

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SUNDAY, MARCH 09, 2025

Daily Evening Newspaper



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Ukraine determined to do everything to end war with "just and lasting peace": Zelenskyy



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BRIEFLY

Vice President Dhankhar admitted to cardiac department of AIIMS

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar was admitted to the cardiac Department at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the national capital early on Sunday morning, as per sources.

The 73-year-old was said to have experienced chest pain and uneasiness.

Sources said that the health of Vice President Dhankhar is stable now. Further details are awaited.

MeT predicts week long wet spell from Monday over J&K

SRINAGAR, Mar 9 (Agencies): The Meteorological Centre Srinagar Sunday predicted a week-long spell of wet weather from Monday over Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The MeT office said the weather generally will remain dry till Sunday evening.

It said there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow over higher reaches at many places during March 10 and 11, while an intermittent spell of light to moderate rain and snow at many places over Jammu and Kashmir during March 12 and 14.

There are chances of another spell of intermittent light rain and snow at many places during March 15 and 16.

The MeT office has also issued an advisory for travellers, tourists, and transporters to follow the admin/traffic advisory before planning their trip during the period.

The farmers have also been advised to suspend farm operations from March 10 onwards till March 18; besides, people living on the higher reaches have been asked to avoid sloppy and avalanche-prone areas during the period.

The night temperature recorded 1 to 2°C below the average at many weather stations of Kashmir during the past 24 hours, while the day temperature on Saturday remained 4.5°C above normal across the Valley. Srinagar recorded the highest day temperature at 19.0°C on the previous day.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, had a low of 2.2°C recorded during the night.

In J&K, Rs 100 crore to be spent to boost inland connectivity over rivers Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi

SRINAGAR, Apr 16 (Agencies): Search and rescue operation underway after a boat capsized in Jhelum river at Gandbal, in Srinagar on Tuesday.

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will invest Rs 100 crore in three national waterways in Jammu and Kashmir, aiming to boost inland water transport and connectivity in the Union territory, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said in a statement.

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is the country's nodal agency for developing national waterways.

An MoU was signed between the IWAI and the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to boost river cruise tourism.



ism.

The proposed Rs 100 crore investment will be used to develop infrastructure for smooth transportation on the Rivers Chenab (NW-26), Jhelum (NW-49), and Ravi (NW-84).

"This initiative seeks to enhance tourism, create jobs, and drive economic growth in the region in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Vision of 'Viksit Bharat'," the ministry

said in a statement late Saturday evening.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Union Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal; Union Minister of State Shantanu Thakur; J&K Minister Satish Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, TK Ramachandran; and IWAI Chairman Vijay Kumar.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) organ-

ised a two-day 'Chintan Shivir, 2025' in Srinagar with a vision to evaluate, reset, discover, and apply solutions to unlock the potential of India's Blue Economy.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal reviewed his ministry's ongoing projects—worth Rs 2 trillion—and outlined a goal of completing at least 150 projects by September 2025.

The Union Minister reemphasised India's vision to be among the top 5 shipbuilding nations by 2047, with an additional shipbuilding capacity of 4 million Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT). He directed the formulation of suitable policies and skill development initiatives

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Kathua Killings | Union Minister points to terror angle, Home Secretary reviews situation

JAMMU, Mar 9 (Agencies): Union minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday pointed to the involvement of terrorists in the killing of three civilians in a remote area in Billawar tehsil of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district.

The killings have sparked protest and a shutdown in the area.

The bodies of Varun Singh, 15, and his uncles Yogesh Singh, 32, and Darshan Singh, 40, were found in Ishu nullah in the remote Malhar area in the higher reaches of the district on Saturday.

The minister said the killings were a matter of great concern.

"The brutal killing of 3 youth by terrorists in Bani area of district Kathua is extremely sad

as well as a matter of great concern. There appears to be a deep conspiracy behind spoiling the atmosphere in this peaceful area," the minister, who represents Udhampur Parliamentary constituency that covers Kathua, said on X.

"We have discussed this matter with the officials concerned. The Union Home Secretary himself is reaching Jammu so that the situation can be assessed on the spot. I am confident that it will be ensured that such incidents do not happen again and the confidence of the people remains strong," he said.

Officials said Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan is reviewing the

security situation at a meeting here.

J-K Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary condoled the killings, and said "increasing crime is a matter of concern." He also expressed concern over the "life-threatening" attack on Bani MLA Rameshwar Singh, who was assaulted by a group of protesters while he had gone to meet the family members of the deceased at a local hospital in Billawar late Saturday night.

The MLA's security guards had to intervene and escort him away.

Reacting to his heckling at the hospital in Kathua, Singh said it was an attempt to vitiate the atmosphere.

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Babu Rampaul hails Omar Govt's budget as 'People-Friendly'

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: Former Minister and President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) Central Zone, Babu Rampaul, has lauded the budget presented by the Jenab Omar Abdullah-led government in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on March 7, 2025. Calling it "people-friendly", he highlighted the ten key concessions provided to the people and termed the budget as a significant step towards progress and modernization.

In a statement, Rampaul emphasized that the budget reflects the government's commitment to the welfare of



the people, especially that impact daily life. He described it as "revolutionary", particularly in its focus on revitalizing education, healthcare, sports, and agriculture. According to him, the financial allocations and policy initiatives outlined in the budget would not only boost economic growth but also improve the overall quality of life for the people of J&K.

While appreciating the government's efforts,

Former Minister pointed out that the budget stands out due to the ten special concessions announced for the public. Though specific details of these concessions were not mentioned in his statement, experts believe they could include tax reliefs, subsidies, employment schemes, and infrastructure development projects.

He particularly praised the focus of the Govt on Education, Healthcare, Sports and Agriculture sector with special provisions for modernization and capacity building.

Rampaul congratulated Hon'ble Chief Minister Jenab Omar Abdullah and his

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Khelo India Winter Games 2025 commence amid multi-layered security in Gulmarg



SRINAGAR, Mar 9 (Agencies): The much awaited 2nd phase of 5th Khelo India Winter Games 2025 commenced at world famous ski resort, Gulmarg in North Kashmir on Sunday.

An official said that multi-layered security arrangements have been put in place to ensure a safe, smooth

and successful event.

Athletes and officials from different parts of the country are participating in the games while security forces including Jammu and Kashmir Police, paramilitary CRPF and sleuths from other security forces have been deployed in and around Gulmarg under a well coordinated multi-tier security plan,

the official said.

Pertinently, to ensure smooth conduct, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, Maqsood ul Zaman had earlier chaired a high-level security review meeting to finalize comprehensive security arrangements — plans including strict access control, CCTV surveillance, anti-sabotage checks besides, regular patrolling in and around key venues, accommodating facilities and transit routes.

Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, as per KNO, while reviewing the arrangements, assured that all necessary measures have been put in

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Frequent Digital banking disruptions irk J&K Bank customers in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Mar 9 (Agencies): Customers of Jammu and Kashmir Bank have expressed frustration over frequent

disruptions in digital banking services, including online banking, net banking, and the M-Pay Delight app.

Many users have complained that they are unable to access these services, causing inconvenience, especially as

Eid approaches. Speaking to Rising Kashmir, a bank official acknowledged the

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Worm Free Children Are Healthy Children

Worm Infestation can make child

Anaemic	Undernourished	Weak	Tired & Sick
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All children and adolescents aged 1-19 years will be dewormed free of cost in Schools/ Anganwari Centres on

NATIONAL DEWORMING DAY

10th March 2025

Ways to Prevent Worm infestation

- Keep your surroundings clean
- Wash your hands with soap, especially before eating and after using the toilet
- Keep food covered
- Wash fruits and vegetables with clean water
- Wear Shoes
- Do not defecate in the open Always use a toilet
- Drink clean water
- Keep nails clean and short

DIP/J-10892/24

Health Education Bureau
Directorate of Health Services Jammu

OBITUARY/10TH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we would like to inform about the untimely demise of **Sh. Mohan Shah S/o (Late) Sh. Prem Nath Shah** of Martand, Mattan District Anantnag, Kashmir, at present House No. 5, Lane 1, Adarsh Nagar, Paloura, Jammu.

Tenth Day falls on 10-03-2025 and will be performed at Akhnoor Ghat. **Assembly** will be held at residence at 11:30 am.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Suman Shah- Wife
Smt. Pyari and Mr. Maharaj Shah- Sister-In-Law and Brother
Mrs. Sheetal and Mr. Rohin Ji- Sister and Brother in Law
Mrs. Poonam and Ankit Chaturvedi - Sister and Brother in Law
Mrs. Ruchi and Mr. Rakesh Thusoo- Sister and Brother in Law
Smt. Nisha and Sh. Amit Shah- Daughter in Law and Son
Contact: 9999361796, 9419279629, 9906730378

**Sh. Mohan Shah****TENTH DAY KRIYA**

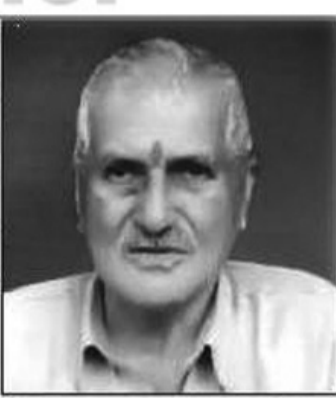
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Father **Sh. Makhan Lal Raina (Banihal Wale)** who left for heavenly abode on 1st March, 2025.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed at Mata Bhaderkali Asthapan Ghat Thalwal, Phallian Mandal, Jammu.

The **Mourning** is being observed at our residence H.No. 94, Dream City Muthi (Akhnoor Road) on 10/3/2025 (Monday) at 10.30 am.

IN GRIEF

Kuldeep Raina & Kiran Raina (Son & Daughter-in-law)
Shiv Kumar Raina (Son)
Usha Ji & Kumar Mohit (Daughter & Son)
Vijay Sharma & Bimla Sharma (Son-in-law & Daughter)
Subash Kala & Family
Ravinder Pandita & Rita Pandita (Son-in-law & Daughter)
Ravi Zadoo & Ragnee Zadoo (Son-in-law & Daughter)
Contact No's.: 7006460093, 7006371473

**Sh. Makhan Lal Raina (Banihal Wale)****TENTH DAY KRIYA**

Loved Ones may leave this world, but never our hearts.

They walk beside us in every step, unseen, yet felt in every moment.

Forever loved. Forever missed.

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad and untimely demise of our beloved **Smt. Jeeta Pandita Miya W/o**

Sh. Vinod Kumar Miya, originally resident of Kocha Nidhan, Rainawari, Srinagar, Kashmir at present 2215 coronation tower, Gaur Saundaryam, Greater Noida West (UP), who left for heavenly abode.

Tenth Day Kriya will be held on 11th March 2025 (Tuesday) at 8.30 AM at Murad Nagar, Ghaziabad (UP).

Grief Stricken

Sh. Vinod Kumar Miya (Husband)

Sh. Vikas Miya and Smt. Divya Miya (Son and Daughter in law)

Miya's, Raina's Pandita's, Ganjoo's, Bhat's and Paliwal's.

Divik, Aarna, Ritvik, Cherry, Aadhya, Aagya, Akarsh & Lakshya (Grand Children)

Mob : 9818199753, 9999644660

**Smt. Jeeta Pandita Miya****TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform you the sad demise of **Sh. Moti Lal Raina** son of **Shri Som Nath Raina** originally from Village Zainapora Shopian. He departed for his heavenly abode on 05-03-2025 at his residence Dina Nagar Sector-2, Lane No.2, Barnai, Jammu.

The **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed on Friday 14th March, 2025 at Akhnoor. The **Assembly** will be held at our residence Dina Nagar, Sec-2, Lane No.2, Barnai, Jammu at 9.00 AM.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Shri Som Nath Raina - Father

Smt. Babli Raina - Wife

Sons & Daughters-in-law

Shri Rohit Raina & Smt. Jyoti Raina

Shri Amit Raina & Smt. Stelip Raina

Brothers & Bhabhis

Shri M.K. Raina & Smt. Veena Raina

Shri Deepak Raina & Smt. Sugeena Raina

Shri Vimal Raina & Smt. Nirdosh Raina

Sister & Brother-in-law

Smt. Kalpana Koul & Shri Ashish Koul

Grand Children: Ikhla Raina, Pearl Raina, Uddeshya Raina

Mob.No: 7889853125, 9149762924, 8551842204, 8800790948

**SH. MOTI LAL RAINA****TENTH DAY KRIYA**

27th January 1943 - 3rd March 2025

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of **Sh. P.L. Razdan Ji**, affectionately known as **Bajana Ji** by one and all on 3rd March 2025, originally from 25 - Batyar Alikadal, Srinagar. He leaves behind a legacy of **Sewa Bhav**, compassion, love and humour

10th Day Kriya will be performed on Wednesday 12th March, 2025 at 7.30 am, at Chota Haridwar Upper Ganga Muradnagar UP.

Fondly Remembered By:

Samast Razdan, Wali, Wafa, Chaman, Handoo, Bhatt Parivar
102, Gyatri Apartments Plot No Gh 06 Sector 45 Faridabad
9990466505, 9810994556, 9871200058

**Sh. Peary Lal Razdan****TENTH DAY KRIYA**

We are observing the **Tenth Day Kriya** of our respected and beloved **Shri Pran Nath Pandita S/o Janki Nath Pandita** of Watterkhani, Kupwara Kashmir, at present 121-E Wazir Bagh, (near Nath Jewellers) Anand Nagar, Bhoori Jammu, on March 12, 2025 at Akhnoor, on the banks of Chenab River at 7 am.

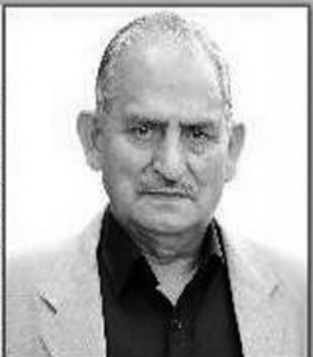
This will be followed by gathering at Muthi Ghat, Near Directorate of School Education at 11am the same day.

Venue of gathering: Muthi Ghat

Date: 12/03/2025

Time: 11am

Samast Pandita/Darvesh and Koul (Kutlari) Parivaar.
094193 20661, 098718 66063

**Shri Pran Nath Pandita****TENTH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt. Nancy Dhar W/o Sh. Deepak Dhar R/o Chattabal, Srinagar A/P H.No. 161/3, Vivek Vihar, Paloura.**

The **10TH DAY** will be performed on 12-03-2025 (Wednesday) at Thalwal (Bhaderkali), Jammu and **ASSEMBLY** will be held at Muthi Ghat (Near Education office, Jammu) at 11 A.M Sharp.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Jai Kishori Dhar/Prabhjigri (Mother- in-law)

Deepak Dhar (Husband)

Daughters and Son-in- laws

Neha Dhar Sharma and Anuj Sharma

Sapna Dhar Bhat and Rahul Bhat

Samast Parivaar Dhar, Safaya, Mattoo, Pandita, Koul,

Bakshi, Sharma and Bhat Families.

MOB. NO: 9796407446, 8867861675, 9103171700

**SMT. NANCY DHAR****10TH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved Karamyogi father **Sh. Dina Nath Saproo** - Originally resident of Krandigam, Bijbehara, at present B-28 Vasant Vihar Talab Tillo Jammu.

10th Day Kriya will be performed on 12th March, 2025 at Akhnoor. **Assembly** will be held at Muthi Ghat near Director of School Education at 10 AM.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Phoola Saproo - Bhabhi

Girija Koul and BN Koul (Daughter and Son-in-Law)

Sarla Koul and BL Koul (Daughter and Son-in-Law)

Dulari Dhar and Vijay Kumar Dhar (Daughter and Son-in-law)

Ram Krishan Saproo and Basanti Shah (Son and Daughter-in-Law)

Mobile - 9419123299, 9419207067

**Sh. Dina Nath Saproo****TENTH DAY**

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform sad demise of our beloved mother, **Smt. Anjali Dhar W/o Lt. Sh. Nand Lal Dhar R/o Lar Ganderbal A/p N-11 Pandit Colony Sheikhpora Budgam.**

The **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed on 10/3/2025 (Monday) at Shuryar Shiv Mandir Opp. G.B. Panth Hospital Sonwar at 7 A.M.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Suriender Dhar - Son

Sons & Daughters-in-law

Avtar Krishen Dhar & Anjali Dhar

Kuldeep Dhar & Pammy Dhar

Ravi Dhar & Sunita Dhar

Daughter & Son-in-law

Ruby Gassi/Dhar & Sanjay Gassi

Kiran Kumar Bazaz & Veena G. - Brother & Sister-in-law

OM Krishen Bazaz and Sarla Bazaz - Brother & Sister-in-law

Grand Children : Ayushmaan Dhar, Cheshtha Dhar, Shivansh Gassi, Shreesth Gassi

Samasth Dhar, Bazaz & Raina Parivar

Ph.No.: 9697031303, 7006309075, 7006977008

**Smt. Anjali Dhar****MOURNING FROM MALUN SIDE**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved (Jija Ji) **Sh Jawahar Lal Koul H/o Smt Veena Koul D/o Late Sh Janki Nath Bhat, R/o Chattibandi Aragam, Bandipora Kashmir** at present R/o House No. 113, Shiv Lane, Muthi, Jammu on 04-03-2025.

MOURNING FROM MALUN SIDE is at House No. 48-A Lane No. 4-A, Sub Lane No. 2, Laxmi Vihar, Tomal, Anand Nagar, Bohri, Jammu. The **10TH Day** will be performed on 13-03-2025 (Thursday) at Akhnoor and **ASSEMBLY** will be held at Muthi Ghat (Near Education Office Jammu) at 11:30 AM.

