Government of India, aimed to provide research training to faculty and scholars from the region, pro-

viding expertise in climate resilience studies within plant sciences.

The event commenced with an invited lecture by Prof. Gurdev Chand, Head of the Plant Physiology Division, SKUAST-Jammu, followed by an interactive session on trait identification for conventional versus molecular breeding. The inaugural ceremony was graced by Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies, University of Jammu, as the Chief Guest. In her address, Prof. Rohmetra emphasized the significance of such training programs in enhancing research

capabilities, particularly in understanding climate change responses in crop systems.

Earlier, Prof. Susheel Verma, Head, Department of Botany, welcomed the participants and extended his gratitude to the Chief Guest and Prof. Namrata Sharma, Dean, Faculty of Life Sciences, who attended as the Guest of Honor. Prof. Verma highlighted the importance of plant root trait analysis in agricultural research.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Namrata Sharma encouraged the participants to adopt advanced research

methodologies in their respective domains.

The practical sessions were led by Dr. Sikander Pal alongside a team of Plant Physiology Lab scholars—Prakriti, Bhuvneshwari, Rehana, and Shami. Participants were trained in advanced root analysis techniques using specialized software, including ImageJ, Rhizo Vision Explorer, Root-Scan, WinRhizo, and RootSOFT.

The program successfully enriched the knowledge of 40 participants, comprising faculty and scholars from various universities and colleges across the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. The event was attended by Prof. Pankaj Kumar, Prof. Jyoti Wakhlu, Dr. Amit Gupta, Dr. Rakesh, Dr. Skarma Nonzom, and Dr. Ripudaman, who engaged in discussions on the relevance of root architecture research in modern agriculture.

## From Page No:1

### Army Chief visits French Army's 3rd Division, discusses joint training plans including Exercise SHAKTI

Ministry said in a statement. During his visit, General Dwivedi also toured the Ecole Militaire, a prestigious military academy in Paris, where he was briefed on the Future Combat Command (CCF). Additionally, he visited the Technical Section of the French

Army (STAT) and the Battle Lab Terre in Versailles to learn about ongoing developments in military technology.

On Thursday, the COAS will visit the Neuve Chapelle Indian War Memorial to lay a wreath in honour of Indian soldiers who fought in World War I. Later, he will deliver a talk at the Ecole de Guerre, the French Joint Staff College, on modern warfare and India's strategic vision.

The visit comes days after India and France held a Bilateral Dialogue on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in Paris on February 14. The discussions covered nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons-related developments,

outer space security, AI in the military domain, lethal autonomous weapons, and multilateral export control regimes.

"General Dwivedi's visit aims to strengthen the military collaboration between India and France, exploring new avenues of cooperation and enhancing strategic partnerships between the two nations' armed forces," the MoD stated.

### Devotees throng Shankaracharya Temple, Srinagar to pay obeisance on

### Maha Shivratri

cold weather morning at the temple. Kritika from Delhi said that "it was a great experience to visit Shankaracharya temple on the holy occasion of Maha Shivratri." She said that the spiritual feelings are all around this temple.

The devotees also took part in the special prayers and prayed for the eternal and everlasting peace for the country, particularly Kashmir.

J&K Lt Governor, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and several leaders have greeted the people on Maha Shivratri.

### Helicopter ride to Sunshine Point in Gulmarg thrills tourists

stunning landscapes. Jammu and Kashmir travel guide

"We charge between Rs 11,000 to Rs 15,000 per ride, depending on the destination," Bakshi said, adding that Sunshine Point remains the most sought-after location.

Encouraged by the growing demand, he revealed plans to expand the service to other prime tourist destinations like Sonamarg

and Pahalgam.

The helicopter, designed and painted in France, is operated by two experienced pilots. Bakshi, who is the first and only Kashmiri to own a helicopter, believes such initiatives can boost Kashmir's tourism industry by offering visitors a premium adventure experience.

### J&K Police registers first-ever e-FIR Via e-Mail

was taken by registering an e-FIR, covered under Case FIR No. 17/2025, under the relevant sections of the BNS in Police Station Khrew.



## I Create India celebrates empowering Indian Army Veterans through entrepreneurship training



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: I Create India, a leading non-profit organization dedicated to entrepreneurship development, commemorated its 25th anniversary with a Silver Jubilee celebration on February 26th at the Manekshaw Centre in Delhi.

Founded with the mission of transforming job seekers into job creators, I Create India has spent the last quarter-century fostering entrepreneurial skills, particularly amongst army veterans and underserved communities.