GRIEF STRICKEN (IN LAW'S)

Roshan Lal Bhat & Babli Bhat

Amit Bhat & Rakhi Bhat

Ashish Bhat & Sarika Bhat

Rahul Bhat & Kajal Bhat

Karan Bhat

D.N.Koul & Manmohani Koul

A.K.Bhat & Doora Bhat

C.L.Bhat & Chandra Bhat

Nana Ji Raina & Kaki Raina

Contact No :- 9622433894, 9622030545

Bhat's, Raina's, Koul's.

**Sh Jawahar Lal Koul (Jija Ji)****UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform you of the sad demise of our beloved **Smt. Ved Pargal W/o Romesh Chand Pargal**. She took her last breath on 07.03.2025 at 4:30 AM.

Uthala will be held on 10.03.2025

Time: 3 PM to 4 PM at Community Hall, Near Shri Ram Sharnam Ashram, Near New Bus Stand, Samba (J&K)

GRIEF STRICKEN:

Brother in Law and Sister in Law

Smt. Sudesh Pargal W/o Late Vidya Bushan Pargal

Smt. Pushpa Pargal W/o Late Kuldeep Raj Pargal

Sh. K.K. Pargal

Smt. Prem Pargal W/o Late Subash Pargal

Daughters & Son in Laws

Smt Vandana Pargal and Sh Meenu Manish

Smt Anchal Gupta and Sh Shakti Gupta

Smt Bindu Mahajan and Sh Rakesh Mahajan

Smt Anju Mahajan and Sh Ankur Mahajan

and all Grandsons

Pargal Family

9419160092, 9419150361, 9697115536

**Smt. Ved Pargal****10TH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Harmesh Lal (Shastri Ji) R/o H.No. 106/2A, Trikuta Nagar Extension, Jammu** on 28-02-2025.

10TH DAY will be performed on 9th March, 2025 (Sunday) 10 AM at residence H.No. 106/2A, Trikuta Nagar Extension, Jammu. **KRIYA** will be performed on 10th March, 2025 (Monday) 11 AM at residence.

UTHALA will be performed on 14th March, 2025 (Friday) from 3 PM to 5 PM at Shiv Mandir, Sector 3, Trikuta Nagar Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Anju Raina - Wife

Daughter & Son-in-law

Smt. Sakshi Raina & Sh.Sidharth Sharma

Sons & Daughters-in-law

Shubam Raina & Driti Chandan

Abhishek Raina & Anjali Sharma

Ashutosh Raina

Grand Children: Ridhi,Sidhi,Chiku,Gopi & Shubh.

Mob: 9176270005, 7006392040, 8899130286

**Sh. Harmesh Lal (Shastri Ji)****TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sudden and untimely demise of our youngest brother **Sh. Sanjay Kumar Bhan, S/o Late Sh. Dwarka Nath Bhan** on 03/03/2025 originally resident of Ladwuna, Tulamulla, Ganderbal, Kashmir at present Lane No.1, Ward No. 73, Baba Zorawarsingh Enclave, Upper Garhigarth, Jammu (near Gajraj Marble).

TENTH DAY KRIYA will be performed on 11/03/2025 (Tuesday) at Akhnoor ghat and **MOURNING ASSEMBLY** will be held at Muthi Ghat (near Director Education Office) at 11:30 AM.

GRIEF STRICKEN:

Bharti Bhan (Wife) - 6005793906

Sakshi Bhan, Sarthik Bhan (Sons) - 6006716163

Satish Bhan, Usha Bhan - (Brother and Bhabhi) - 7889636660

Vinod Bhan, Sunita Bhan - (Brother and Bhabhi) - 9419148332

Sh. J.L. Saraf, Urmila Saraf - (Jija Ji and Sister) - 7006495451

Sh. A.K. Bhat, Neelam Bhat - (Jija Ji and Sister) - 9626401655

Sh. Anil Waza, Neena Waza - (Ujja Ji and Sister) - 7889734059

Sh. Kanya Lal Koul, Late Krishna Koul - (Father-in-law) - 9868963251

Sh. Ravi Koul, Suman Koul - (Brother-in-law, Sister-in-law) - 9823424855

**Sh. Sanjay Kumar Bhan (Senior Accounts Officer, IAF) 23 Wing, PDCA (NC) Jammu****TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow we deeply regret to inform about the sad demise of our beloved mother **SMT PRABHAWATI BHAT W/o Late Sh Bal Ji Bhat** originally resident of Chinad (Khushali Pura) Baramulla at present TRT Q.No. B/24 Muthi Camp Phase 2 (Ekta Bhawan Hall).

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed on 15 march 2025 at Akhnoor Ghat. **Assembly** will be held at Muthi Ghat (near Directorate of Education) Muthi Jammu at 11 am.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Pyari Bhat

Son and Daughter in law

Smt. Madnu and Sh. Chuni Lal Bhat

Son and Daughter in law

Smt. Suman and Sh. Rajender Kumar Bhat

Veena Bhat (Daughter)

SAMAST BHAT PARIVAR OF CHINAD BARAMULLA

**SMT PRABHAWATI BHAT****DISCLAIMER**

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Seharkhwans, Drum-Beaters who keep an age-old Ramzan Tradition alive in Kashmir

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 9 (Agencies): With Ramzan come the Seharkhwans — the drum-beaters who wake up people for the pre-dawn meal 'Sehri' — to the cities and towns of Kashmir.

Hundreds of these men who arrive from remote villages have kept the age-old tradition alive, despite the ubiquity of modern gadgets such as mobile phones and alarm clocks.

From time immemorial, their drum beats have woken up Kashmiris for that one meal that keeps them going as they fast during the day.

Mohammad Shafi Mir, a resident of Barzulla, said that Seharkhwans have an important role to play during the holy month. "Ramzan is not free of rigours. We finish the taraweh (long, late-night prayers) around 10.30 pm, and by the time we go to sleep, it is already midnight. To wake up again in four hours for the Sehri and the Fajr (early morning) prayers is tedious. Unlike mobile or clock alarms, you cannot switch off their drum beats."

Each Seharkhwan takes up a 'territory' of one or two mohallas. For some, this is a source of livelihood. For others, an act of devotion.

Many of them wait 11 months for Ramzan, as the earnings during



this month provide for their families for an entire year.

"We are from a remote area and this is my livelihood. I work as a labourer for the rest of the year, but the earnings in those 11 months are still less than what I earn during Ramzan," Abdul Majeed Khan from Kalaroos in Kupwara district said.

Khan, who has been a drum-beater for 20 years, said his work starts at 3 am in the morning and ends at 5 am.

"People pay us generously at the end of Ramzan. Allah has blessed them," he added.

Mohammad Mehboob Khatana, who has been coming to Srinagar for 22 years every Ramzan, said

while he makes a living for his family, he is also hopeful of getting a reward from the God Almighty for the good deed of waking up people for Sehri.

"We wake people up for fasting. We do this not just for a livelihood, but also in the hope of a reward in the next world," he said.

Ghulam Rasool Payar, a veteran of more than 50 years, is a familiar figure in the old city. He said the financial gains are a bonus, as his main aim is to serve people.

"I have been doing this work for the last 50 years. I do not pester the residents for payments, as I feel the bigger reward is with the Almighty," he said.

Investment proposals worth Rs 1.63 Lakh crores received in J&K till Dec 2024: Survey Report

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9 (Agencies): Investment proposals worth Rs 1.63 lakh crore have been received till December last year, which will create direct employment opportunities for more than 5.90 lakh people, Jammu and Kashmir government's economic survey report 2024-25 said. Jammu travel packages

The report, tabled by the Chief Minister in the Legislative Assembly last week, said 1,984 units involving an investment of Rs 9,606.46 crore and providing employment to 63,710 people have come into production in the Union Territory since 2019 till December 2024.

This includes 334 units having employment of 8,443 persons with an investment of Rs 2,977 crores in FY 2024-25 up to December 2024.

As many as 8,306 new applications have been received with a proposed total investment of Rs 1.63 lakh crore and the potential to create employment for approximately 5.90 lakh individuals, requiring 79,137 kanals of land as of December 2024, the survey said.

It said the Industries and Commerce Department envisions sustainable, equitable, environment-friendly and balanced industrial growth and economic development of J&K with focus on employment generation. Development of backward regions and nurturing existing units is emphasized upon in the J&K Industrial policy 2021-30.

To attract investment further in the Industrial Sector, J&K Government introduced new policies which include J&K Start-Up Policy 2024-27 and J&K Wool processing, Handloom and Handicraft

policy 2020.

Online allotment of land across the Union Territory in a transparent way is ensured through the J&K Industrial Land Allotment Policy 2021-30. These aim to attract investments with incentives like Capital Investment Incentive, GST Linked Incentive, and Working Capital Interest Incentive, it said.

The Centre has rolled out the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) with an outlay of Rs 28,400 crores for industrial development of J&K in 2021 which envisages incentives like Capital Investment Incentive, Capital Interest subvention, GST Linked Incentive, Working Capital Interest Subvention.

"This package has received an overwhelming response and has been fully subscribed. As of the registration deadline on 30th September 2024, a total of 971 applications, representing an investment of Rs 10,471 crore and employment of 51,897 have been approved for registration.

"J&K has witnessed the setup of industries with investments exceeding Rs 500 crore. These large-scale ventures have catalysed the development of ancillary industries, enhanced-local employment, and firmly positioned J&K as a competitive investment destination," the survey said.

Forty-six new industrial estates are being developed to boost job opportunities, with PSUs like NBCC, IRCON, CPWD handling the work.

The report said handicrafts and handlooms are vital to J&K's economy, providing significant employment to around 4.22 lakh artisans.

"The sector includes renowned products like Pashmina Shawls, Kashmiri Carpets, and various woodcrafts. The government focuses on skill development with 634 training centers. A unique QR

Code-based certification system has been established which ensures authenticity of the crafts. Many crafts have received GI tags, and more are in the pipeline," it said.

Exports have rebounded post-COVID, with total handicraft exports reaching Rs 1,162.29 crore in 2023-24, doubling from 2021-22.

Jammu and Kashmir's start-up ecosystem has also seen a remarkable 287 per cent growth, with DPIIT-registered start-ups increasing from 237 in 2020 to 917 in 2024, including 333 women-led ventures.

Over 1,600 start-ups have been registered with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI), marking a threefold rise, the report said, adding the New Start-up Policy 2024-27 and the J&K start-up portal, launched in July 2024, offers strong fiscal and non-fiscal support.

In terms of Ease of Doing Business (EODB), Jammu and Kashmir has made significant progress becoming the first UT to integrate its National Single Window Portal with the national platform.

The region achieved 97 per cent compliance with the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP), with 341 out of 352 reforms approved, and the JK-SW Incentive Calculator was recognized as a Best Practice.

The Regulatory Compliance Burden (RCB) has also been reduced by 3,226 regulatory hurdles, further streamlining business operations, the survey said.

During 2024-25, it said Jammu & Kashmir's cooperative sector made notable progress viz. 664 societies were registered, creating potential jobs for 1,223 people.

Natrang stages hindi play 'Ajgar Raaj'



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: Natrang presented a Hindi play 'Ajgar Raaj' written by Chiranjeet and directed by Neeraj Kant here today at Natrang Studio Theatre in its weekly Sunday Theatre series. The play 'Ajgar Raaj' attacks imperialist, expansionist and opportunistic policies of our neighboring country by highlighting its efforts to push mankind across the world towards destructive weapons, bloody wars and the propagation of destruction.

The play begins at the court of Ajgar Raaj,

where he is celebrating his 74th birthday with his commander, tells him that his master Shaitaan had given him a boon that if he completes 73 years of his life, he will never die, becoming immortal. Along with this, he also declares his Commander as his crown prince in the absence of his Prime Minister.

On the occasion of his 74th birthday, 'Ajgar Raaj' announces that today he has become immortal, hence he should be considered as God and celebrating a huge celebration all over the world, his "Lal Kitab" should be considered as

the divine book of God. After this, a commentary on the "Lal Kitab" is broadcast on the Radio, after which Ajgar Raaj orders the commander to broadcast it 101 times and to wipe out all religions and sects. Then a voice echoes in which the dragon king is warned that he is the enemy of humanity and world peace and all the dictators who declared themselves God have been killed, so he too will die soon. Ignoring this warning, he cites the teachings of his "Lal Kitab" and says that the whole world is afraid of his destructive weapons.

At the same time, the Prime Minister of Ajgar Raaj who has returned from visiting many countries, tells that no one is afraid of him anymore, a civil war has broken out in his own country and people have blackened his pictures. Many countries have expelled their citizens from their countries. Angered by this, the dragon king says that Shahe Jhutistan should now be asked to attack India. On this the Prime Minister says that Shahe Jhutistan wants us to attack them first.

The dragon king directs the commander to order the army to attack. Just then sounds of laughter start coming from all sides and the Prime Minister says that because of his words the whole world along with India is laughing at us and with this everyone starts laughing and the play ends.

Natrang young artists who performed in the play included Aryan Sharma, Adaksh Bagal and Krishay Bhatia. The lights of the play were executed by Neeraj Kant whereas the music of the play was scored by Mehak Chib. The show was coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen.

GOVT. POLYTECHNIC FOR WOMEN

Lower Shiv Nagar Near, AG's office Jammu-180001

राजकीय महिला पॉलिटेक्निक

शिवनगर (एजीकार्यालयके पास) जम्मू

Contact Numbers: 0191-2955320, 2957937

Website: www.gpfwjammu.edu.in | Email: gpfwjammu@gmail.com, gpfwj@rediffmail.com

ADMISSION NOTICE FOR FREE JOB ORIENTED SKILL COURSES

Applications are invited from the candidates of J&K UT seeking admission in JOB ORIENTED SHORT TERM FREE TRAINING COURSES under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 4.0 as per the norms of MSDE, Govt. of India/ NSDC at Government Polytechnic for Women, Lower Shiv Nagar, Jammu. The last date for receipt of application form is 15-03-2025.

S.No.	Name of Trade/Course	Sector	Eligibility	Duration
1.	Domestic IT Help Desk Attendant SSC/Q0110	IT-ITes	12 th Pass	390hrs+60hrs(OJT)
2.	Electrician ELE/Q5804	Electronics	10 th Pass	360hrs+180hrs(OJT)

Application Forms are available **FREE OF COST** at Government Polytechnic for Women, Lower Shiv Nagar, Jammu or may be downloaded from our website: www.gpfwjammu.edu.in

Documents to be attached with Form:-

1. Qualification Certificate
2. Address Proof
3. Aadhar Card
4. Two Passport Size colour Photographs

(Er. Neelanjana Manwati)
Principal
Govt. Polytechnic for Women,
Jammu.
No: WPJ/F-309/2584-2587
Dated: 07-03-2025

GOVT. POLYTECHNIC FOR WOMEN

Lower Shiv Nagar Near, AG's office Jammu-180001

राजकीय महिला पॉलिटेक्निक

शिवनगर (एजीकार्यालयके पास) जम्मू

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PRADHAN MANTRI KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA (PMKVY)

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)

GOVERNMENT POLYTECHNIC FOR WOMEN, LOWER SHIV NAGAR, JAMMU

APPLICATION FORM

Space for Passport Size Photograph

Course: _____

Name: _____

Father's Name: _____

Mother's Name: _____

Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY): _____

Gender (Male/Female): _____

Mobile No: _____

E-mail ID: _____

Aadhaar No.: _____

Category (SC/ST/BC/GEN/Minority/others): _____

Disability & its type, if any: _____

Permanent Address : _____

District: _____ State/UT: _____ PIN: _____

Urban/Rural: _____

DIP/J-10849/24

Signature of Candidate

Documents to be attached:

1. Qualification Certificate
2. Address Proof
3. Two Passport Size color Photographs

EDITORIAL

Women
Empowerment

Women empowerment is a crucial step toward building an equitable and just society. It refers to the process of giving women the power and opportunities to make decisions, have control over their lives, and participate fully in social, political, and economic activities. Women empowerment is not just about gender equality; it is about unlocking the potential of half the world's population to contribute to the growth and development of society.

Throughout history, women have struggled for their rights and freedom. Despite the challenges, they have emerged as leaders, innovators, and changemakers in various fields. However, issues such as gender discrimination, lack of education, domestic violence, unequal pay, and restricted access to resources continue to hinder their progress. To build a strong and progressive society, it is essential to remove these barriers and create an environment where women can thrive.

Empowering women is not just a moral responsibility; it is a necessity for a prosperous society.

When women are given equal opportunities in education and employment, they contribute significantly to the economy. Women-led businesses and enterprises boost productivity and innovation.

Educated and empowered women can make informed choices regarding healthcare, family planning, and child education, leading to overall social progress.

Women's financial independence helps reduce poverty levels as they can support their families and invest in their children's future.

Women's participation in governance ensures balanced decision-making and the implementation of policies that benefit all sections of society.

Women empowerment challenges patriarchy and gender stereotypes, leading to a more inclusive and fair society.

Despite significant progress, women still face several obstacles in achieving true empowerment.

Women often face wage gaps, discrimination, and harassment at the workplace, limiting their career growth. Domestic violence, sexual harassment, and honor killings continue to threaten women's safety and freedom. Women are underrepresented in politics, leading to a lack of policies that address their needs and concerns. Deep-rooted beliefs in some societies restrict women's mobility and decision-making power.

To create an environment where women can grow and succeed, certain steps must be taken. Education for All – Governments and organizations must ensure universal education for girls, providing scholarships and incentives to keep them in school. Equal Job Opportunities – Employers should enforce equal pay policies and create safe working environments free from discrimination and harassment. Encouraging Entrepreneurship – Financial assistance, training programs, and mentorship can help women start and sustain businesses. Strict Laws Against Violence – Governments must implement and enforce strict laws to protect women from domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence. Political Participation – Women should be encouraged to take leadership roles in governance, policy-making, and administration. Awareness Campaigns – Awareness programs on women's rights, reproductive health, and gender equality should be conducted in both rural and urban areas. Strengthening Support Systems – Creating support networks for women, such as self-help groups, counseling centers, and helplines, can help them navigate challenges.

In the digital era, technology plays a vital role in empowering women. Access to online education, digital banking, e-commerce, and telemedicine has opened new opportunities for women worldwide. Social media platforms have given women a voice to raise awareness about important issues and connect with support groups. Digital literacy programs should be introduced to help women use technology effectively for their growth.

Women empowerment is not just about granting rights to women, but about creating a society where women have the freedom, resources, and opportunities to achieve their full potential. By addressing challenges like gender discrimination, education barriers, and workplace inequality, we can build a future where women stand on equal footing with men.

A society that empowers its women empowers itself, as empowered women contribute to stronger economies, healthier families, and a more just world. As the famous saying goes, "When you empower a woman, you empower a nation."

The future of US support for Ukraine?

By: Dr. Satyawan
Saurabh

The outlook for U.S. support for Ukraine is currently unclear, shaped by political factors, military requirements, and global relations. The level of U.S. assistance to Ukraine will depend on the political landscape, the ongoing military situation in Ukraine, and cooperation with international partners. As circumstances change in the U.S. and around the world, the type and amount of support for Ukraine will also vary.

U.S. support for Ukraine has seen significant changes under President Donald Trump. Recently, military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine have been halted, as the U.S. seeks to encourage Kiev to engage in peace talks with Russia. This shift has raised concerns about Ukraine's defense capabilities, particularly the availability of U.S.-made Patriot missile systems, which have been vital to protecting cities like Kiev from Russian attacks. European allies have no direct alternatives to these systems, putting Ukraine at risk. Meanwhile, President Trump is considering new sanctions and tariffs on Russia to force Moscow to end hostilities. This strategy marks a shift from direct military support to an economic strategy. These changes have strained U.S.-Ukraine relations and created tensions with European allies, who are committed to supporting Ukraine and have announced substantial military spending initiatives.

The differing approaches have led to a growing divide between the U.S. and Europe regarding the situation in Ukraine. Overall, the future of U.S. support for Ukraine is

moving away from direct military aid and toward economic and diplomatic strategies, signaling a broader reassessment of foreign policy at present. The United States has significantly assisted Ukraine with military and financial aid since Russia launched a full-blown invasion in February 2022. Total funds authorized through various aid packages have reached nearly \$175 billion, with a significant amount allocated to military assistance. However, recent changes indicate a potential shift in U.S. policy under President Donald Trump, who has halted all military assistance and intelligence sharing with Ukraine in an effort to encourage peace talks with Russia. Ukraine's military situation remains fragile. Ongoing military assistance is vital; analysts warn that without it, Ukraine could suffer major losses on the battlefield.

The US has been a vital source of advanced weapons and intelligence that has bolstered Ukraine's defense capabilities. If US aid is reduced or stops altogether, experts believe this would severely hamper Ukraine's ability to maintain its defense against Russia's greater forces. On the other hand, if aid continues at current or increased levels, it could significantly enhance Ukraine's capabilities over time.

Relations between the US and Ukraine have been crucial in influencing the geopolitical landscape since Russia's invasion in 2022. Through 2024, the US had provided over \$119 billion in aid to Ukraine, but recent political changes and budget limitations have cast doubt on the future of this assistance. This uncertainty could have serious implications for Ukraine's defense capabilities and overall regional stability. Ten-

sions were highlighted during recent exchanges between US and Ukrainian leaders, raising concerns about the continuation of US military and diplomatic support.

The sudden cancellation of the planned diplomatic lunch signals a lack of goodwill, causing concern among Kiev and European leaders. Additionally, many Republican politicians have supported the current position of the US government. A reduction in US military assistance could encourage Russia to intensify its actions in Ukraine, taking advantage of the resulting power vacuum. Historical examples of US inaction, such as the annexation of Crimea in 2014, have encouraged Putin to pursue his expansionist agenda. Without US support, Ukraine may find it challenging to maintain its defense, risking territorial losses. The absence of US F-16 fighter jets could reduce Ukraine's air superiority, affecting mobility on the battlefield. A reduced US presence could bring Moscow closer to Beijing, reshaping global power relations.

Russia's growing economic ties with China, particularly in energy exports, reflect this geopolitical shift. European countries may need to take steps to fill the void left by the US withdrawal, which could put pressure on their economies. Germany and the UK have already committed to new military support in light of US uncertainties. A fragmented Western alliance could lead to a stalemate in a conflict, leading to long-term instability. The Korean War (1950-1953) is a reminder of how unresolved superpower tensions can lead to long-lasting frozen conflicts. The US's alleged withdrawal from Ukraine could undermine NATO's collective defense

strategy. The inability to deter Russian aggression could provoke future threats against the Baltic states and Eastern Europe. This would increase the military burden on European countries, forcing them to increase defense spending and enhance military cooperation.

The EU's new €50 billion aid initiative aims to mitigate the effects of a potential US withdrawal. The power vacuum could prompt Russia to challenge NATO's resolve in Eastern Europe. Russian hybrid warfare tactics in Moldova and the Baltics show how Moscow tests Western vulnerabilities. European countries dependent on Russian gas could face a renewed energy crisis, as highlighted by the 2022 Nord Stream pipeline sabotage incident, which exposed Europe's vulnerability to energy warfare. In response, European countries could seek to establish an independent security framework to reduce their dependence on the US. Ongoing US support for Ukraine is important for both European security and global stability.

**Dr. Satyawan
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International Women's Day, Brilliant Women Mathematician who have shaped the history of mathematics

By: Vijay Garg

On this International Women's Day, we want to tribute to the brilliant women mathematician who have shaped the history of mathematics with their wisdom, courage, and intellectual contributions.

Honoring "Hypatia": A Pioneer for Women in Philosophy.
(c. 360-415 CE):

A pioneer in Neoplatonism, mathematics, and astronomy, she defied societal norms to pursue knowledge and was martyred for her beliefs.

Hypatia of Alexandria was a woman dedicated to understanding the incomprehensible. An individual passionate about discerning the mysteries of life through scientific means, she was a famed mathematician, philosopher, and astronomer who gained the respect of those in her community through education. She was later killed for this intelligence as the subject of a furious man's anger, but was immortalized as a martyr for feminine intellect snuffed out before its time. Born in 355 B.C., Hypatia grew up under Roman rule inside a city referred to as the center point of the modern world by many historians of her era. The port city of Alexandria was a hub of great minds and intellectual thinkers within the empire, standing as the largest city within Roman ruled Egypt.

While not much is known about Hypatia's childhood or mother, what is written down most often is the impact her father had on philosophers during her youth.

Theon of Alexandria was a mathematician and studier of philosophy who not only encouraged his only child to be a well-rounded, educated thinker, but took it a step

further by teaching Hypatia himself. They studied mathematics, astronomy, and various philosophies together, infatuating her with the artistry of math and the stars (studies which were often kept out of the realms of women). These passions led Hypatia to follow a Neoplatonist philosophical branch, of which views she shared with her father.

Neoplatonism tells us that art, music, the stars, and everything else within the world is made up of mathematical variations, and that by studying these, one may become more enlightened to The One or the Divine.

Hypatia, armed with her philosophy and curiosity, built complex items for her studies like astrolabes (hand-held models of the universe used for solving astrological calculations) and hydrometers (an instrument used for measuring the density of various liquids based on the idea of buoyancy), eventually surpassing her father in both philosophical understanding and mathematics.

She became known within the city, not only as an extremely intelligent individual and leader in Neoplatonism philosophy, but also as a scholar and teacher. She began educating others inside of the Platonic school of Alexandria, something similar to modern day colleges. She also wrote her own math textbooks, eventually refining many mathematical equations during this time – even creating a more comprehensive way of formatting long division.

Many men from near and far traveled to study under her. Hypatia gladly took them in, no matter their background, and became a popular figure with the Alexandrian people during a time of disturbing turmoil within the city. Eventually, she was caught in the crossfire of a political and social uprising.

Around the 400's B.C.E., there was a major

influx of Christianity sweeping across the Roman Empire as it became the new state religion. Hypatia herself did not identify as Christian, but rather Pagan – taking the title of the old state religion of Rome, though not worshipping any deity or pantheon in particular.

She worshiped the Divine through her Neoplatonist ideas, but never judged an individual for having a different faith. She respected and taught Christians, Pagans, Jews, and various other denominations without discretion, but despite her compassionate discernment, others in Alexandria did not feel that way.

A growing group of extremist Christians led by a man named Cyril burned Pagan temples, worship spaces, and landmarks, claiming to do "the Lord's work" and attempted to take over the political sphere of Alexandria. The land's governor, Orestes, was a moderate Christian at the time and disliked Cyril's influence on the Alexandrian public.

Needing guidance, Orestes sought counsel from Hypatia. She advised the governor to be fair and restrained, electing caution with his next moves. During a riot in the middle of Alexandria, Orestes was seriously injured and Hypatia's words of wisdom went out the door.

Orestes was kidnapped, tortured, and killed by Cyril's followers as a political statement. The people of Alexandria turned on Hypatia after realizing she had given advice to the governor. They began to recognize Hypatia as an evil, pagan witch whose negative influence swayed Orestes away from his faith and resulted in violence.

Soon after, Hypatia was ambushed while riding through the city. She was dragged

off her chariot and brutally murdered by radicalized Christians in March of 415 B.C.E. If not for her dedicated students and followers, her story would have gone completely untold.

After her death, Hypatia was understood through many variations of memory and importance. She has since been settled upon as a feminist saint of philosophy and a martyr for wise women who have been shamed by their societies.

Hypatia should be remembered for more than just her tragic downfall and as a life cut too short due to ignorance. She should stand as an icon for women in scientific fields and positions of influence.

Hypatia was a woman of deep complexities in faith, knowledge, and in her existence as a woman. She deserves to be known and remembered not for her death, but for the strides she made for the advancement of women and the sciences to be where they stand today.

This women and many more have challenged conventions and redefined our understanding of the world. Their voices remind us that philosophy is not just for the few—it is for all who dare to question, reflect, and seek truth.

**(Vijay Garg Retired
Principal Educational
columnist street kour
Chand MHR Malout
Punjab)**

Women play vital role to build society for bright future of country: Rattan Lal Gupta

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: Mata Rani ka Bhandhara was organized by the students and scholars of Jammu University under the chairmanship of Dr. Vikas Sharma, Coordinator Jammu District and Zonal Secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) at the revered Bahu Fort temple on the occasion of international women day.

It was inaugurated by Rattan Lal Gupta, former MLC and Provincial President of JKNC, who was chief guest and presided over by Former Minister and Zonal President JKNC Babu Rampaul.

Provincial Joint Secretary JKNC, Ankush Abrol and Provincial President of the SC Wing of JKNC Vijay Lochan were the guests of honor. A large number of students, scholars, and devotees were also present at the event, adding to the spiritual fervor of the celebrations.

Addressing the gathering, Rattan Lal Gupta lauded the efforts of the students and scholars for organizing the event, emphasizing the importance of



spiritual gatherings in fostering community spirit and promoting cultural heritage.

He spoke about the role of women in history and their continued contributions to society. He encouraged young scholars and students to actively participate in activities that uphold moral and spiritual values while acknowledging the vital role that women play in the socio-cultural fabric of the region.

Speaking on the occasion, Babu Rampaul said we should respect all the religions so as to maintain amity, brotherhood and harmony, he insisted, adding that all the festivals should be celebrated together by people

belonging to different religions.

He also highlighted the significance of International Women's Day and the role of women in shaping society. He emphasized that such religious and social events not only reinforce cultural values but also serve as a platform to promote unity and inclusivity. Rampaul further stated that Jammu University students and scholars are committed to upholding traditions and contributing to the welfare of society through such initiatives.

Ankush Abrol also extended his greetings on International Women's Day and praised the students for their initiative

in organizing the event. He stressed the need for more such gatherings to promote communal harmony and cultural awareness among the younger generation.

The Mata Rani ka Bhandhara concluded with prayers for peace, prosperity, and the empowerment of women across all sections of society.

The organizers expressed their gratitude to all the dignitaries and participants for making the event a grand success, reaffirming their commitment to continuing such endeavors in the future.

Vikshay Vashist delivered the welcome address; Gourav Partap Singh, University President NSF was delivering the vote of thanks.

Other prominent present on the occasion include Dr Rajesh Sharma, Dr Gourav Bharat, Dr Rajesh Singh, Bishan Das Dalhotra (Retd Sp), Dr Gourav, Ram Singh, Amit Gupta, Rahul Gupta, Lovesh Bharat, Ramesh Lal, Monhar Lal, Rakesh Singh and others.

First Day of Bollywood International Film Festival 2025 Concludes Successfully in Mumbai



Top News Report

JAMMU/MUMBAI, Mar 9: The first day of the two-day Bollywood International Film Festival (BIFF) 2025 concluded successfully at the Veda Kunba Theatre, Mumbai. The festival, which showcases an eclectic mix of national and international films, witnessed the presence of several renowned Bollywood personalities, including Padmini Kolhapure, Poonam Dhillon, Deepak Parashar, Manoj Joshi, Nandita Puri, Praveen Singhal, Deepak Dua, Pawan Sharma, Ena Bolmark, Pratibha Sharma, and Yashpal Sharma.

The festival commenced with a Ganesh Vandana and traditional lamp lighting ceremony, graced by eminent figures such as Meriano Borgo, Rajeev Bhatia, Vandana Bhatia, Geetanjali Sinha, and Deepak Kumar Dua. Film Screenings and

Discussions

From 10 AM to 10 PM, various films were screened, starting with the much-discussed Marathi film 'Chal Halla Bol' by Mahesh Bansode. Following this, the Turkish short film 'Pencil' captivated the audience. In the afternoon session, the Haryanvi feature film 'Dhadam' moved viewers emotionally, while the Punjabi music video 'Mutiyar Punjaban' had them grooving.

The festival also showcased thought-provoking films such as 'Leer', highlighting the dangers of excessive mobile usage, and 'Chaudhary Sahab', a sensitive Haryanvi short film on animal rights. The short film 'I Am Sorry, Mom' explored family values, while 'Sanghar Amchya Astitvachya' shed light on tribal issues. The first day concluded with the Hungarian short film 'Bloom', leaving the audience with much to ponder.

Industry Insights and Panel Discussions

A key highlight of the festival was a special 'Let's Talk' session featuring film critic Dharmendranath Ojha and renowned Bollywood cinematographer Aseem Bajaj, where they discussed the role of cinematographers in filmmaking.

Festival Background and Organizers

Bollywood actor Yashpal Sharma and actor-director Pratibha Sharma founded the Bollywood International Film Festival (BIFF) during the first lockdown. Since then, it has successfully completed four editions. This year, the festival is organized in collaboration with Om Puri Foundation, Haryana Stage App, and Pahal Foundation.

The festival continues for another day on March 9, 2025, featuring more films and culminating in awards for the best-selected films.

Holi Festival on Friday, March 14: Mahant Rohit Shastri

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: The festival of Holi is celebrated on the full moon day of the month of Phalgun. On this occasion, the President of Shri Kailash Jyotish Avim Vedic Sansthan Trust, Jyotishacharya Mahant Rohit Shastri, explained that Holashtak begins eight days before the festival of Holi. This year, Holashtak began on Friday, March 7, and will end on Friday, March 14.

Mahant Rohit Shastri informed that this year, the festival of Holi will be celebrated on Friday, March 14. The Purnima Tithi (full moon phase) will begin at 10:36 AM on Thursday, March 13, and will end at 12:25 PM on Friday, March 14. The Phalgun ratri Purnima Fast will be observed on Thursday, March 13, and the Phalgun Day Purnima Fast will be observed on Friday, March 14.

Auspicious Time for Holika Dahan

The auspicious time for Holika Dahan will be from 11:31 PM to 11:59 PM on Thursday, March

13. Holika Dahan is primarily performed in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Mahant Rohit Shastri stated that Holi is a social festival that holds a special place in Hinduism. This festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy throughout India. Since ancient times, Holi has symbolized humor, joy, and the destruction of evil tendencies within human beings. The festival has always adapted to cultural traditions and promotes social harmony, caste equality, and religious goodwill, bringing true colors and joy into everyone's lives.

On this day, the barriers between people are dissolved through the exchange of colors. People of all religions and communities celebrate Holi by applying colors to each other, forgetting differences. Mahant Rohit Shastri mentioned that Holi is a festival of colors, but in today's modern era, chemical-based colors have replaced natural ones, which can be harmful to the skin. Therefore, people

should exercise caution while playing Holi and use only natural colors that are safe for the body.

Why is Holi Celebrated?

According to mythology, there was a demon king named Hiranyakashipu, who had a son named Prahlad. Prahlad was a devoted follower of Lord Vishnu, whereas Hiranyakashipu was a staunch opponent of Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashipu did not want anyone in his kingdom to worship Lord Vishnu. He made several attempts to kill Prahlad, but each time he failed.

Finally, Hiranyakashipu sought the help of his sister, Holika, to kill Prahlad. Holika had a boon that made her immune to fire. Following Hiranyakashipu's orders, Holika sat in a fire with Prahlad on her lap. However, due to Prahlad's unwavering devotion to Lord Vishnu, he remained unharmed while Holika was burned to ashes. Since then, the tradition of Holika Dahan has symbolized the victory of good over evil.