The organization's Silver Jubilee event highlighted the achievements and felicitation of over 40 Indian Army Veteran entrepreneurs, who have successfully transitioned to business ownership following I Create's comprehensive training and mentorship programs. Key component of I Create's success is its collaborative partnership with the Directorate of Indian

Army Veterans (DIAV), formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

This partnership has facilitated the establishment of Business Incubation Centres (BICs) at 13 Regimental Centres and 04 more Regimental centres are in the process to be on board under this initiative.

The Chief Guest for the event, Lieutenant General Ranjeet Singh, the Director General of Discipline, Ceremonial, and Welfare of the Indian Army, honoured the outstanding contributions of over 40 Indian Army veteran entrepreneurs.

He took a moment to commend each of them for their remarkable dedication and perseverance in achieving self-reliance.

Lt Gen Singh expressed his deep appreciation for their entrepreneurial spirit and emphasized the importance of their efforts in inspiring other veterans to pursue self-employment and

economic independence. Moreover, he highlighted the crucial role that these veteran entrepreneurs play in the nation's economic growth and social stability.

By turning their military discipline and leadership skills into successful business ventures, they not only ensure a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families but also contribute to the community and the larger economy.

The senior representatives of the initiative's sponsors, including HCL Foundation, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Allianz, The Hans Foundation and IndusInd Bank, graced the event with their presence. The celebration prominently featured a documentary highlighting the remarkable impact of I Create's efforts, as well as the unveiling of a commemorative coffee table book.

To date, I Create India has trained nearly 14,500 Indian Army Veterans across vari-

ous Business Incubation Centres established throughout the country. Upon retiring from the Indian Armed Forces, these veterans have successfully launched micro and small businesses in diverse sectors such as grocery stores, various types of agricultural farming, travel agencies, dairy farms, poultry farms, cosmetic stores, medical stores, gyms, hardware stores, coaching centres, restaurants and real estate ventures. Among these veterans, 1,687 have already become successful entrepreneurs, while nearly 3,000 others are currently in the mentoring phase or working on their business plans. These veterans, typically aged 35-40 years, were acknowledged for their entrepreneurial achievements during the event.

Harsh Bhargava, the Founder of I Create India, highlighted the organization's unwavering dedication to tackling India's employment

challenges. He stated that for the past 25 years, I Create has been steadfast in addressing India's employment crisis through entrepreneurship. Our Army veterans leverage their disciplined approach to overcome business obstacles, our women entrepreneurs uplift entire communities and our youth embrace self-reliance to become job creators. As we commemorate this Silver Jubilee, we pay tribute to those who are shaping India's future, one business at a time.

Indian Army veteran entrepreneurs are making significant contributions to nation-building through their disciplined approach and leadership skills acquired during their service. Through their dedication and perseverance, these veterans are playing a crucial role in strengthening the nation's economic growth and social stability, ultimately contributing to a more self-reliant and Viksit Bharat.

## Army conducts medical patrol at Thanna

### Top News Report

RAJOURI, Feb 26: The Indian Army conducted a medical patrol in Thanna, Rajouri District, providing free medical aid and treatment to 29 beneficiaries, including 12 males, 7 females, and 10 children.

The medical patrol was held at Mathiyani, where Indian army medical personnel offered essential medical services to villagers in need. This initiative is part of the Indian Army's ongoing efforts to reach out to remote areas and provide medical assistance to local communities. By doing so, the Indian Army aims to build trust and strengthen its bond with the locals, while ensuring their health and well-being.

The medical patrol is a testament to the Indian



Army's commitment to serving the nation and supporting local communities, particularly in remote and underprivileged areas.

The Indian Army's efforts to provide essential medical services have been well-received by the local population, who appreciate the Indian Army's dedication to their welfare.

By conducting medi-

cal patrols, the Indian Army is not only providing medical aid but also promoting health awareness and education among the local population.

This initiative has helped to foster a sense of goodwill and cooperation between the Indian Army and the local community, while also ensuring the overall well-being of the people.

## Haji Tariq Keen holds organizational meeting at Bonjwah



### Top News Report

BONJWAH, Feb 26: BJP State Secretary Haji Tariq Hussain Keen held an organizational meeting at Block Headquarters Bonjwah following the

restructuring of the Mandal body team.

He extended a warm welcome and congratulations to Mohd Ashraf Sheikh, the newly nominated Mandal Pradhan.