BTSM to hold protest against illegal occupation of Tibet by China

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: A meeting of Bharat Tibet Sahyog Manch J&K (BTSM) was held in the office of BTSM under the leadership of Dr Vivek Sharma, State President, BTSM J&K and the future course of action of the organisation was discussed. It was decided to observe the 66th Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day on 10th March 2025 to remember and pay tribute to the Tibetan martyrs who on this day in 1959 gathered in Tibet's capital Lhasa to rise against Communist China's illegal occupation of Tibet. In J&K, BTSM will commemorate the day by organizing various activities and programs paying tribute to the Tibetan martyrs and protesting against the Communist Chinese Government. Dr. Vivek Sharma

discussed the importance of the day and elaborated the issue emphasizing the current situation in Tibet, which includes severe human rights violations by the Chinese government. He also talked about the self-immolation of Tibetans who are protesting for their freedom and advocating for the return of His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama to Tibet.

BTSM activists appeal to the Government and people of J&K to boycott China in every aspect to secure its border and help gain freedom for Tibet.

Those who were present in the meeting were Dr. Vikrant Singh, Mr. Rajinder Sadotra, Dr. Rajesh Sharma, Dr. Rajesh Chib, Dr. Nitin Sharma, Dr. Kuldeep Sharma, Dr. Rohit Sadotra, Mr. Vishal Sharma, Mr. Alok Mahajan and others.

Kaiths pay obeisance to their ancestral spirit



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: The Kaith Biradari members paid obeisance to Sankri Devta at his Asthan in Channi Kamala and sought his blessings for the well-being of their families. They also partook parsad served by the priest Darshan Kaith Bawa. R.L. Kaith said, Sankri

Devta is a powerful deity, people come here with their individual wishes, hoping they get fulfilled after the prayer and they visit this Asthan after their wishes get fulfilled.

Prominent among the Biradari members who paid obeisance included Havildar Des Raj Kaith, Mela Ram, Bunty Kumar, Ankush Kumar, Rakesh Kumar, Rahul Kaith and many others.

Valedictory cum certificate distribution ceremony for digital marketing course held at Kishtwar



Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Mar 9: A valedictory cum certificate distribution ceremony for the Skill Development Course in Digital Marketing was held today at the Conference Hall of the DC Office, Kishtwar. The ceremony was graced by Ms. Mamta Sudershan, JKAS, Assistant Director/ALC Kishtwar, who extended her congratulations to the candidates for successfully completing the three-month-long training program.

During her address, Ms. Mamta Sudershan emphasized the growing importance of digital marketing in today's world and encouraged the participants to leverage their newly acquired skills to explore self-employment opportunities and enhance their job prospects. She also took time to engage with the candidates, seeking feedback on their learning experiences and the practical knowledge they gained throughout the course. The course trainer pro

vided an overview of the curriculum, highlighting the significance of digital skills in the modern job market. He expressed his satisfaction with the enthusiasm and dedication demonstrated by the trainees and wished them success in their future endeavors.

Mr. Vinod Shant, Employment Officer Kishtwar, addressed the gathering and spoke about various government initiatives, including Mission Yuva and Mission Youth, urging participants to take full advantage of these schemes, which are designed to foster youth entrepreneurship and skill development.

The ceremony celebrated the exceptional achievements of the top three performers Ashira Jaan and Masoofa Jaan Malik, who were both appreciated for securing the 1st position.

Numan Raja Malik, who earned the 2nd position, and Rashid Manzoor, who secured the 3rd position. A special highlight of

the event was the recognition of Numan Raja Malik, who, in addition to his 2nd-place achievement, showcased his creativity by generating an AI video, which captured and described the entire theme of the course from start to finish. This unique project received significant praise for its innovative approach and the thorough understanding it reflected of the course content.

Ms. Mamta Sudershan felicitated the top performers with trophies, motivating them to continue pursuing excellence in their future endeavors.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of course completion certificates to all participants, symbolizing the successful culmination of their training.

The candidates expressed their sincere gratitude to the District Employment & Counselling Centre, Kishtwar, for organizing the course in collaboration with the training partner, Modern Computer. They commended the program for equipping them with valuable digital skills that would play a key role in shaping their future career paths.

The event marked a significant milestone in empowering the youth of Kishtwar with digital skills, opening doors to brighter career opportunities and contributing to the overall socio-economic development of the region.

International Women's Day Celebrated at GDC Kishtwar

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Mar 9: Government Degree College (GDC) Kishtwar marked International Women's Day with an insightful and engaging event on 8/3/2025 organized by the Women Development Cell, NCC, and NSS Unit of the college. The program was conducted under the convenership of Dr. Tabassum Saleem and the abled guidance of Prof. Basharat Iqbal, Principal, GDC Kishtwar.

The event featured a panel of esteemed experts, including Dr. Sehrish Gazal (HOD, EVS), Dr. Salma Beigh (Gynaecologist), PSI Heena Bashir, and Ms.

Rahida Bano (JKAS), who shared their expertise on various issues concerning women's health, empowerment, and societal roles. The session was highly interactive, allowing students to engage with the experts on pressing concerns and challenges faced by women today.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Idress Lone (ACR Kishtwar), lauded the efforts of the organizers in creating awareness about women's rights and fostering a spirit of empowerment among young students. The chief guest and experts with felicitated with mementoes and certificates. The event was coordi-

nated by Dr. Tabassum Saleem and concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Dr. Usman Sheikh. Other distinguished faculty members present included Dr. Yasar Ahmed, Prof. Esar ul Ayub, Prof. Ashfaq Wani, Prof. Waseem Rashid, and Prof. Vikram Singh.

With the participation of around 250 students, the celebration was a resounding success, reinforcing the importance of gender equality and women's contributions to society. The event left an indelible impact, encouraging students to play an active role in advocating for women's empowerment and inclusivity.

Being the new Kapoor on the block a double-edged sword: Zahan Kapoor

Zahan Kapoor, who recently starred in the critically acclaimed web series "Black Warrant", said being the newest actor from the Kapoor film family has both its advantages and disadvantages.

The actor, who is the grandson of the legendary actor and producer Shashi Kapoor, was speaking at a session on the second day of the India Today Conclave 2025 here.

"Being the new Kapoor on the block is a common source of intrigue for a lot of people. It's interesting. It's both an advantage and a disadvantage. A double-edged sword.

"There is pressure and expectation, yet there is also forgiveness and accessibility in certain ways. Thankfully, I'm happy to say that my parents ensured I wasn't carrying that weight on my shoulders and taught me to be diligent with my own work. Things are in my hands and in how I show up," Zahan said.

The 32-year-old actor said belonging to a film family didn't necessarily make things "easy" for him.

"It's subjective. I can only speak for myself. I was given some opportunities and access, but not everything... It was difficult for me to navigate these expectations.

"All I knew was that I wanted to be a part of this magical world of telling stories, to serve it in the



best way I can. And I like learning; I really do. I'm very nerdy like that. So I'm reading, learning, talking to people, watching rehearsals and films. I am fascinated and trying to reflect on life around us, so society questions that."

He also praised his cousins and Bollywood stars Ranbir Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan, saying irrespective of the fame they carry, all of them are hard-working individuals.

"They are passionate about what they do. Fame and celebrity is a byproduct. So, it's not the source of their concern, the concern is how to live a life in the most passionate and big way possible, while serving cinema, stories, art, and culture... Then you are also a representative of society. So you play the showbiz game, consequently," said Zahan, who made his film debut with 2022's "Faraaz".

The actor also spoke about his late grandfather, adding that Shashi Kapoor had already by the time he was born.

As a child, Zahan said he would wonder why megastar Amitabh Bachchan, his grandfather's co-star on many films like "Deewaar" and "Shaan", would come by their house.

"One day, I came home from school and suddenly saw Amitabh Bachchan sir at our house to meet my grandfather. I recognised him, but I didn't understand - was he there every day?"

"I greeted my grandfather with a 'namaste', and he would do the same. Then, he would watch his cricket series on TV, completely engrossed, outside and away from the spotlight of the film industry... For me it was just my grandfather there and every day I would meet him. It was a very demystified upbringing," he

recalled.

The actor said his roots lie in Mumbai's iconic Prithvi Theatre, built by Shashi Kapoor and his wife Jennifer in memory of the Kapoor family patriarch Prithviraj Kapoor.

"Outside and away from the spotlight or churn of the film industry, theatre was my connection. I remember visiting the theatre as a young child. So Prithvi was the grounding," he said.

Zahan admitted that Vikramaditya Motwane's "Black Warrant", which released in January, has been a "turning point" in his career.

"I am grateful to be a part of this project. The most incredible thing right now has been how overwhelming it is to be a part of something that seems to have connected and resonated in such a big way," he added.

When asked about his contemporaries, the actor said there are a lot of actors he admires.

"Adarsh Gourav's new film 'Superboys of Malegaon', he is a fantastic actor. Sparsh Shrivastava, who was in 'Laapataa Ladies', is an incredible young actor. Babil is doing some incredible work also.

"There are so many others and beyond Vicky Kaushal, Rajkumar Rao, Manoj Bajpayee sir, the late Irrfan sahab, Ranbir himself and Ranveer Singh," he said.

Kabir Khan highlights immigrant stories in 'My Melbourne' with inspiring Afghan refugee tale



Filmmaker Kabir Khan aims to challenge stereotypes surrounding immigrants and refugees with his latest project, My Melbourne, an anthology film featuring four unique stories inspired by true events. His segment, Setara, follows the journey of a 15-year-old Afghan girl who finds solace in cricket after fleeing the Taliban and rebuilding her life in Melbourne. Khan, known for films

like Ek Tha Tiger and Bajrangi Bhaijaan, said the story emphasizes the contributions immigrants can make when welcomed with open arms. "If you see refugees through just one perspective, they may never be able to contribute. But if you embrace them, they become a valuable part of society," he told agency in an interview.

The director was inspired by the real-life

experiences of Afghan women cricketers who relocated to Melbourne after the Taliban's takeover. During a visit to the city, he met Setara, a young player whose dream of representing Afghanistan was cut short. "Her story perfectly captured the spirit of resilience and belonging," Khan said.

To ensure authenticity, Khan cast the real Setara in the lead role instead of opting for a known star. "We wanted to keep it real. Setara is the star of her own story," he added.

Produced by Mitu Bhowmick Lange, My Melbourne also features segments by filmmakers Imtiaz Ali, Rima Das, and Onir, exploring themes of diversity across sexuality, gender, disability, and race. The film is set for a theatrical release in India on March 14. While Khan acknowledges its niche appeal, he believes the film's message is essential. "Not every film is made for box office success. Some are meant to tell important stories and reach those who wish to see them," he said.

Shubhangi Atre is now officially single in real life

Shubhangi Atre, known for her role as Angoori Bhabhi in Sanjay and Binaiferr Kohli's Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, has been a beloved face in the television industry for years. While she has entertained audiences with her comic timing, her personal life has seen significant changes. After 22 years of marriage, she and her husband, Piyush Poorey, decided to part ways. Their divorce was finalised on February 5, bringing closure to a long chapter in her life.

Shubhangi admits that the decision was painful, as she was deeply invested in the relationship. "I gave my heart to this marriage because that's the kind of person I am," she shares. However, over time, differences between them grew, making it impossible to continue together.



er. Now, after moving on, she feels a sense of peace. "It feels like a heavy weight has been lifted. There's a newfound sense of freedom, and it's hard to explain how relieving that is,"

she says. Her priority now is to focus on her daughter, Ashi, and give her a happy and secure life. One of the biggest lessons she has learned from this experience is self-reliance.

Nora Fatehi reveals music labels earned from songs she did for free

Actor-dancer Nora Fatehi got popular by starring in several dance numbers, and she has admitted after a very long time that music labels and producers were reaping the benefit of her work with no compensation to her.

In a recent interview, she said she realised what's the point of being the Dilbar girl for her kids if she doesn't have revenue to show from the tag.

Nora introspects In an interview with agency, Nora spoke about understanding the business and working through it.

Nora said, "When I started featuring in the songs that were breaking the internet, helping the film's success and influencing the box-office numbers, I understood that many earn from these except me. There are the You-



Tube revenues, streaming rights, and even the films earning from the hype of these successful songs, and I was doing them for free. Whatever I earn, it is from the shows or events that I am part of. But otherwise, there are no IPs, no publishing royalties, etc... But I understand that it is what it is."

She added, "Instead of fighting the system, I found a way out for me where I can still do those dance numbers, and not worry about the revenue. See, I am grateful for the opportunities, but as an artiste I also have to think about sustainability and security. The publishing rights, royalties are very important for creating a legacy, and safeguarding my future. What is the point of being the Dilbar girl for my kids if I don't have revenue to show from

the tag. Generational wealth is important, and that is something I want to focus on."

Nora's recent work Nora has carved a special place for herself in the industry because of her dance moves. She has performed in many dance songs, including Ek Toh Kum Zindagani, Dilbar and O Saki Saki.

In 2024, Nora starred in Crakk, Madgaon Express and Matka. She will soon star in the Hindi film Be Happy, Tamil film Kanchana 4 and the Kannada film KD - The Devil. The trailer of Be Happy, which will be released on Prime Video on March 14 was recently released. Abhishek Bachchan plays a father who asks Nora to teach him to dance to make his daughter happy. She was also seen alongside singer Jason Derulo in his song, Snake.

Court refuses to take cognisance of Tanushree Dutta's 'MeToo' allegations against Nana Patekar

A Mumbai court has refused to take cognisance of "MeToo" allegations levelled against veteran actor Nana Patekar by his co-star Tanushree Dutta in 2018 after observing the complaint was filed "beyond the period of limitation" without explaining the reason for delay.

Judicial Magistrate First Class (Andheri) NV Bansal said that Dutta filed an FIR in 2018 over an incident that allegedly occurred on March 23, 2008.

In her complaint filed in October 2018, Dutta accused Patekar and three others of harassing and misbehaving with her in 2008 while shooting a song on the sets of the film "Horn Ok Pleassss".

The issue hit national headlines and sparked

the #MeToo movement on social media.

The police, in 2019, filed its final report before a magistrate court stating that its probe did not find anything incriminating against any of the accused.

The FIR was found to be false, the police further said in its report. In legal terms, such a report is called a 'B-summary'.

At the time, Dutta had filed a protest petition urging the court to reject the B-summary. She urged the court to order a further probe into her complaint.

The magistrate said Dutta filed an FIR in 2018 under the Indian Penal Code sections 354 and 509 over an incident that allegedly occurred on March 23, 2008.



Both offences have a limitation of three years as per provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), he said.

The purpose of the prescribing period of limitation is to put pressure on the organs of criminal prosecution to make every effort to ensure detection and punish-

ment of the crime quickly, the court observed.

No application for condonation of delay has been filed by the prosecution and the informant to let the court know the reasons for delay, the order said.

Thus, there is "no reason before me to take cognisance after a

long lapse of more than 7 years after the expiry of the period of limitation", the magistrate said.

"If such a huge delay is condoned without any sufficient cause, then it will be against the principle of equity and true spirit of the law," the magistrate said while concluding that the alleged incident "is not within limitation and the court is barred to take cognisance of the same".

"The alleged first incidence cannot be said to be false nor can be said as true" as the court has not dealt with the facts of the alleged incident, it added.

The magistrate disposed of the B Summary report, saying it "cannot be dealt with due to bar of taking cognisance".

Papia Sengupta talks about her role in Jamai No. 1



Papia Sengupta, known for her compelling performances, is currently winning hearts with her portrayal of Kanchan Chotwani in

Jamai No. 1. The actress opened up about the depth of her character, the evolving nature of television storytelling and the jour-

ney of bringing Kanchan to life on screen. "When I took on the role of Kanchan Chotwani in Jamai No. 1, I knew I was stepping into a character that would challenge me in new ways. Kanchan is a powerhouse—a woman of strength and fierce authority. Playing her has been both exhilarating and deeply rewarding, and I am truly grateful for the overwhelming love and appreciation from audiences," Papia shared.

About the essence of Kanchan's character, she explained, "Kanchan Chotwani is not just a mother-in-law; she is the backbone of the Chotwani family. She has built her empire from the ground up and is determined to protect its legacy."

Govt yet to receive prospective names from HCs to appoint Ad-Hoc Judges

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Over a month after the Supreme Court cleared the decks to appoint ad-hoc judges in high courts to deal with rising pendency of cases, the government is yet to receive proposals from respective HCs naming candidates.

Considering a backlog of over 18 lakh criminal cases, the Supreme Court on January 30 allowed the high courts

to appoint ad-hoc judges, not exceeding 10 per cent of the court's total sanctioned strength.

Article 224A of the Constitution allows the appointment of retired judges as ad-hoc judges in high courts to help deal with pendency.

Sources said the Union law ministry is yet to receive any recommendation from respective high court

collegiums for appointing ad-hoc judges.

As per the laid down procedure, the respective high court collegiums send recommendations or names of candidates to be appointed as HC judges to the Department of Justice in the law ministry.

The department then adds inputs and details on the candidates before forwarding the same to the Supreme Court Collegium.

India condemns vandalism at temple in California

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): India on Sunday strongly condemned an incident of vandalism at a Hindu temple in California's Chino Hills and demanded "stringent action" against those involved.

New Delhi also called for adequate security to the places of worship in view of the incident.

"We have seen reports regarding the vandalism at a Hindu temple in Chino Hills, California. We condemn such despicable acts in the strongest terms," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"We call upon the local law enforcement authorities to take stringent action against those responsible for these acts, and also ensure adequate security to places of worship," he said.

Jaiswal was responding to media queries on the incident.

The Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) on Saturday said that Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Chino Hills faced desecration.

"In the face of another Mandir desecration, this time in Chino Hills, CA, the Hindu community stands steadfast against hate. Together with the community in Chino Hills and Southern California, we will never let hate take root," the BAPS Public Affairs posted on X.



PM Modi hails India adding 58th tiger reserve to its tally



NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the development of India adding the 58th tiger reserve to its tally with

Madhya Pradesh's Madhav Tiger Reserve, and said it was "amazing news for wildlife lovers".

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav had

on Saturday said he was thrilled to announce that the country has added the 58th tiger reserve to its tally with the latest entrant being Madhav Tiger Reserve.

Tagging Yadav's post, Modi said on X, "Amazing news for wildlife lovers! India is blessed with wildlife diversity and a culture that celebrates wildlife." "We will always be at the forefront of protecting animals and contributing to a sustainable planet," Modi said.

Punjab factory collapse: Rescue ops continue as teams search for trapped workers

LUDHIANA, Mar 9 (Agencies): Rescue operation was underway Sunday to see if anyone was still trapped under the debris, a day after a factory building collapsed here.

A worker was killed after a building of a textile factory collapsed in the Focal Point area here late Saturday evening, officials said.

The six workers trapped under the debris were brought out by the NDRF teams, of which one was found dead and three sustained serious injuries.

An eyewitness had earlier said a loud sound was heard before the building caved in.

Sources said repair work was being taken up in the factory when a pillar gave way.

Two teams of National Disaster Response Force and other teams of police, fire brigade and factories departments, the Municipal Corporation were undertaking the rescue operation.

Gangster wanted for loot, dacoity and murder killed in police encounter in Mathura

MATHURA, Mar 9 (Agencies): A wanted criminal carrying a reward of Rs 1 lakh was killed in an encounter with Uttar Pradesh Police here on Sunday morning, police said.

In an operation led by Senior Superintendent of Police, Mathura,

Shailesh Pandey, the accused, identified as Fati alias Asad, sustained bullet injuries, UP Director General of Police (DGP) Prashant Kumar said.

He was rushed to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead, he

added.

Fati was the leader of the Chhaimar gang and was wanted in over three dozen cases of loot, dacoity and murder in multiple states, including Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir, the DGP said.

BSc student jumps to death from third floor of college in MP's Indore

INDORE, Mar 9 (Agencies): A third-year college student allegedly died by suicide after jumping from the third floor of his college in Dwarakapuri, Indore, police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday, and from his social media status, police say they suspect that his mental state was not sound.

Anand Yadav, Additional DCP Zone 4, said,

"This is an incident of the Dwarakapuri police station area where a boy named Mayur Rajput, who was a BSc third-year student, jumped from the third floor of the college. Right now, we are investigating the reason. So far, it has been found that he had posted something on his social media status in which he had written that neither could I become a good student

nor a good son. He has done something like this in his mental state."

The police is currently investigating the case.

"We are investigating the rest. In the investigation, all these things will be discussed with the family members, and once all the talks are done, everything will be clear. He is a third-year student, so his age will be between 19-20 years," he further said.

Kerala teen, who went missing 3 weeks ago, found dead with neighbour: Cops

KASARAGOD, Mar 9 (Agencies): A 15-year-old girl who went missing in this district nearly three weeks ago was found dead along with a 42-year-old man in a village here on Sunday, police said.

The girl from Paivalike village had gone missing on February 11, and an investigation had been underway since



then to trace her, they said.

Her parents had raised allegations against

the man, identified as Pradeep, their neighbour, who had also gone missing around the same time.

The mobile phones of both were switched off.

This morning, a 52-member police team, along with local residents, conducted an extensive search.

Eventually, the two were found hanging

from a tree in an area close to the girl's house.

Her parents had filed a missing persons complaint with the police in Kumabala on February 12.

Since both the girl and the neighbour had been missing, an investigation was ongoing, including the use of drones.

Manipur: Uneasy calm in Kangpokpi district, additional security forces deployed

IMPHAL, Mar 9 (Agencies): The situation in violence-hit Kangpokpi district in Manipur remained tense but calm on Sunday morning as the indefinite shutdown called by Kuki-Zo groups against "crackdown by security forces" affected normal life in all areas inhabited by the community in the ethnic strife-torn state.

A protester was killed while over 40 others, including women and policemen, were injured in clashes between Kuki demonstrators and security forces in different parts of Kangpokpi district on Saturday, officials said.

Clashes erupted between demonstrators and security forces in the Kuki-dominated district after police fired tear gas shells to disperse them, as they opposed Union Home Minister Amit Shah's directive allowing free movement across the state.

Additional security forces have been deployed in Gangghipai and other parts of the district along the NH-2 (Imphal-Dimapur Road) and vehicular patrolling was being conducted to ensure law and order, a district official said.

Protesters clashed with security forces till late on Saturday night as the agitators used catapults against the law enforcers, he said,



adding windshields of at least five vehicles of the security forces were damaged.

The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), a Kuki-Zo body, has extended support to the indefinite shutdown called by Kuki Zo Council (KZC) in all areas inhabited by the community in Manipur to protest the crackdown of security forces on demonstrators protesting free movement along all roads in the ethnic strife-torn state.

In a statement, ITLF said, "Yesterday, the Government of India's decision to allow the movement of Meiteis through Kuki-Zo areas led to agitation and protest in Kangpokpi... the security forces used excessive force on the protesters."

Endorsing the indefinite shutdown called in all Kuki-Zo areas, ITLF asked everyone to "adhere to the shutdown in solidarity".

"We respect everyone who came out to

protest yesterday," the ITLF said.

Manipur Police, in a statement, said 27 security personnel were injured in the attacks by the Kuki protesters who pelted them with stones, and barricaded roads by putting up huge boulders, setting tyres on fire and felling trees.

"Amid the protests, there were incidents of firing from amongst the protesters towards the security forces, to which the security forces retaliated," the statement said.

"Due to heavy pelting of stones, use of catapults and random firing by armed miscreants from amongst the protesters, 27 security forces personnel suffered injuries, including two critical injuries," it said.

"The security forces showed tremendous restraint while trying to control the unruly and violent mob and used minimum force to control and counter the anti-social elements.

During the skirmish, 16 protesters were reportedly injured and one protester succumbed to injuries," it said.

According to the police, it all started when a Manipur State Transport bus plied along the Imphal-Kangpokpi-Senapati route, a mob started pelting the vehicle with stones at Gangghipai in Kangpokpi district prompting security forces to use tear gas and minimum force to disperse the crowd.

The protest was also directed against a peace march by the Federation of Civil Society (FOCS), a Meitei organisation. The procession, involving over 10 vehicles, was halted by security forces at Sekmai before it could reach Kangpokpi district. Police claimed that the procession was stopped as those taking it out did not have requisite permission.

Shah had on March 1 directed security forces to ensure free movement of people on all

routes in Manipur from March 8 and also called for strict action against those creating obstructions.

The order bore significance as unhindered travel throughout the state has remained affected since ethnic violence broke out between the two communities in May 2023. The violence left over 250 people killed and thousands homeless since then.

The Centre had imposed President's rule in Manipur on February 13, days after Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned from his post leading to political uncertainty in the north-eastern state.

The Manipur Assembly, which has a tenure till 2027, has been put under suspended animation, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla had on February 20 urged the people of the state to voluntarily surrender looted and illegally held weapons within seven days, assuring no punitive action would be initiated against those giving up arms during this period.

He later extended the deadline till 4 pm on March 6, following demands by people from both hill and valley areas for additional time.

Three injured as leaking gas pipeline catches fire in Mumbai's Andheri



MUMBAI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Three persons suffered burn injuries after a leaking gas pipeline caught fire on a road in Mumbai's Andheri area in the wee hours of Sunday, an official said.

Two vehicles were also damaged in the incident, he said.

The blaze erupted at 12.35 am in a heav-

ily leaking supply pipeline of the Mahanagar Gas Limited, passing through the middle of a road at Sher-E-Punjab society near a gurdwara at Takshila in the Andheri (East) area, the fire official said.

It was a "level-one" fire which was confined to two moving vehicles, he said.

A two-wheeler rider,

Arvindkumar Kaithal (21), suffered 30 to 40 per cent burns, another biker, Aman Harishankar Saroj (22), sustained 40 to 50 per cent burn injuries, and auto-rickshaw driver Suresh Kailas Gupta (52) suffered 20 per cent burns, he said.

The three persons were admitted to the Balasaheb Thackeray Trauma Care Centre in Jogeshwari for treatment.

A water tanker, a fire engine and other assistance were rushed to the spot and the blaze was extinguished by 1.34 am, the official said.

The exact cause of the fire was yet to be ascertained, he added.

Journalist shot dead in UP, family says he had received threatening calls

SITAPUR, Mar 9 (Agencies): A regional reporter for a Hindi daily was shot dead by bike-borne assailants on the Sitapur-Delhi National Highway here on Saturday, police said today.

The attack occurred on the overbridge near the Hempur railway crossing, within the Imalia Sultanpur police station area.

According to the police, the assailants opened fire on Raghendra Bajpai (35) while he was commuting on his motorcycle.

"Three bullets struck him in the shoulder and chest. The assailants then fled the scene on their motorcycle," said

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Sitapur, Praveen Ranjan Singh.

With the assistance of local residents, police transported Bajpai to a nearby hospital, where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

Bajpai's family told media outlets that he had received threatening phone calls in recent days.

"Evidence collection has commenced and the district borders have been sealed to apprehend the perpetrators. Call details and other legal proceedings are underway," ASP Singh said.

The body has been sent for a post-mortem examination, he added.

Trump hints at revisiting US-Canada border demarcation: Report

The report, which cited four people with firsthand knowledge of their content, on the condition of anonymity, also noted that Trump, in an early February call, challenged the border treaty between the two countries and told Trudeau he didn't like their shared water agreements.

WASHINGTON DC, Mar 9 (Agencies): Amid the ongoing tariff war between the two countries, US President Donald Trump, during his conversation with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, raised the point that he did not believe in the border demarcation treaty between them and wants to revise the boundary, the New York Times reported.

The report, which cited four people with firsthand knowledge of their content, on the condition of anonymity, also noted that Trump, in an early February call, challenged the border treaty between the two countries and told Trudeau he didn't like their shared water agreements.

Recently, Justin Trudeau made an extraordinary statement that was largely lost in the fray of the moment, as per NYT.

"The excuse that he's giving for these tariffs today ofentanyl is completely bogus, completely unjustified, completely false," Trudeau told the news media in Ottawa.

"What he wants is to see a total collapse of the Canadian economy, because that'll make it easier to annex us," he added.

The conversation between Washington and Ottawa on February 3 not only included



discussions on staving off tariffs on Canadian exports but Trump also laid out a long list of grievances he had with the trade relationship between the two countries, including Canada's protected dairy sector, the difficulty American banks face in doing business in Canada and Canadian consumption taxes that Trump deems unfair because they make American goods more expensive.

Notably, the border treaty that Trump referred to was established in 1908 and finalized the international boundary between Canada, then a British dominion, and the United States, as reported by NYT.

Trump also mentioned revisiting the sharing of lakes and rivers between the two

nations, which is regulated by a number of treaties, a topic he's expressed interest in in the past.

The report further cited Trump's response to the media on January 7, wherein, he had said that he is planning to use "economic force" against Canada.

The persistent social media references to Canada as the "51st state" and Trudeau as its "Governor" had begun to grate both inside the Canadian government and more broadly, as reported by NYT.

Following the talks between the two leaders, Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick in a conversation with Canada's finance minister, Dominic LeBlanc, issued a devastating message, according to several people familiar with the call

that Trump, he said, had come to realize that the relationship between the United States and Canada was governed by a slew of agreements and treaties that were 'easy to abandon

He also wanted to eject Canada out of an intelligence-sharing group known as the 'Five Eyes' that also includes Britain, Australia and New Zealand, according to NYT.

He wanted to tear up the Great Lakes agreements and conventions between the two nations that lay out how they share and manage Lakes Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario, the report further added.

It also noted that he is also reviewing military cooperation between the two countries, particularly the North American Aerospace Defence Command.

A sigh of relief, however, has been that the Secretary of State Marco Rubio, has refrained from delivering threats, and recently dismissed the idea that the United States was looking at scrapping military cooperation.

However, Canada's politicians across the spectrum, and Canadian society at large, are frayed and deeply concerned. Officials do not see the Trump administration's threats as empty; they see a new normal when it comes to the United States, the report added.

Ukraine determined to do everything to end war with "just and lasting peace": Zelenskyy



KYIV, Mar 9 (Agencies): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shared details of the upcoming meeting between American and Ukrainian officials in Saudi Arabia for negotiating peace talks as the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to rage on.

He also said that a meeting took place between the diplomatic teams of the UK and Ukraine to discuss steps to achieve peace.

In a post on X, Zelenskyy said, "Today, a highly productive meeting took place in Kyiv between the diplomatic teams of Ukraine and the UK. We discussed our joint steps that could bring us closer to peace and accelerate diplomatic efforts. I'm grateful for the support. Ukraine is determined to do everything to end this war with a just and lasting peace as soon as possible."

Earlier, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed

strong appreciation for the support Ukraine has received during a European leaders summit in London on March 2, focused on Ukraine's future and its relationship with Europe.

During his recent visit to the UK, Zelenskyy and UK PM Keir Starmer discussed the challenges facing Ukraine and Europe, and efforts to achieve a just peace with strong security guarantees.

Earlier this year, the UK and Ukraine signed a 100-year partnership agreement, which had given a call for Ukraine's recovery and committed towards fostering technological innovation along with focus on several other areas.

The Ukrainian President further said that next week, he will visit Saudi Arabia, where he will hold a meeting with the Crown Prince, followed by a meeting with the American team.

"Next week, I will begin with a visit to Saudi

Arabia. After my meeting on Monday with the Crown Prince, Ukrainian diplomatic and military representatives will stay for a meeting on Tuesday with the American team. The Ukrainian team will include Andriy Yermak, Andriy Sybiha, Rustem Umerov, and Pavlo Palisa," he stated in his post.

"On our side, we are fully committed to constructive dialogue, and we hope to discuss and agree on the necessary decisions and steps. Ukraine has been seeking peace from the very first second of this war. Realistic proposals are on the table. The key is to move quickly and effectively," Zelenskyy added.

Meanwhile, US envoy Steve Witkoff confirmed he would meet Ukrainian officials in Saudi Arabia, and would discuss an "initial ceasefire" and a "framework" for a longer agreement, as reported by Al Jazeera.

Notably, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the talks would take place in Jeddah.

Al Jazeera reported that this will be the first high-level gathering of US and Ukrainian officials since the February 28 meeting between Zelenskyy and Trump.

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh brace for upcoming food reductions as aid agencies cut funding

COX'S BAZAR, Mar 9 (Agencies): Rohingya refugees in cramped Bangladeshi camps say they are worried about a US decision to cut food rations by half beginning next month, while a refugee official says the reduction will impact the nutrition of more than 1 million refugees and create "social and mental pressure."

President Donald Trump abruptly stopped most foreign aid and dismantled the US Agency for International Development, which has significantly hampered the global humanitarian sector. Trump's Jan 20 executive order froze the funding for a 90-day review.

The World Food Programme, the main U.N. food agency, recently announced that cuts to food rations will take effect from April 1 in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where dozens of camps are inhabited by Rohingya refugees.

More than 700,000 Muslim Rohingya fled to Bangladesh starting in late August 2017 when Myanmar's military launched a "clearance operation." The ethnic group faces discrimination and are denied citizenship and other rights in the Buddhist-majority nation. Following a military takeover in 2021, the country has been engulfed in an armed conflict widely seen as civil war.

It was not immediately clear if the WFP's decision was directly related to the Trump administration's action.

"We received a letter that (says) previously it was \$12.50, and now it is \$6. They used to get \$12.50 per month, and from now \$6, this will greatly affect them," Shamsud Douza, additional refugee relief and repatriation commissioner of Bangladesh,



told agency.

"As the food is cut, they will get less nutritious food, which may lead to a lack of nutrition. There will be social and mental pressure created amongst the Rohingya people in their community. They will have to look for an alternative for the food," he said.

Douza said there are more sectors where budgets have been cut beyond the food rations, but he would not say whether WFP cuts were related to the U.S. funding rollback.

"Generally, there will be less (support) for the (Rohingya) response after the funding cuts. The response already has been slowed, and some people, including Rohingya, have lost their jobs, and some services are reduced. It does not bring a good result when the available services get reduced," he said.

The interim Bangladesh government said the end of USAID payments would stop other projects in Bangladesh, but funding for Rohingya refugees will continue to flow.

The US has been the top donor to Bangladesh for Rohingya refugees, providing the UN with emergency food and nutrition assistance. The US usually provides almost half of the aid money spent on the humanitarian response to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, which provided about \$300 million in 2024.

As the news of the

impending food reductions spread through the camps in Cox's Bazar, fear and frustration gripped the refugees.

"I am afraid now about how I am going to run my family, as we don't have any income-generating opportunities here. I got scared when I heard it," 40-year-old Manzur Ahmed said. "How will I buy rice, chilies, salt, sugar and dal, let alone fish, meat and vegetables, with 700 taka (\$6)? We won't even be able to buy (cooking) oil. How are we going to get them?"

Medical treatment also is decreasing, refugees said.

"When we go to the hospital, they don't provide medicines unless it's an emergency. They only provide medicines to the very emergency patients. Earlier, they would treat anyone who felt unwell, but now they only provide treatment to those who are in an emergency," 32-year-old Dildar Begum said.

Hundreds of thousands have lived in Bangladesh for decades and about 70,000 crossed the border from Myanmar in 2024. During fighting with the military junta, the opposition force known as the Arakan Army effectively took over the Rakhine state where Rohingya were displaced and took shelter in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh says Rohingya refugees must return to Myanmar, which has been accused in an international court of genocide against Rohingya.

Hamas pushes for phase two of Gaza truce talks

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, Mar 9 (Agencies): Hamas reiterated on Sunday its insistence on moving directly into negotiating a second phase of the Gaza truce, as Israel announced it would dispatch a delegation to Doha for further talks.

Representatives of the Palestinian militant group met with mediators in Cairo at the weekend, emphasising the need for humanitarian aid to re-enter the besieged territory "without restrictions or conditions", according to a Hamas press release.