The meeting was attended by Shakti Kendra Pramukhs, booth-level workers, and senior leaders, including Lekh Raj Kotwal, Tek Chand Parihar, Husan Bano, Hashim Din, Mohd Amin, and others.

The primary focus of the meeting was to devise strategies to strengthen the party's reach at the grassroots level. The session concluded on a high note with enthusiasm and determination among the workers.

## Keshav Chopra organizes 11th Varshik Langar on Maha Shivratri

### Top News Report

JAMMU Feb 26: On the occasion of Maha Shivratri Chairman Samvedna Society, Keshav Chopra organized 11th Varshik langar at Talab Tillo in which BJP JKUT President Sat Sharma, MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta, Prominent Journalist Sohail Kazmi, BJP Spokesperson Gaurav Gupta, District



and hoped that May this shivratri brings Peace for everyone.

Sohail Kazmi & Gaurav Gupta also expressed their best wishes to the people of Jammu Kashmir and requested everyone to come forward and work for the needy sections.

Keshav Chopra, while expressing the greetings, said that these festivals also provide an opportunity to come together as a mark of respect towards our religion and also Prayed for peace and Prosperity of the JKUT.

Veena Gupta, Kushant Daffara, Swati Sharma, Pritpal Singh, Social Activists Urja Singh, Tarun Sharma, Anu Gupta, Rahul Dutta,

Jaideep Samyal, Ravi Kant Sharma, Manav Mahajan, Karan Singh, Rajesh Gupta, Dr R.K Gupta, Arun Dubey, Rahul Nargotra, Deepak Kumar, Rajesh Saini, Geeta Sodhi, Naveen Sharma, Harvinder Singh, Ramesh Kumar, Rajesh Saini, Raman Verma, Bablu Chand, Anupam Gupta, K.L Sharma, Sonali Gupta, Puneet Chawla, Vikas Gupta, Sanjeev Gupta, Kusum Gupta, Bhupinder Gupta, Sumit Malhotra, Bhanu Partap, S.K Rana, Vikas Kumar, Lokesh Bhagat, Kali Bhagat, Dr Sanchit Sharma, Rakesh Verma, and others were also present.

## LUPIN sponsored five days training for capacity building of farm women concludes at SKUAST-J

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: The five days training programme on "Capacity Building of Farm Women through training on Animal Husbandry Management Practices" w.e.f. 19-21 & 24-25 February 2025 concludes at Division of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Extension Education, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry, SKUAST- Jammu, R.S. Pura. LUPIN Human Welfare and Research Foundation (LHWRF), Jammu has sponsored the five days training programme for farm women under their CSR initiative and it was being organized under the able guidance and leadership of Dr. B.N. Tripathi, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu

Dr. Rajesh Katoch, Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry, R.S. Pura was the Chief Guest during the valedictory session of the training programme. In his address, he congratulated the trainees for being selected for this training programme who have come from border villages of R.S Pura block of Jammu district. He asked the trainees about their experience and learning during the five days of training.



Participants were happy about the theoretical and practical exposures received during the programme.

Dr Pranav Kumar, Training Coordinator of five days training programme and Associate Professor, Division of Veterinary & Animal Husbandry Extension Education welcomed the Chief Guest and other dignitaries and gave details of the activities being conducted during the five days training programme. He gave a brief note on the importance women-oriented training programme on animal husbandry. He said that since, women play a crucial and significant role in livestock rearing but their contribution in livestock rearing has not been given the

due place they deserve. They always remain invisible workers. Keeping above points in view, LUPIN Human Welfare and Research Foundation (LHWRF), Jammu has sponsored the training programme under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. Dr. Kumar informed the gathering that trainees were exposed to clinical visits, various practical demonstrations such as vermicompost making, cow dung log making, value addition of milk, natural farming preparations/concoctions, indigenous technical knowledge for the treatment of dairy animals, cattle dung based entrepreneurial opportunities etc in such a way that they could start their

own enterprise as well as for the promotion of organic/natural farming.

Mr. Ujjwal Kumar, Head, Quality Control and Mr. Atul Sharma of Lupin Ltd. Jammu also spoke and interacted with trainees and thanked SKUAST-Jammu for being part of their CSR initiative programmes. During the valedictory session of the training programme, a training manual in Hindi on "Pashupalan Ke Madhyam se Krishak Mahilayon ka Kshamta Nirmaan" was released by the dignitaries and distributed among the participants. Various inputs (such as milk can, mineral mixture, dewormer etc) were also distributed among the trainees for scientific and hygienic rearing of dairy animals at farm level.