The high-level delegation also stressed the need for "moving directly to begin negotiations for the second phase" of the deal, which will aim to lay the groundwork for a permanent ceasefire.

Hamas's demands for the second phase include a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, an end to the blockade, the reconstruction of the territory and financial support, an official told agency.

Hamas spokesperson

Abdel Latif Al-Qanoua said indicators were so far "positive".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office meanwhile said it would send delegates to Doha on Monday.

Israel has maintained it wants an extension of the truce's first phase until mid-April.

That initial period ended on March 1 after six weeks of relative calm that included the exchange of 25 living hostages and eight bodies for the release of about 1,800 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

The truce largely halted more than 15 months of fighting in Gaza, where virtually the entire population was displaced by Israel's relentless military campaign in response to Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack.

It also enabled the flow of vital food, shelter and medical assistance into Gaza.

After Israel turned the pipeline off again, UN rights experts accused the government of "weaponising starvation".

Displaced Palestinian

widow Haneen al-Dura told AFP she and her children spent a month and a half living on the street "among dogs and rats" before receiving a tent.

"As the family's provider, it was distressing and I couldn't sleep at all during the night," she said.

'Last warning'

Last week, US President Donald Trump threatened further destruction of Gaza if all remaining hostages are not released, issuing what he called a "last warning" to Hamas leaders.

He also warned of repercussions for all Gazans, telling them: "A beautiful future awaits, but not if you hold Hostages. If you do, you are DEAD!"

Hamas said Trump's threats would only encourage Israel to ignore the terms of their truce.

The Trump administration has also confirmed the start of unprecedented direct talks with Hamas, which Washington had previously refused contact with

since designating it a terrorist organisation in 1997.

Of the 251 hostages taken by the Palestinian militants, 58 remain in Gaza, including five Americans. Four American captives have been confirmed dead, while one, Edan Alexander, is believed to be alive.

The White House said Trump met with eight of the freed captives, who "expressed gratitude" for his efforts to bring them home.

The US president previously floated a widely condemned plan to relocate Palestinians from Gaza, prompting Arab leaders to offer an alternative. Their proposal would see Gaza's reconstruction financed through a trust fund, with the Palestinian Authority returning to govern the territory.

"We need more discussion about it, but it's a good-faith first step," Steve Witkoff, Trump's Middle East envoy, told reporters in Washington in response to the plan.

Witkoff will be returning to the region this week

as he travels to Saudi Arabia for talks on the war in Ukraine.

At their regular weekend rally in Tel Aviv, families of Israeli hostages demanded the government fully implement the ceasefire.

"The war could resume in a week -- they have even picked a name for the operation," Einav Zangauker, the mother of Matan Zangauker, told the candle and poster-wielding crowd.

"The war won't bring the hostages back home, it will kill them."

Recently released hostages have also joined those beseeching Netanyahu to implement the ceasefire.

Hamas's attack resulted in the deaths of 1,218 people on the Israeli side, most of them civilians, according to official figures.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed at least 48,446 people in Gaza, the majority of them civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The UN considers these figures reliable.

6 die as Afghan camp roof collapses in Pakistan

KARACHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): At least six people, including women and children, lost their lives after the roof of their house collapsed in an Afghan camp on the outskirts of Karachi on Sunday, ARY News reported.

The incident occurred in the wee hours of Sunday at the Janjal Goth Afghan Camp in the Gulshan-e-Maymar area, as per ARY News.

According to police, four people were injured in the collapse. The affected family belonged to Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Authorities are currently investigating the cause



of the incident.

Meanwhile on Saturday, Pakistan's Ministry of Interior has asked Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, staying in Pakistan, to leave the country by March 31. The Afghan nationals will be deported from

April 1, the ministry said in a statement.

It was said in earlier reports that Pakistan was planning to evict all Afghans from the country but for the first time the Interior Ministry has officially confirmed the development. "Illegal

Foreigners Repatriation Program (IFRP) is being implemented since November 1, 2023. In continuation of the government's decision to repatriate all illegal foreigners, national leadership has now decided to also repatriate ACC holders," the interior ministry said in an official handout, as per ARY News.

"All illegal foreigners and ACC holders are advised to leave the country voluntarily before March 31, 2025; thereafter, deportation will commence from April 1, 2025," the statement added.

The interior minis-

try said that sufficient time had already been granted for their dignified return. "It is emphasised that no one will be maltreated during the repatriation process and arrangements for food and healthcare for returning foreigners have also been put in place," ARY News quoted the Interior Ministry.

Over 8,00,000 Afghans living in Pakistan illegally were repatriated to their country since Pakistan launched the campaign in November 2023. It is estimated that around 3 million Afghans still reside in Pakistan, ARY News reported.

LG condemns Kathua killings; orders thorough, transparent investigation



the perpetrators will be brought to book at the earliest.

Taking to micro-blogging site X (formerly Twitter), Office of LG J&K said: "I am shocked and saddened beyond words at the brutal killing of Varun Singh, Yogesh Singh and Darshan Singh of Kathua. In this hour of grief, I offer my deepest condolences to their families and friends".

"I have ordered a thorough and transparent investigation, and all the necessary support to the families will be provided. I assure the people that the perpetrators will be brought to book at the earliest. Justice will be ensured and accountability will be fixed," Office of LG J&K added on X.

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 9: Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today condemned killings of three youth in Kathua and expressed

deepest condolences to the victim families.

He said orders have been passed for thorough and transparent investigation into the incident, and assured

J&K Youth Congress Condemns Killing of Three Youth in Kathua, Criticizes Centre for Security Lapses

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: J&K Youth Congress General Secretary Anirudh Sawhney on Sunday in a statement strongly condemned the recent killing of three youth, including a child, in the Bani area of Kathua district by terrorists. Expressing deep sorrow over the tragic incident, Sawhney said that J&K Youth Congress demands a thorough investigation to ensure that the culprits are identified and brought to justice. He emphasized that such terror acts must not go unpunished and urged the authorities to take decisive action to prevent such tragedies in the future. He said that this is an extremely sad incident as well as one of great concern. The killing of innocent youth, including a child, highlights the deteriorating security situation and the growing number of such incidents in our region, he added. He also expressed his condolences to the family of the victims while speaking on the matter.

Sawhney criticized the central government for failing to ensure the safety of civilians in Jammu and Kashmir. He pointed out the alarming rise in terror



attacks across the Union Territory, stating that the government's inaction has allowed these incidents to become increasingly commonplace. We are seeing more and more civilian deaths, and this is not acceptable. The central government has failed in its fundamental duty to provide security to the common man, he remarked. He further accused the BJP-led government of neglecting the security situation, leading to a rise in fear and uncertainty among the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the issue, he added that the Youth Congress calls for an immediate reassessment of the security measures in place, stating that mere condemnations are not enough. We demand a concrete plan of action to curb terrorism and prevent further loss of innocent lives. "There must be a well-thought-out strategy to tackle these security threats.

The government cannot afford to remain passive while innocent people are being killed. Strong and effective measures need to be implemented on the ground to safeguard our people," he asserted. Sawhney also said that JKPYC calls upon law enforcement agencies to enhance intelligence operations and take proactive steps to counter terrorist activities in vulnerable areas.

The Youth Congress State General Secretary further stated that amid growing concerns over the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, where targeted killings have continued to claim innocent lives, people need reassurance in the form of action not words. The latest attack in Kathua has sent shockwaves across the region, with people demanding urgent action. He reiterated that the safety of civilians should be the top priority of the government and warned against political complacency in addressing security challenges. "People deserve to live without fear. The government must act decisively before more lives are lost to terror," he concluded.

NC committed to women empowerment, Says Farooq Abdullah

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: The Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) organised a grand convention on the occasion of International Women's Day, underscoring its enduring commitment to women's empowerment and active participation in societal development.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, President of JKNC and former Chief Minister, was the chief Guest. He emphasized the necessity for women to assert their rights and engage actively in societal roles. He called upon the administration to facilitate greater inclusion of women across various sectors and highlighted the importance of respecting women both within the family unit and the broader community.

Reflecting on his tenure as Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq recalled implementing a 50% reservation for women in medical colleges, illustrating his dedication to promoting gender equality in professional fields. He stressed that while policy initiatives are



essential, a fundamental shift in societal mindset is crucial for genuine women's empowerment. Encouraging women to step forward boldly, he assured them that with determination, they could overcome any injustice.

Remembering Madr-e-Meharban, Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah, Dr. Abdullah acknowledged her pivotal role in the socio-political movement of Jammu and Kashmir. He recounted how, during challenging times when his father, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, was impris

oned, Madr-e-Meharban courageously managed party affairs and championed the cause of women's rights and education, laying a strong foundation for future generations. Bimla Luthra, senior NC leader and former MLA, threw light on the hardships faced by the women of J&K due to the ineffective policies of previous governments, emphasizing the need for more robust support systems.

Sakina Ittoo, Minister for Health, Education and Social Welfare, highlighted initiatives

taken by the Omar Abdullah-led government for women's welfare, including free travel in government buses and enhancements in pending welfare schemes.

Nasir Aslam Wani, Senior JKNC Leader, pointed out the stagnation in development over the past decade and reiterated the current government's commitment to addressing the pressing issues of the people.

Ajay Sadhotra, Additional General Secretary, emphasized the party's dedication to progressive policies.

Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President, addressed the rising unemployment issue in J&K due to anti youth policies adopted by the previous government, highlighting the "Mission Yuva," an initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship among the youth. He encouraged young individuals to take full advantage of the schemes introduced by the Omar Abdullah government.

Mubarak Gul, former Speaker and Chief Whip

of the National Conference in the Assembly, addressed the gathering with a fervent appeal to remain vigilant against anti-national elements. He emphasized the importance of maintaining communal harmony and brotherhood, urging society to stand united in the face of divisive forces.

Ajaz Jan, MLA Poonch, called upon the youth to come forward and strengthen the hands of the Omar Abdullah-led government, emphasizing their crucial role in the region's development.

The convention concluded with a renewed pledge from the JKNC to continue its legacy of supporting and empowering women, ensuring they occupy their rightful place in society.

Among those who were present included Aftab Kaloo Hon'ble MLA Pahalgal, Shamshad Begum and Pooja Thakur, DDC Chairpersons, Vijay Lochan, Ayub Malik, Rakesh, Rajni Devi, Shammi Begum and Dilshad Malik.

Mehbooba Mufti, Sajad Lone condemn Kathua killings, urge authorities to bring culprits to justice

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 9 (Agencies): Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti and J&K Peoples' Conference (JKPC) president Sajad Gani Lone today condemned killings of three youth in Jammu & Kashmir's Kathua. The leaders urged authorities to bring real culprits to justice.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti in a post on X said: "The situation in Kathua is deeply alarming. In a short span of time nearly a dozen people from both the Muslim & Hindu communities have lost their lives. Five of them were allegedly chased by police and cow vigilantes which led to fatal accidents. Subsequently the bodies of two members of Hindu community were discovered followed by three more yesterday including the heartbreaking case of a fourteen year old".

"Tragically, while the police seem more focused on extracting

false confessions from victims like Makhan Din the real perpetrators are still at large. Approximately 30 individuals have been charged till date, under the PSA or UAPA often with scant or no evidence," she said on X.

She added, "There are indications that certain disruptive elements possibly operating both within & across the border maybe stoking communal tensions in this sensitive border district. The authorities must act swiftly yet judiciously to identify and bring the true culprits to justice ensuring that peace and communal harmony is maintained".

J&K Peoples' Conference (JKPC) president Sajad Gani Lone also condemned the incident.

"Condemn the killing of three persons in a Bhillawar. It is tragic that these senseless killings continue to persist. Hope the police hunts down the perpetrators. May they rest in peace," Lone said on X.

Tarigami urges Government to address growing issues in transport sector in J&K

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 9 (Agencies): CPI(M) leader and Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami, has urged the government to address the growing issues in the transport sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that there is a need for fair regulations, financial relief, and strict enforcement of rules to protect the livelihoods of taxi operators.

Addressing a convention of All Road transport workers union of Jammu Kashmir at Srinagar on Sunday, Tarigami, who is also the President of Centre of Indian Trade unions (CITU) J&K said a deputation had called him and put forth one of their biggest concerns, the operation of private vehicles as tourist taxis without commercial licenses.

He said this practice creates unfair competition for legitimate operators who pay heavy taxes and tolls.

Tarigami called for strict enforcement of licensing rules to prevent unauthorized operations.

He also demanded a review of excessive Airport parking and entry fees, which add to the financial burden of transporters.

"The lack of facilities for drivers at hotels and lodges, forcing them to sleep in vehicles after long shifts, is another serious issue. The government should ensure basic amenities for drivers at accommodations. Besides, authorities should regulate permit issuance to prevent market oversaturation and establish a fixed fare structure for tourist destinations to protect both tourists and operators from unnecessary

fare disputes," he said.

He also raised national-level transport concerns, demanding the rationalization of diesel prices, insurance premiums, and toll charges.

He criticized the mandatory vehicle scrapping policy and called for financial support to small transporters through government-backed loans.

"Authorities should also develop a government-controlled mobile application, similar to private companies, to protect drivers and commuters from exploitation. This app should address fare disputes and provide a grievance lodging system," he said.

He added that there is a need to strengthen State Transport Undertakings (STUs) by restoring funding and ensuring government support for electric bus procurement.

From Page No:1

In J&K, Rs 100 crore to be spent to boost inland connectivity over rivers Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi

while encouraging collaboration with the State governments.

Kathua Killings | Union Minister points to terror angle, Home Secretary reviews situation

"I want to tell those who attacked me not to vitiate the atmosphere. Since the day they (trio) went missing, I had been raising my voice for them and was also in touch with police," he told PTI.

The MLA said he was attacked because he had also raised the issue of Makhan Din, a 25-year-old Gujjar youth from Billa

war, who ended his life by consuming insecticide last month, alleging police torture over his suspected links with terrorists.

"Is speaking for a Muslim a sin? Should we not raise the voice for Muslims? Anyone raising his voice for Muslims becomes a terrorist," he said.

He said he will not be cowed down and will "continue to raise my voice for the victims, irrespective of their religion." A shutdown was observed in Billa and adjoining areas on Sunday to protest the killing of the three civilians.

"This is a clear case of target killings by terrorists, engulfing the peaceful area in fear and anger... we want the government to intensify the anti-terrorist operations in the forests to neutralise the terrorists hiding in the forests for the last one year," local BJP leader Gopal Krishan, who led a group of protesters at Phinter chowk, said.

He said the people will not allow the terrorists to succeed in their designs and harm the communal harmony by carrying out selective killings.

Senior BJP leader and Billa MLA Satish Sharma, who visited the deceased family, said it is premature to say who killed the three

civilians.

"It is a matter of investigation as nobody has seen how they were killed. Police are looking in all aspects, including the terror angle, in the case," he said, adding a clear picture will emerge once the postmortem report comes.

The Congress demanded a high-level investigation to clear the apprehensions of locals and overcome the current situation of "great fear" and sense of insecurity in the entire belt.

Babu Rampaul hails Omar Govt's budget as 'People-Friendly'

government for delivering on their promises and formulating a budget that prioritizes the welfare of the people. He expressed confidence that the initiatives proposed in the budget would bring significant improvements in governance and development across J&K.

The budget presentation has generated a positive response from various quarters, with many experts and political leaders acknowledging its potential

to transform key sectors of the region. The coming days will reveal how the proposed measures are implemented and their impact on the ground.

Frequent Digital banking disruptions irk J&K Bank customers in Kashmir

ongoing technical issues but clarified that they are part of a major system upgrade. "The disruptions occur only during night hours, from 1 AM to 3 AM, and customers were informed in advance," the official stated. The upgrade is expected to last a week, aiming to enhance digital banking services before Eid.

However, many customers have refuted the bank's claim, stating that they are experiencing service outages even during the day. "It's not just a night-time issue. The M-Pay Delight app hardly works, and online banking transactions fail frequently," said a customer from Srinagar.

The bank official also pointed to poor mobile and internet connec-

tivity in certain areas as a possible reason for difficulties in accessing services. "From our end, there is no disruption during the daytime. However, customers in areas with weak internet coverage may face issues," he added.

As Eid approaches, customers are urging the bank to resolve these issues swiftly, ensuring a smooth banking experience for everyone.

Khelo India Winter Games 2025 commence amid multi-layered security in Gulmarg

place. He expressed optimism that the event will be conducted successfully like the previous editions.

To ensure a smooth flow of traffic and hassle-free movement of participants and visitors, Baramulla Police, Traffic Department as well as local administration have already devised a traffic management plan.

It is noteworthy that, the mega

sporting event, initially scheduled from February 22 to 25, had to be put on hold as key ski slopes at Affarwat and Bowl lacked sufficient snow, making it impossible to conduct skiing and other competitive games.

Around 800 participants, including 650 technical staff, delegates, and local athletes, are competing across four disciplines, including alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, ski mountaineering, and snowboarding.

It may be recalled that the first leg of the games was successfully held in Ladakh from January 23 to 27, where ice hockey and ice skating events took place at NDS Sports Complex and Guphuk Pond.

MeT predicts week long wet spell from Monday over J&K

the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday. This was 1.1°C below the average for the place during this period of the season.

The tourist resort of Pahalgal in south Kashmir was the coldest place with a low of -2.7°C, ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir at -2.4°C, and Kupwara -0.4°C, the MeT office said.

New Income Tax Bill defines virtual digital space for searches, seizures

Sources said the new provision under Section 247 of the I-T Bill to override the access code of a virtual digital space is "only the reiteration of the already existing provision in a simpler language".

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): The new Income-tax Bill proposes to give powers to tax officers to access social media and other digital accounts including online investment, trading and banking accounts, as well as email servers. The new I-T bill has defined "virtual digital space" in the powers to call for information by income tax authorities during surveys, searches and seizures.