During the valedictory session, Dr. Sunil Kumar, Prof. LPT; post graduate students of the division and non-teaching staffs namely Satbinder Singh, Chain Singh & Vyas Dev were present. Dr. Pranav Kumar, Training Coordinator extended vote of thanks, while proceedings of the programme was coordinated by Dr. Anna Singh, Dr. Anny Kujur and Dr. Veerta Bhagat, post graduate students of VAHEE division.

## Army organizes Volleyball Competition at Kijai

### Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Feb 26: As part of its continued efforts to engage with youth and nurturing their sports talent, Indian Army, organised Volleyball Competition for the local youth at Kijai, District Kishtwar.

The competition aimed to build a bond between youth and the Indian Army while fostering a spirit of healthy competition.

A total of five teams



participated and four matches were played. The final match was held between Kundal and Himalayan team in which Himalayan

emerged victorious.

More than 60 locals participated and witnessed the competition. The competition culminated with felicitation

of the winners and runner-up teams. All the participants thanked the Army for organising the event and expressed their heartfelt gratitude.

## Awareness Lecture on drug abuse conducted at Sangiot

### Top News Report

POONCH, Feb 26: The Indian Army conducted an awareness lecture on Drug Abuse at Government high school, Sangiot. The primary objective of the awareness lecture was to educate the local population especially the youth and students about the dangers of drug addiction and its far-reaching consequences.

The session empha-



sized the importance of a drug-free society and highlighted preventive measures to curb substance abuse.

The lecture covered crucial topics such as

the psychological and physiological impact of drug abuse, social and legal repercussions, and the role of families in rehabilitation and prevention.

Real-life examples and interactive discussions helped in effectively conveying the message.

Participants expressed their appreciation for the initiative, acknowledging the Indian Army's continuous efforts in addressing social challenges and guiding the youth towards a healthier future. The villagers also pledged their support in spreading awareness and ensuring a safer environment for future generations.



## “An advantage”: Nasser, Atherton on India playing all Champions Trophy matches in Dubai

Former England cricketers Nasser Hussain and Michael Atherton have said India has advantage in ICC Champions Trophy as they are playing only at one venue - Dubai - and don't have to travel to different venues.

LONDON, Feb 26 (Agencies): Former England cricketers Nasser Hussain and Michael Atherton have said India has advantage in ICC Champions Trophy as they are playing only at one venue - Dubai - and don't have to travel to different venues.

After India's refusal to travel to Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy due to security concerns, they are now playing all their matches in Dubai as part of a hybrid model, including their semifinal clash. As a result, their group members, Pakistan, New Zealand and Bangladesh will be having to play their matches across both Pakistan and Dubai. Even Group B members, South Africa, Afghanistan, Australia and England will face the same thing if they move to knockouts.

Atherton and Nasser spoke on India's schedule on Sky Sports, as quoted by Wisden, comparing it to other teams. They said that playing at one venue has helped their team reduce their travel time very significantly as now the travelling is limited from a hotel to the stadium and even their selections were made keeping Dubai in mind, while other teams have to factor in all the venues, Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Dubai while making their team selection.

“About the advantage India



have in playing in Dubai, only in Dubai, which seems to me to be a hard-to-quantify advantage but an undeniable advantage,” said Atherton as quoted by Wisden.

“They are playing at just one venue. They do not have to travel between venues or, you know, between countries as a lot of other teams have to do. Therefore, the selection can focus on Dubai, you know, can focus in on the conditions in Dubai, where they are playing their semi-final as and when they get through to that. That seems to me an undeniable advantage,” he added.

Nasser agreed, saying, “It is an advantage. For the best team in the tournament to have that advantage...I saw a tweet the other day: Pakistan - host

nation, India - home advantage. That sort of sums it up, really.” “They are [India] in one place. They are in one hotel. There is no travel. They are in one dressing room. They know the pitch. They picked for that pitch. When they selected, they were very smart. They probably knew what Dubai was going to be like. They picked all their seamers. There was a bit of debate from Indian media saying, “Why have not you gone for the extra seamer? Why all these spinners?” We have seen why,” he added.

India picked up five spinners in their squad, two specialist spinners in Varun Chakravarty and Kuldeep Yadav and three spin bowling all-rounders in Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Washington Sundar. Despite Mohammed Shami just having returned

from a massive injury layoff, they picked up a rather inexperienced and thin pace line-up of Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, and all-rounder Hardik Pandya to support his workload, with Mohammed Siraj in non-traveling reserves.

Hussain said that other teams have not done so, and if England goes to the semifinal, they have just a specialist spinner. However, England have now replaced an injured Brydon Carse with spinner Rehan Ahmed.

“Pakistan last night [against India] had one frontline spinner [Abrar Ahmed],” continued Hussain. “You could argue that when the injuries came, they should have changed that, and I have made that argument. But all the other sides have to pick for different conditions - Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Dubai, and then they have to travel and adjust to those conditions.”

“It is an advantage, but what else could happen? ICC, once India refused to come here to Pakistan, what else could happen? You cannot have a tournament like this without India-Pakistan, that is not going to happen. It had to be in Dubai. They [India] sit happily and comfortably there, knowing that they will probably play six games there, and if they win all those, they will win another global tournament,” he concluded.

## Champions Trophy: South Africa captain Temba Bavuma “frustrated” after rain washes away Australia clash



RAWALPINDI, Feb 26 (Agencies): South Africa captain Temba Bavuma was left “frustrated” after relentless rain in Rawalpindi washed away their Champions Trophy fixture against Australia. Australia and South Africa's clash was a prospect where fans expected to experience a gripping affair. However, rain played spoilsport, and after a continuous downpour since morning, the match was eventually called off.

“Yeah, it is frustrating - well, we'd have obviously loved to get a game of cricket. Like I said, you would have had two sides who were confident coming into the game. So, I think as a fan, you would want to see who the winner would have been at the end of the day,”

Bavuma said after the match.

Australia and South Africa have delivered some thrilling fixtures over the past couple of years in the ODIs. In their previous encounter during the ODI World Cup 2023, Australia dug deep and marginally got past the Proteas in the semifinal in a low-scoring affair.

Bavuma and his troops were pumped and looking forward to the opportunity to take on Australia again. He felt that if his side had gotten past the Baggy Greens, it would have given them a big confidence boost for the rest of the tournament.

“Yeah, I think you don't really have to say much, honestly. From a motivation point of view, the minute you mention

Australia, that gets the guys jumping. But like I said, we were looking forward to it. I think, obviously, from a confidence point of view, just building on the work that we've done,” Bavuma said.

“The previous result that we caught against Afghanistan, which I thought was quite clinical and obviously now against a tough outfit in Australia to get over the line then would have done well for the confidence point of view,” he added.

Bavuma ensured that the entire squad, including Henrich Klaasen, was fit. The 33-year-old explosive batter missed South Africa's campaign opener victory against Afghanistan due to a left elbow soft tissue injury.

“Yeah, everyone is good; Henrich Klaasen's recovered from the fitness- that obviously adds a lot of value towards our team; spirits are good within the team,” he said.

With three points in their kitty, South Africa will bolster their preparations for their final group stage clash against England on Saturday at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi.

## Pakistan will find it hard to beat India's B team: Gavaskar

NEW DELHI, Feb 26 (Agencies): Pakistan's cricket team continued to invite scathing criticism a day after being knocked out of the Champions Trophy with the great Sunil Gavaskar saying that it would struggle to beat even a second-string Indian team.

India, the 2023 ODI World Cup finalists, defeated defending champions Pakistan by six wickets in the Champions Trophy in Dubai on Sunday, continuing their dominance over the arch-rivals.

“I think a B team (from India) certainly (can give Pakistan a run for their money). A C team, I am not too sure. But a B team will be very, very hard to beat for



Pakistan in their current form,” Gavaskar said.

Pakistan, hosting an ICC tournament for the first time since 1996, were knocked out of the Champions Trophy after New Zealand beat Bangladesh in another Group A match. Pakistan are still winless in the event.

Since winning the Champions Trophy in 2017, Pakistan's crick-

eting fortunes have declined, with the team finishing fifth in the last two ODI World Cups. “I think it's surprising, this lack of bench strength. Pakistan always had natural talent. Natural in the sense that they may not have always been technically correct, but they had an instinctive understanding of bat and ball,” Gavaskar said.

## PCB's Mohsin Naqvi faces call for removal following team's disastrous show in Champions Trophy

ISLAMABAD, Feb 26 (Agencies): Pakistan's early exit in the ongoing Champions Trophy 2025 has not only drawn widespread criticism against players but also landed Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi in hot waters with his position being held under scrutiny, Geo News reported.

Hosts Pakistan, which got the opportunity to host an ICC tournament after a long gap of 29 years, was knocked out of the tournament in a matter of just 5 days leaving the fans of supporters of the team massively disappointed.

National Assembly Opposition Leader and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) politician Omar Ayub expressed



his disappointment with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi and demanded the post.