It defines a virtual digital space as "any digital realm that allows users to interact, communicate and perform activities" through computer technology.

Sources said the new provision under Section 247 of the I-T Bill to override the access code of a virtual digital space is "only the reiteration of the already existing provision in a

simpler language". "No additional power has been given to the tax authorities," a source said.

Similar powers for searches and seizures are currently there under Section 132 of the existing I-T Act, 1961, wherein authorities can inspect and seize books of accounts and other documents in the form of electronic records. However, the new bill specifically outlines virtual digital spaces.

As per Section 132 of the I-T Act, tax authorities can enter and search "any building, place, vessel, vehicle or aircraft" where persons are suspected to have kept books of account, other documents, money, bullion, jewellery or other valuable articles to evade tax. Authorities have the powers to break open doors, locks, safes, other reposi-

tories, and seize any such suspected books of account, other documents, money, bullion, jewellery or other valuable articles.

Now, the new bill — tabled in the Lok Sabha last month — explicitly includes "virtual digital space" under the ambit of such searches and seizures as it attempts to define books of accounts and other valuable items in physical or electronic form. This also allows tax authorities to override the access code to any said computer system, or virtual digital space, where the access code thereof is not available.

"The authorised officer may, during the course of any search or seizure, examine on oath any person who is found to be in possession or control or access holder of any computer systems, books of account, other

documents or asset, or any other person who is present in the premises or is being searched," the bill states.

Sources said that under Section 132 of the existing I-T Act, tax authorities have been seizing electronic devices such as desktops and hard disks, and collecting evidence from communication platforms such as emails, WhatsApp, and Telegram. "These evidence are not only essential to prove the tax evasion in the court of law but also computing the amount of tax evasion," a source said.

The provision of 132(1) (iib) via Finance Act, 2002 has mandated the person in possession or control of any books of account or other documents maintained in the form of electronic record to facilitate the authorised officer's access

to such documents, sources said. This facilitation includes providing necessary credentials required for access as well as seizure of such documents, they added. Section 132 provides powers to designated tax authorities to conduct search and seizure operations based on information of tax evasion.

The Income-tax Bill, 2025, which was introduced in Lok Sabha last month, intends to simplify India's six-decade-old structure of direct taxation by streamlining provisions, removing obsolete references, and creating a crisper and simpler legal framework. The proposed bill will be reviewed by the Select Committee of Parliament. Once passed by Parliament, the new law will likely come into effect on April 1, 2026.

BPCL to float tender for 1 mbd crude oil from US

As per a report citing sources, the move aims to secure cheaper oil from the world's top producer



MUMBAI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) is set to float a four-month tender next week to buy 1 million barrels of US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude every month.

As per a report citing sources, the move aims to secure cheaper oil from the world's top producer. The tender, which will be awarded for four months, is expected to begin deliveries in May or June 2025. This is not the first time BPCL has purchased US oil; the company awarded

a similar tender to European major BP last year. BPCL often buys US oil for its three refineries, which have a combined capacity to process 706,000 barrels of crude a day. India's imports of US oil reached their highest level in over two years last month, as refiners sought alternative supplies after tighter US sanctions on Russian producers and shippers.

The US imposed fresh sanctions on Russian oil producers Gazprom Neft and Surgutneftegas, along with nearly

180 tankers from Russia's so-called shadow fleet, on January 10. The move aims to reduce Moscow's revenue, which Washington claims is being used to finance the war against Ukraine. Under these sanctions, Russian oil cargoes had to be shipped by February 27 to comply with the new restrictions.

As per cargo tracking agency Vortexa, India's crude oil imports from Russia fell marginally to 1.41 million barrels per day (mbd) in February 2025, down from 1.49 mbd in January 2024. The country's total crude imports in February stood at 4.77 mbd, remaining largely unchanged from 4.76 mbd in January. Vortexa anticipates a further decline in Russian crude imports in March and April, citing sanctions imposed by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on January 10.

Parkinson's cases to surge by 112% by 2050, ageing population fuels rise

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): More than 2.5 crore people in the world could be living with Parkinson's disease by 2050, largely driven by an ageing population, according to a study.

Researchers, including those from the Capital Medical University, China, said the projected numbers are a 112 per cent increase from cases in 2021.

Further, cases of the neurological disorder from South Asia are predicted to be the second highest at 68 lakh, following East Asia (over 1 crore), the findings, published in The British Medical Journal, suggested.

The researchers said the estimates could "serve as an aid in promoting health research, informing policy decisions and allocating resources".

Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder in which one's movements and balance are steadily affected. The condition can also cause problems with speech, memory and behaviour. Symptoms include tremors in parts of the body and muscle stiffness.

The researchers analysed data from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2021 to estimate prevalence of Parkinson's disease during 2022-2050 across

195 countries and territories and factors driving cases of the disease.

The authors wrote, "25.2 million people (are) projected to be living with Parkinson's disease worldwide in 2050, representing a 112 per cent increase from 2021." Population ageing is predicted to be the main factor driving nearly 90 per cent of the projected cases, they said.

Further, the western Sub-Saharan Africa could be expected to see the most pronounced spike of almost 300 per cent in the cases of the disease, even as East and South Asia could see the highest case numbers.

The men-to-women ratio in Parkinson's cases could increase from 1.46 in 2021 to 1.64 in 2050 the world over, the authors said.

They also projected that increasing physical activity could reduce the future number of Parkinson's disease cases.

The results point to an urgent need for "future research to focus on the development of novel drugs, gene engineering techniques, and cell replacement therapies that are aimed at modifying the course of the disease and improving patients' quality of life," the authors said.

AI can help clinicians personalise treatment for Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Study

WASHINGTON DC, Mar 9 (Agencies): Individuals with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), a condition characterized by daily excessive worry lasting at least six months, have a high relapse rate even after receiving treatment.

Artificial intelligence (AI) models may help clinicians identify factors to predict long-term recovery and better personalize patient treatment, according to researchers.

The researchers used a form of AI called machine learning to analyze more than 80 baseline factors -- ranging from psychological and sociodemographic to health and lifestyle variables -- for 126 anonymized individuals diagnosed with GAD. The data came from the



U.S. National Institutes of Health's longitudinal study called Midlife in the United States, which samples health data from continental U.S. residents aged 25 to 74 who were first interviewed in 1995-96.

The machine learning models identified 11 variables that appear most important for pre-

dicting recovery and nonrecovery, with up to 72% accuracy, at the end of a nine-year period. The researchers published their findings in the March issue of the Journal of Anxiety Disorders.

"Prior research has shown a very high relapse rate in GAD, and there's also limited accuracy in clinician

judgment in predicting long-term outcomes," said Candice Basterfield, lead study author and doctoral candidate at Penn State.

"This research suggests that machine learning models show good accuracy, sensitivity and specificity in predicting who will and won't recover from GAD. These predictors of recovery could be really important for helping to create evidence-based, personalized treatments for long-term recovery."

The researchers found that higher education level, older age, more friend support, higher waist-to-hip-ratio and higher positive affect, or feeling more cheerful, were most important to recovery, in that order.

Meanwhile, depressed affect, daily discrimina-

tion, greater number of sessions with a mental health professional in the past 12 months and greater number of visits to medical doctors in the past 12 months proved most important to predicting nonrecovery.

The researchers validated the model findings by comparing the machine learning predictions to the MIDUS data, finding that the predicted recovery variables tracked with the 95 participants who showed no GAD symptoms at the end of the nine-year period.

The findings suggest that clinicians can use AI to identify these variables and personalize treatment for GAD patients -- especially those with compounding diagnoses, according to the researchers.

Brain activity during sleep could predict recovery of patients with brain injury

76 per cent of the patients with sleep spindles and cognitive motor dissociation showed evidence of consciousness by the time they were discharged from hospital, find researchers

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Sleep spindles or brain activity occurring during the non-dreaming stage of sleep could help predict recovery of consciousness and independent functioning in those who suffered a brain injury, a new study has suggested.

Researchers from Columbia University and the NewYork-Presbyterian healthcare system, US, said the studies have shown that unresponsive patients with a recent brain injury can possess a degree of consciousness hidden from families and doctors.

For the study, published in the journal Nature Medicine, the researchers looked through electroencephalograms or EEG recordings of brain

activity in 226 comatose patients taken over a night.

"The electrical activity during sleep looks relatively chaotic and then occasionally in some patients, these (bursts of) very organised, fast frequencies appear," said lead researcher Jan Claassen, an associate professor of neurology at Columbia University.

These bursts of brain activity, called sleep spindles, often preceded the detection of cognitive motor dissociation—in which a patient appears unresponsive but shows evidence of brain activity—the return of consciousness and long-term recovery, the researchers said.

The patients with sleep spindles and cognitive motor dissociation were more likely to recover consciousness



and functional independence, the team said.

"Spindles happen normally during sleep and (the patients are) showing some level of organisation in the brain, suggesting circuits between the thalamus and cortex -- (brain regions) needed for consciousness are intact," Claassen said.

In the study, sleep spindles were seen in "approximately every third behaviorally unre-

sponsive patient after acute brain injury, frequently precede detection of CMD and are a promising complementary predictor for recovery of consciousness and functional independence".

The researchers said that 76 per cent of the patients with sleep spindles and cognitive motor dissociation showed evidence of consciousness by the time they

were discharged from the hospital.

A year later, 41 per cent of these patients had recovered neurological function, with either minor deficits or a moderate disability, and were able to care for themselves during the day, the team said.

They acknowledged the findings do not prove that inducing sleep spindles would translate to better outcomes, but raise the possibility that improving a patient's sleep may promote recovery.

Further, 19 of 139 patients in the study who did not show sleep spindles or signs of cognitive motor dissociation did recover consciousness, suggesting that other information will likely be needed to make more accurate predictions, the team said.

Regular eye-testing essential to prevent glaucoma

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness, often called "the sneak thief of sight" because it progresses without symptoms, and once vision is lost, it is permanent.

As much as 40% of vision can be lost without a person noticing. Globally, over 80 million people have glaucoma, and half of them are unaware of it.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 4.5 million people are blind due to glaucoma. In India, approximately 12 million people suffer from glaucoma, and 1.5 million are blind due to it, making it the third most common cause of blindness.

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning. Although the most common forms

primarily affect middle-aged and elderly individuals, glaucoma can occur at any age.

Vision loss is caused by damage to the optic nerve, which functions like an electric cable with over a million wires, responsible for transmitting images from the eye to the brain. Raised intraocular pressure (IOP) is the most common factor responsible for this damage.

There are two main types of glaucoma: primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG) and angle-closure glaucoma, both marked by increased IOP. In cases where optic nerve damage occurs despite normal IOP, it is referred to as normal tension glaucoma.

Secondary glaucoma happens when another disease causes or contributes to increased eye pressure, resulting in optic nerve damage

and vision loss.

Some signs of glaucoma include unexplained headaches or eyeaches, frequent changes in glasses prescriptions, halos around lights, eye pain or redness, and loss of peripheral vision.

The best way to protect your sight from glaucoma is through regular eye exams. Early detection is crucial, as treatment can begin immediately to slow or prevent further vision loss. Medications such as anti-glaucoma drugs or surgery can help manage the condition.

World Glaucoma Week is celebrated annually from March 9-15 to raise awareness about this silent disease. This year, the theme "Uniting for a Glaucoma-free World" aims to educate people about glaucoma and the importance of early detection and treatment.

Final jump over: Men in Blue aim for title glory against New Zealand in Champions Trophy final

Kiwis eye redemption after last defeat | Spinners hold the key

DUBAI, Mar 9 (Agencies): The Indian team will be entering the Champions Trophy final against New Zealand surely after forgetting whatever happened in the past, on today, at Dubai International Stadium. The Indian team, surrounded with stalwarts, has an unbeaten run, so far, in the tournament. However, the 'undefeated' tag hardly matters now, as the Kiwis are known to reverse the trends to their favour under any given condition on the field.

During their last faceoff, New Zealand suffered a 44-run defeat against India—all thanks to the heroics of 'mystery' spinner Varun Chakravarthi, whom the Black Caps were facing for the very first time. However, after the loss, New Zealand rose up to the occasion and defeated South Africa in a high scoring match to enter the final. However, on Sunday, Chakravarthi and the spinning trio of Axar Patel, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav—will be carrying a big responsibility to clear the 'last' examination with distinction. India has always found the resilient Kiwis a tall mountain to surmount, as the latter hold a 10-6 lead over them across all the ICC tournaments. Perhaps, New Zealand is the 'worst' enemy for a final against India—specially after what the fans went through during India's exit from the 2019 ODI World Cup semifinals.

Both familiar to conditions
Notably, it will be for the first time in the ongoing showpiece



event, the Indian team will be facing any opponent who has already played at the same venue.

There's a big debate over the Indian team having the advantage of playing all their matches at the same venue (Dubai), while other teams travelled from or within Pakistan for their fixtures.

The Black Caps has already tasted the conditions in Dubai just six days ago, when they lost at the same venue. Meanwhile, given the current run of the Indian spinners, India is most likely to retain the four spinners and two pacers combination for the championship match.

Chakravarthi and Yadav, the right-hand and left-hand wrist-spinners, have already bamboozled the opponents like illusionists, while Jadeja and Patel have been the metronomes in this Indian bowling unit in the middle overs.

However, a lot will also depend on Mohammed Shami—who faced some injury issues in the last matches—to head the pace attack with Hardik Pandya. If the final is going to be played on the surface used for the India and Pakistan match, then those four bowlers can put New Zealand in a spin.

If Indian spinners are expecting some help, Kiwis will also be confident in skipper Mitchell Santner, Michael Bracewell, Rachin Ravindra and Glenn Phillips. On other hand, their biggest hopes of countering these spinners will be Kane Williamson and Ravindra, who are the most competent batters against slow bowlers in their line-up, after Tom Latham.

Stalwarts in spotlight
Coming so close to the title, the Indian team will surely not only be relying on their bowlers... a lot will depend upon Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma—the

two pillars of Indian cricket – to led the side. A fine performance by both icons will reduce the burden on the middle-order batters—who have been doing the heavy lifting thus far. The likes of Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Pandya and Patel, have proved their worth, so far, in style. While knocks of substance from Kohli and Rohit will add gravitas to the occasion, India would not want to leave it to the veterans alone.

Pitch and conditions
According to multiple reports, the pitch for the final has already been selected. This pitch was previously used during India's group-stage clash between India and Pakistan. Notably, the Dubai International Cricket Stadium has 10 pitches curated by the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB), offering varied conditions for different matches. However, the match was played 14 days ago.

Teams
India: Rohit Sharma (c), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Harshit Rana, Mohd. Shami, Arshdeep Singh, Ravindra Jadeja, Varun Chakravarthi.

New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (c), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Nathan Smith, Kane Williamson, Will Young, Jacob Duffy.

Bringing in 'mystery' spinner Varun Chakravarthi was a masterstroke: Shikhar Dhawan

DUBAI, Mar 9 (Agencies): Former star Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan has appreciated the inclusion of India's 'mystery' spinner Varun Chakravarthi to the squad, despite the team winning two matches without his presence.

"I really like the shift they made to bring in an extra spinner, Varun Chakravarthi. That has been a game-changer and was a great call by the captain and coaches," said Dhawan.

"He has made India a more balanced side, especially on the slow and turning pitches. It's very hard to pick the ball from Varun's hand, and that has given India a real edge. That's why they have started dominating more," Dhawan added.

Virat Kohli yet again showed his class in the semi-final win over Australia. Another key player has been Mohammed Shami, who has looked very impressive on his return to international cricket after injury, he said.

"Playing in a big tournament like this, there is always pressure and you need your experienced players to soak that up, which he has

done. When I met him over there, he was working on his fitness, and his discipline and commitment levels towards the game are exceptional. When you put that much work in, you deserve results," Dhawan added.

But the most impressive thing has been that the whole team is doing well, not just one or two individuals. Shreyas Iyer, Shubman Gill, Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul are playing amazing cricket, cherished Dhawan.

"To win the Champions Trophy final should be a fantastic match as New Zealand are also a great team. Their spinners have excelled well and captain Mitchell Santner has been a great player for many years. He always chips in with bat and ball, and the way he varies his pace makes him a very intelligent bowler," Dhawan said.

"Everyone is playing his role nicely in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah. Bumrah is the best bowler in the world and it's amazing to see how India made it to the final without him in such a competitive tournament. Other bowlers have stepped up in his place and the spinners have really dominated. That has given India an

extra edge," said the former Indian cricketer.

"Personally, I think India will win. I believe Indian spinners will be too strong for New Zealand's batters, who will find it hard to face Varun Chakravarthi -- he will play a major role. Our batting unit is doing very well. The whole team is playing good cricket and I think -- and hope -- that will continue," said Dhawan.

He also evaluated New Zealand as a tough opponent for the final. "The Champions Trophy final should be a fantastic match as New Zealand are also a great team. Their spinners have excelled well and captain Mitchell Santner has been a great player for many years. He always chips in with bat and ball, and the way he varies his pace makes him a very intelligent bowler," Dhawan said.

"With the bat, Kane Williamson, who I have played alongside in the past, remains a great cricketer. His technique is amazing, as is his adaptability on the pitch and the way he soaks up pressure. That's why his consistency is so good," the former Indian opener signed off.

Sourav Ganguly shuts down Rohit Sharma retirement chatter with blunt reminder

NEW DELHI, Mar 9 (Agencies): As the talks over Rohit Sharma's potential retirement surround India's Champions Trophy 2025 final against New Zealand, certain reports have highlighted what could be in store for cricket fans all across the world on Sunday. Rohit didn't even attend the press conference on the eve of the Champions Trophy final, deciding to send vice-captain Shubman Gill instead.