Following the Green Brigade's exit from the ongoing marquee event, National Assembly Omar Ayub, while speaking to the media,

blamed Mohsin Naqvi for the team's poor performance in the ongoing competition and requested the management to remove him from his position following “repeated failures,” as reported by Geo News.

Pakistan's dreadful run

in the ICC events continued after the defending champions lost two games on the trot in the group stage against New Zealand and India.

The Men in Green needed a favour from Bangladesh to stage a victory over New Zealand. However, on Monday, the relentless Kiwis took the Tigers down with a five-wicket win in Rawalpindi to seal their trip to the semifinals with India.

Pakistan's last group-stage match of Champions Trophy 2025 is against Bangladesh at the National Stadium in Rawalpindi. This match would be a dead rubber as both teams have already been knocked out of the tournament.

This is not the first time

that the Mohammed Rizwan-led side has played such disappointing cricket in the mega-events. They were not able to perform in the last two ICC events as well. In last year's T20 World Cup at the West Indies and United States, the Pakistan Cricket Team was knocked out of the tournament after the two consecutive losses in the group stage against United States and then against arch-rivals India.

In the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup in India, the Men in Green were able to win just four out of the nine matches. They finished the tournament at fifth position with just eight points, again failing to make it to the knockouts.

## ICC ODI Rankings: Virat Kohli back in top 5, Shubman Gill extends lead over Babar Azam

DUBAI, Feb 26 (Agencies): Superstar batter Virat Kohli returned to the top five of the International Cricket Council (ICC) ODI batting rankings after his match-winning hundred against Pakistan in the Champions Trophy 2025 match in Dubai. Kohli overtook Daryl Mitchell to clinch the fifth spot in the rankings, updated on Wednesday, February 26.

Virat Kohli was at the No. 6 spot before the Champions Trophy, but he has been rewarded for his return to form against his familiar foes. Kohli proved his doubters wrong, leading India's successful chase of 242 against Pakistan. Kohli hit 100 not out of 111 deliveries, masterfully managing his recent weaknesses against spin bowling. Meanwhile, Shubman

Gill consolidated his spot at the top of the ICC men's ODI batting rankings, extending his lead over Babar Azam. Gill began the Champions Trophy with a match-winning hundred against Bangladesh. The Indian vice-captain hit a fluent 46 against Pakistan, continuing his golden run with the bat.

Shubman Gill now has a world-leading tally of 817 points, 47 more than second-placed Babar Azam. India captain Rohit Sharma, meanwhile, consolidated his spot at No. 3 as three Indians are now in the top five of ICC men's ODI batting charts.

Babar Azam has been struggling for form. After he was heavily scrutinised for his 90-ball 64 against New Zealand, Babar tried to be more proactive against India. However, he was dis-



missed for 23 in Pakistan's underwhelming batting effort in Dubai on Sunday.

TOP 5 IN ICC BATTING RANKINGS - MEN'S ODIs (AS OF FEBRUARY 26)

1. Shubman Gill (India) - 817 points
  2. Babar Azam (Pakistan) - 757 points
  3. Rohit Sharma (India) - 757 points
  4. Heinrich Klaasen (South Africa) - 743 points
  5. Virat Kohli (India) - 743 points
- OTHER INDIANS IN TOP 25
9. Shreyas Iyer - 679

points

15. KL Rahul - 627 points

KL Rahul rose two spots to return to the top 15 after his solid start to the Champions Trophy campaign. India have sealed a berth in the semi-final of the Champions Trophy even before their last league game, against New Zealand on Sunday, March 2. While Gill and Kohli will be looking to continue their good run, captain Rohit will be keen on getting a big hundred against New Zealand before the business end of the tournament.

## New Zealand's Ravindra keen to play against India in dead rubber

MELBOURNE, Feb 26 (Agencies): Rachin Ravindra has no desire to sit out New Zealand's dead rubber against India after returning to the side with a rousing century against Bangladesh at the Champions Trophy.

With New Zealand already qualified for the semi-finals, selectors have the luxury of resting players for the final group match against India in Dubai on Sunday.

Batsman Ravindra sat out the Black Caps' opener against Pakistan while recovering from a blow to the head and does not want to miss another match at the ICC tournament.

“Conversations haven't really been had around that. But in a tournament like this, I guess you want to play



as many games as you can,” the 25-year-old lefthander told reporters on Wednesday.

“And the nature of my injury before is meaning I've missed some games.

“So I'll do whatever the team wants but I'd

be keen to get out there and hopefully do my thing.” Ravindra's preparations for the tournament were disrupted when he was struck on the head by the ball in a fielding mishap, forcing him to go through concussion protocols.

He scored 112 against Bangladesh on his return to the team batting at number four in place of Daryl Mitchell, who was ruled out due to illness.

Ravindra said all-rounder Mitchell was “definitely progressing well” on his way back to full health and the team were glad to have a couple of rest days.

Come game day against India, though, players would be raring to go for the dead rubber.

“I guess you don't really want to take games for granted ever,” he said.

“I think we can treat it like a game in an international tournament, right?”

“So there's still a lot to play for, the first spot in the semi-finals.”



# Maha Shivratri Bhandara inaugurated at Maa Vaishno Devi Mandir

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: On the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri, a grand Bhandara was inaugurated at Maa Vaishno Devi Mandir, Shahidi Chowk, Jammu by Rajat Sharma (MD, Unique Outsourcing, Unique Jan Kalyan Sewa Simiti, Unique Voice), Sahil Mahajan (BJP JK UT Co-Convenor Sanskriti Art and Culture Cell, MD Maa Bawe Wali Records), and Pushkar Kumar Sharma (Gadighar Mandal Adyakhsh).

The event was organized by Swarna Singh Munna (Auto Stand), and saw enthusiastic participation from devotees who gathered in large numbers to seek Lord Shiva's blessings. The dignitaries paid obeisance at the feet of Lord Shiva before inaugurating the Bhandara for the general public. They performed seva at various Maha Shivratri programs, distributed Langar, and contributed to the community celebration.

A massive number of devotees thronged the temple to pay



respects to Lord Shiva on this holy occasion. Speaking at the event, Rajat Sharma extended warm greetings to the public and highlighted the significance of Maha Shivratri, celebrated with great enthusiasm across the world. He mentioned how devotees engage in bhajans, drum beats, and dances in praise of Lord Shiva, fostering an atmosphere of devotion and joy.

Sharma also emphasized the importance of rituals such as the

Kalash Yatra and Maha Yagya, which hold deep spiritual significance. He commended the organizers for arranging such an event and expressed confidence that Lord Shiva's blessings would bring health, wealth, and prosperity to all.

Addressing the gathering, Sahil Mahajan called Maha Shivratri one of the most significant festivals for Hindus, celebrated across the country with Shiv Vivah programs at various

locations. He stated that Lord Shiva is the Creator, Destroyer, and Operator of the universe, and also the caretaker of every living being.

Mahajan reiterated BJP's prayers for peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir and acknowledged the spiritual importance of Maha Shivratri as the 'Great Night of Shiva'. He applauded the Bhandara organizers and encouraged the public to actively participate in such noble initiatives that promote unity and service to humanity.

The event concluded with a heartfelt appeal to the public to join in such religious and social activities. The organizers and dignitaries expressed gratitude to all attendees for making the Bhandara a successful and spiritually enriching occasion.

As the night echoed with chants of 'Har Har Mahadev', the devotees continued to celebrate, reinforcing their faith in Lord Shiva's divine presence and blessings.

# Dimple leads protest against unemployment, demands Restoration of J&K Statehood



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood Jammu & Kashmir, led a massive protest rally on the Amphalla-Janipur High Court Road against rising unemployment in Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The demonstration, held in response to the region's economic and political challenges post-Article 370 abrogation, saw participation from leaders across all three regions, united in their demand for justice and fair treatment.

Dimple strongly criticized the alleged "step-motherly treatment" towards J&K and Ladakh after the dissolution of the former state on August 5, 2019. He called for the immediate restoration of Jammu & Kashmir's statehood, citing discrimination in governance and employment policies.

The protest was fueled by growing anger over the Ladakh administration's recent decision to increase the salaries of daily wagers to Rs 29,000-Rs 45,000 per month, while no such initiative has been taken for their counterparts in Jammu & Kashmir.

Dimple accused the Union Home Ministry and J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha of neglecting the state's workforce.

"Why are J&K's youth being ignored?" Dimple questioned, addressing Home Minister Amit Shah, LG Manoj Sinha, and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. He demanded an urgent salary hike and the permanent recruitment of various categories of contractual workers, including Vocational trainers, cluster resource coordinators, Kissan Khidmat Ghar (KKG) employees, Special Police Officers (SPOs), Rehbar-e-Khel, physical education teachers, forest workers (Janglat); Rehbar-e-Taleem teachers, Sehat scheme workers, National Youth Corps, seasonal teachers; SRO-43 beneficiaries, contingent paid workers (CPW), land donors, Anganwadi workers; and Ayushman Bharat Gold Card Mitras, paramedical staff, and other daily wagers on strike.