The move further intensified the rumours, though Gill confirmed that no such discussion has taken place, yet. When former India captain Sourav Ganguly was asked about his views on the subject, he shut down the topic.

Ganguly, in a chat with agency, said that Rohit's



future shouldn't even be a matter of discussion ahead of the final. Considering how well he played in last year's T20 World Cup and the intent he has shown in the ongoing Champions Trophy, he remains the right man to lead the national team.

"Why is there talk of Rohit Sharma's retirement? Why is this even a question? He won the World Cup just a few months ago. I don't know what the selectors

are thinking, but Rohit is playing very well.

India is far better than New Zealand. India played in the 2023 World Cup finals, won the 2024 T20 World Cup, and they are still unbeaten in this Champions Trophy. The same team will play," Ganguly said.

As for the final, Ganguly strongly feels that India are the absolute favourites to beat the Kiwis in the final and clinch the trophy.

The form of Indian batters - Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, etc. - has instilled plenty of belief in Ganguly ahead of the final.

"India is the favourite. India is in good form. Everyone is in very good form. Virat Kohli is there, Shubman Gill is there, Shreyas Iyer, Rohit Sharma, and KL Rahul - everyone is in good shape. It will be a good match. India's bowling lineup is very good. Anyone can win, anyone can lose," Ganguly said.

A report in agency head earlier said that the national selection committee chief Ajit Agarkar is scheduled to have a chat on the topic with Rohit after the conclusion of the tournament.

CT 2025: Five battles that could decide India-New Zealand final outcome



DUBAI, Mar 9 (Agencies): The ICC Champions Trophy title clash between India and New Zealand at Dubai promises to be an epic sequel to their final in the same competition 25 years back and a trophy win or loss could decide the stories of many stars across both sides for years to come.

Many India-New Zealand clashes over the years have been decided by some massive factors: Be it a run chase masterclass from Virat Kohli, supporting acts from KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer etc, Kiwi pacers Matt Henry and Trent Boult running through Indian top order and making the scorecard look like a football scoreline or recently, the domination of both side's spinners.

This Champions Trophy final would be no different. At its best, cricket itself is cinema and has plenty of sub-plots that decide the fate of a match.

Here are some key battles that will define this game:

-Absence or presence of Matt Henry

The Kiwi pace spearhead has been the leading wicket-taker in the competition so far with 10 scalps, averaging 16.70 and having a five-wicket haul to his name.

Henry has troubled India a lot in past, most notably during the 2019 World Cup semifinal where early scalps of KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma pushed India on backfoot during a 239-run chase and contributed to their loss.

With 21 wickets in 11 matches at an average of 21 and a five-wicket haul to his name, Henry has terro-

rised Indian batting with his pace, line and length.

If he stays absent due to a shoulder injury sustained in the semifinals, Kiwis will still have capable seamers in Kyle Jamieson and Will O'Rourke. However, O'Rourke is not a new ball regular and could be ineffective against Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill, each dismissed twice by Henry in ODIs and averaging 29 and 31.50 against him. Henry has also dismissed Virat Kohli twice and has enjoyed upper hand against KL Rahul, India's now designated number six.

Jacob Duffy and all-rounder Nathan Smith, two backups, are also a notch below Henry and inexperienced.

If Henry stays, problems could follow for India. Or else, expect Rohit-Gill to feast on other pacers freely.

-India middle order vs Mitchell Santner-Michael Bracewell

Santner (7 scalps at an average of 27.71) and Bracewell (6 scalps at an average of 28.83) have done pretty well in CT 2025 so far, despite playing majority of their matches on Pakistan's batting-friendly surfaces.

How they squeeze out Indian middle order would be a key. Santner has 16 scalps in 10 ODIs this year at an economy of 4.48. He also troubled India during Pune Test last year on a slow, sluggish wicket, looting 13 wickets.

As per Wisden, Since 2023, he has dismissed Virat and KL twice each, giving just 37 and 2 runs against him. While Rohit and Gill have made a meal out of him with strike rates of 125 and 116.6

respectively, scoring in Dubai would be much tougher.

Bracewell has slipped under the radar with 12 ODI scalps this year at an economy rate of 4.36.

How Santner and co deal with India's ODI engine, i.e, Virat, Shreyas and KL Rahul, who have perfected the 50-over template with a mix of strike rotation and odd boundaries, would be interesting.

-Rachin Ravindra vs India
The left-hander is in rich vein of form, having made 226 runs and two centuries in this CT. His only failure came in Dubai against India, where he got out cheap to Hardik Pandya for six runs.

While India has largely kept Ravindra silent, with 94 runs in three innings with best score of 75, he will still be a threat as an exceptional player of spin, showcasing his ability during 2023 World Cup in India.

Rachin has scored 489 runs against spin at an average of above 61 and a strike rate of above 112. His eight dismissals to spin have not stopped his free flowing game against them.

-Indian spinners vs Kiwi batters
Last time Kiwis were in Dubai, spinner Varun Chakravarthi, who was playing only his second ODI, dismantled Kiwis middle order during a run chase of 250 runs with figures of 5/42.

While Kiwis have acknowledged the threat of India's 'mystery spinner', he is not the only one waiting to spin a web. Three other spinners, Axar Patel, Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav, make it a threatening match-up for NZ.

During the last IND-NZ clash, NZ crawled from 44/1 to 93/2 between 11 to 25 overs, choking against Indian spin despite having Kane Williamson and Daryl Mitchell, two elite spin players at the crease. India bowled only one over of pace after sixth over and unleashed a spin choke on Kiwis, which they could do again.

-Fitness and fielding on a hot day
During the title clash, temperature is expected to reach 34-degree celsius. Both sides feature some of the fittest players in the world. How they cope with this heat while fielding, rotating strike, without any cramping, would be a crucial part of this match.

Mohun Bagan clinch League Shield with victory over FC Goa

KOLKATA, Mar 9 (Agencies): Mohun Bagan Super Giant remained unbeaten at home with a 2-0 win over FC Goa in their Indian Super League (ISL) match here.

It was a gripping affair with both teams getting a flurry of chances. However, the Mariners secured their 17th win of the season, courtesy of an own goal from Boris Singh in the 62nd minute and a late strike from Greg Stewart (90+4).

With this victory, they remained unbeaten at home this season throughout the league phase. They also mustered 56 points this season, which is the most in a single ISL campaign.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant were off the blocks pretty quickly as they make several inroads into FC Goa's defensive third early on in the game. Both Greg Stewart and Dimitrios Petratos had an opportunity to put them ahead in the game within the first 10 minutes.

However, FC Goa almost caught the opposition off-guard on a

fast break when Rowlin Borges released Borja Herrera in space with a pinpoint long ball. The Spaniard found Iker Guarrotxena in company and played the ball in behind. However the latter's attempt was way off target.

Minutes later, Udanta Singh made a surging run down the left channel but Tom Aldred was in position to thwart the danger.

While the hosts started brightly, FC Goa grew into the game as they had more meaningful chances. Guarrotxena kept the Mohun Bagan Super Giant defenders on their toes with his exceptional movement. He came close to scoring on a couple of occasions but Aldred and others did enough to keep the scores level.

In the 31st minute, Borja tried his luck from distance but Dheeraj Singh Moirangthem in goal punched away the danger.

In the 37th minute, a similar sequence happened again, this time from a free-kick but Dheeraj did his best to keep out Borja's

attempt, and the ball was later cleared by the defence.

Early in the second period, Udanta made a sensational move down the left flank but was recklessly stopped by Asish Rai, who also received a yellow card for the infringement. Later, Jose Molina replaced him with Dippendu Biswas in the 57th minute.

MBSG eventually took the lead in the 62nd minute, courtesy of errors from Boris Singh and Hrithik Tiwari. The duo had some miscommunication as Boris' headed ball bounced into the net leaving Hrithik wrong-footed.

After the goal, the hosts became even more dominant as Liston Colaco and Stewart came close to scoring in quick succession. Later, Jason Cummings and Dejan Drazic were introduced by their respective coaches after the drinks break.

The final phase of the game saw the MBSG playing percentage football as they had already secured the lead.

BJP's PoJK narrative a smokescreen for electoral gains: SOS Int'l 'Stop deceiving 12 lakh displaced people; political drama won't solve our crisis': Chuni



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: The SOS International, a leading organisation spearheading the struggle for the rights and welfare of over 12 lakh displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the ruling BJP at the Centre for exploiting the community for electoral gains.

It also warned the BJP leadership against further playing with the sentiments of PoJK displaced persons for political advantage, stating, "The BJP should refrain from this deceit, or else our people will not forgive them. We will not allow ourselves to be used as mere vote banks anymore."

Addressing a press conference here, Rajiv Chuni, Chairman of SOS International, expressed deep concern over the neglect of PoJK refugees and criticized the BJP for discussing the reclamation of PoJK while ignoring the hardships endured by those displaced due to Pakistani aggression in 1947 in Mirpur, Muzaffarabad, and Poonch districts. He accused the BJP

of enacting a "political drama" on various platforms, including seminars and discussions, on PoJK, without acknowledging the plight of the affected people. "Not even a word of sympathy has been expressed by BJP leaders regarding the miseries of PoJK displaced persons, yet they make loud declarations about reclaiming PoJK from Pakistan," he said.

Chuni claimed that the BJP government has been trying to shift the narrative to focus solely on reclaiming PoJK, not for national interest but for political gains to win elections. "Our destruction and devastation began after 2014 when the BJP took over the reins of power. Whatever hopes we had were systematically crushed," he said while accusing the government of using PoJK as an "electoral strategy" rather than making genuine efforts.

"The unfortunate reality is that there is no concrete plan with the Government of India to reclaim these areas; instead, this rhetoric is being pushed through seminars as a political gimmick for elections," he said. He further strongly

condemned the BJP for exploiting the emotions of over 12 lakh PoJK displaced persons, 80 percent of whom are living below the poverty line. "This is a blatant case of deception and vote-bank politics. The BJP should be ashamed of using our miseries for political mileage while showing no real concern for our rehabilitation," he stated.

Despite repeated pleas, Mr Chuni said, the government has failed to ensure proper rehabilitation of PoJK displaced persons. He reminded that before the Modi government took office, a rehabilitation package was announced but has yet to be implemented even after 11 years of BJP rule at the Centre.

"They made a promise in 2015, assuring us that it would be fulfilled in three months. To this day, nothing has been done," he said while pointing out the stark contrast in the treatment of PoJK displaced persons and Valley Migrants.

He said that while Valley Migrants displaced in 1989 received relief, ration, cash assistance, income tax relief, housing, and free electricity, PoJK refugees

are still deprived of these basic necessities.

"Why are our people still living in camps? Why are small landholdings given for agricultural purposes being taken away today? This is a conspiracy being hatched to destroy our community," he alleged.

The SOS International Chairman said that political empowerment was crucial for the welfare of PoJK displaced persons. "Our people, who were displaced from Poonch, Mirpur, and Muzaffarabad, have never been allowed to elect their own representatives. Even today, 24 seats meant for PoJK remain vacant in the legislative assembly," he said while criticizing the ruling government for its failure to grant representation to the community despite the constitutional responsibility to do so.

Chuni also questioned why the government has not granted at least eight seats to PoJK displaced persons, a demand long endorsed by the Wadhwa Committee, Parliamentary Committees, and even the Delimitation Committee. "The Valley Migrants were given representation in the form of two seats in haste, despite

Kashmir being part of India. It is hard to say that our territorial constituencies are still under illegal Pakistani occupation," he said.

He further slammed the BJP for appointing individuals with no concerns to PoJK to the single reserved assembly seat. "This seat is apolitical and should not be controlled by a political party. Even some BJP MLAs from the PoJK community remain silent on our plight. Another political nomination will make no difference. We believe that it is only an attempt to suppress our voice," he said.

Chuni took on the BJP for failing to introduce any meaningful rehabilitation scheme for PoJK refugees despite making promises in its 2014 manifesto.

"The party announced the Tika Lal Taploo rehabilitation scheme for Valley Migrants, but there is no similar scheme for PoJK displaced persons. If they truly cared, they could have announced a scheme in the name of Justice R. P. Sethi whose son's name is being projected for the single seat reserved for PoJK refugees, but they didn't. All they want is our votes," he said.

Prominent among those who attended the press conference were Prof N N Sharma, V K Datta, Bhai Ram Singh, Ved Raj Bali, Sujan Singh, Dalip Singh Chib, Jagjit Singh, Dalip Sharma and Dharamvir Gupta.

AAVRAN - A Unit of LMD Fashion Boutique Inaugurated in Jammu

Advocate Ishant Gupta Praises Women Entrepreneurship and PM Modi's Vision for Self-Reliance

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: AAVRAN - A Unit of LMD Fashion Boutique was inaugurated today at Opp. Karan Bagh Gate, Gadigarh, near Airport Satwari, Jammu. The boutique, which offers ladies' garments, artificial jewelry, and kids' clothing, was inaugurated by Advocate Ishant Gupta, State IT Head, BJP J&K.

Advocate Ishant Gupta congratulated Laxmi, the owner of AAVRAN, and appreciated her efforts in starting a new business. He said that women entrepreneurs like her are a true inspiration and play a big role in building a self-reliant India.



"This initiative reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', where women are encouraged to start their own businesses and contribute to the economy. The BJP government has always supported women's empowerment, and today's event is a great example of that," said Advocate Ishant Gupta.

The inauguration took place during International Women's Day Week, making it even more special. Advocate Ishant Gupta emphasized that women are the backbone of society and their success leads to the progress of the nation.

Many well-wishers and supporters attended the event and wished Laxmi success in her new venture.

Udhampur District host 23rd Sub-Junior U.T. Kabaddi Championship for Boys & Girls at Indoor Subash Stadium, Udhampur



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 9: General Secretary of Jammu & Kashmir Amateur Kabaddi Association Mr. Kuldeep Kumar Gupta told Udhampur District Kabaddi Association will host 23rd Sub-Junior U.T. Kabaddi Championship for Boys & Girls section from 15th March to 17th March 2025 at Indoor Subash Sta-

dium, Udhampur under the banner of Jammu & Kashmir Amateur Kabaddi Association and under the aegis of Jammu & Kashmir sports Council.

All the affiliated district kabaddi teams in Boys & Girls Section will be allowed to participate in the 23rd Sub-Junior U.T. Kabaddi Championship at Indoor Subash Stadium, Udhampur.

All the Districts President & Secretary are advised to select their teams on merit before participation in said Championship. The last date of entry is on or before 13th March 12:00 Night positively.

The selection for the Sub-Junior National Boys & Girls teams shall be Conducted during the Sub-Junior U.T. Kabaddi Championship and the Boys and Girls team probables for coaching camp will be held from 18th March 2025 at Udhampur.

All the district players will come with their Aadhar Card, and Domicile Certificate and Medical Fitness Certificate from the Medical officers, and NOC from their Parents and Moreover, all the players should be duly registered with Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India.

PSAJK President G.N. Var Welcomes J&K Budget 2025-26, Hails Focus On Education And Social Welfare

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 9: The Private Schools Association of Jammu and Kashmir (PSAJK) extends a warm welcome to the J&K Budget 2025-26 presented by J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. PSAJK State President G.N Var has lauded the government's visionary approach in prioritizing education and introducing several people-friendly initiatives aimed at uplifting the socio-economic landscape of the Jammu & Kashmir.

In a statement to the press, PSAJK President G.N. Var hailed education as the foundation of progress and welcomed the government's commendable move to strengthen the sector. He particularly lauded the establishment of a National Law University, calling it a landmark initiative that will provide quality legal education and empower students from J&K. With an initial allocation of ₹50 crore, this step reflects the government's commitment to advancing higher education in the region.

He also appreciated the overall budget allocation of ₹1,388.97 crore for the education sector—an increase of ₹242.75 crore from the previous fiscal year—emphasizing that this major boost will drive



transformative improvements in educational infrastructure, foster academic excellence, and enhance student welfare across J&K.

"The government's commitment to upgrading 40 higher secondary schools into integrated K-12 institutions is a welcome move, as it will help create a modernized education system that caters to evolving academic needs," stated G.N. Var.

He also welcomed the government's focus on strengthening higher education, emphasizing that enhancing infrastructure and services in degree colleges will play a crucial role in improving academic standards. "The addition of 600 polytechnic seats to expand technical education opportunities is another significant step, as it will boost vocational training and skill development, preparing students for diverse career paths," he added. PSAJK also empha-

sized that the private education sector should be the government's top priority in addressing the genuine grievances faced over the past several years. Private schools in J&K provide employment to lakhs of youths, ranging from peons, teaching and non-teaching staff, drivers, conductors, security guards, administrative personnel, accountants, IT support staff, librarians and other support workers. Also, by paying taxes, board fees, power bills, water bills and other charges to the government, private schools significantly contribute to the economy. Recognizing and supporting the role of private institutions in education will not only enhance learning outcomes but also contribute significantly to the region's employment generation and economic stability.

Apart from the education sector, Var also praised the government's pro-people ini-

tatives that will significantly benefit the underprivileged sections of society. He highlighted the provision of 200 units of free electricity and 10 kg of free ration per person per month for Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households as landmark steps toward social security.

He also appreciated the enhancement of the Marriage Assistance Scheme from ₹50,000 to ₹75,000, free public transport for women, and the increase in pensions under the Integrated Social Assistance Scheme (ISSS) and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), calling them "progressive measures that will uplift vulnerable communities."

While welcoming the budget, PSAJK urged the government to ensure the efficient implementation of these initiatives so that their benefits reach the grassroots level. "Budgetary allocations must translate into on-ground improvements. We look forward to timely execution and monitoring to ensure transparency and accountability," added G.N. Var.

The PSAJK reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the J&K government, led by Omar Abdullah, to support education reforms and contribute to the overall development of the region.

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