Dimple also challenged former CM Omar Abdullah to debate the surge in unemployment since Article 370's revocation. He urged the government to fill all vacant govern

ment positions, expedite JKSSB recruitments, and pass a bill in the assembly to ban liquor sales in Jammu & Kashmir. Additionally, he called for the reinstatement of the traditional Darbar Move from April 2025 to restore administrative balance.

Reiterating his demand for the restoration of J&K's statehood, Dimple reminded the central government of its promises made after August 5, 2019. He cautioned that protests would continue until these commitments were honored. "J&K has the highest unemployment rate in India at 42%—this is unacceptable," he declared.

Dimple also pressed for a Jammu Dogra leader to be nominated for a Rajya Sabha seat, recognizing their contribution in the struggle for statehood.

The protest witnessed a strong show of solidarity, with prominent leaders from Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh standing together. Key figures included Vikas, Deepak, Imteaz, Mohinder Lichie, Kashmir leaders Kamran, Abdul Qoom, Javed, Ashiq Hussain, and Ladakh representatives Gulam Mehadi, Asgar Ali, Momad Ali, and Gulam Mohiudin.

# UT status to J&K is an insult of public opinion, warn to protest on March 3

## Elected representatives should protest in the House: Sahni

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: Shiv Sena UBT Jammu-Kashmir unit, in solidarity with all elected representatives of the ruling and opposition parties, on the delay in restoration of state status, protested in the House on the first day of the upcoming assembly session and exposed the public sentiment to give a strong message to the central government.

In a press conference held today at the party's state central office, state chief Manish Sahni said that the erstwhile state of Jammu-Kashmir remaining a Union Territory (UT) is an insult to public opinion, the Lieutenant Governor, Chief Minister, all ministers and MLAs are enjoying



their personal facilities to the fullest, but public issues are being sidelined and people are being crushed in the mill of dual power system, the era of accountability is almost coming to an end.

He said that the BJP government at the Centre has maintained silence in fulfilling the promise of restoration of statehood, while Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

and his ministers are not able to move beyond verbal protest.

Sahni said that all parties should rise above their political and personal interests and put pressure on the central government to restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir with unity.

Sahni has warned of protests outside the House on the first day of the Assembly session starting on March 3.

Along with this, he has demanded from the MLAs to protest unitedly inside the House and send a strong message to the Central Government. On this occasion Gen Secretary Vikas Bakshi was also present.

Meanwhile, raising that the continuous cel-

bration of the days of other states by the Raj Bhavan and the Lieutenant Governor wishing them is like rubbing salt on the wounds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Raj Bhavan should take public respect seriously until the state status of Jammu and Kashmir is restored.

# Jaswinder nominated President JKMEF



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Feb 26: Jammu Kashmir Medical Employees Federation (JKMEF) on Wednesday held conference under the chairmanship of Sushil Sudan to discuss grievances of health employees.

After consultation of all District and Block Presidents and Presidents of all sister organization of employees association, Jaswinder Singh nominated as president unanimously with one voice of JKMEF.

Jaswinder Singh took oath in presence of employees and pledged to serve the medical employees federation with full might and work


sincerely with the cooperation and support of health employees.

He also requested to Sushil Sudan to enlighten the federation as chairman of federation with their extensive experience of struggle.

Sushil Sudan, while addressing the conference, congratulated Jaswinder Singh and also extended his full support for welfare of health employees and showed full faith that flag of Jammu Kashmir Medical Employees Federation remain high under his leadership.

Other who addressed the conference were Parfulat Singh General Secretary, Bharat Bhushan Bhagat Presi-

dent pharmacist association, Harpal Singh President X Ray Tech, Neeraj Maladhar Distt President Kathua, Aslam Bhai President Lab Tech, Onkar Singh President Ophthalmic Tech, Mohd Nadeem General Secretary, Anita Bhagat, Gagan Singh Block President, Madan Sharma, Kulwant Singh, Sanjay Choudhary, Vikas Sabharwal, Rajinder Sharma, Sultan Mohd, Ashwani Gupta, Surjeet Rajan, Daleep Choudhary, Sorab Bakshi General Secretary, Vinod Kumar Advisor, Tejinder Singh, Sahil Kumar, Sanjeev Chadha, Mukhtar Ahmed Kohli, Netar and Arti.



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