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BRIEFLY

Suspected IED found in South Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Mar 17 (Agencies): Security forces detected a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district, an official said here on Monday.

They said a suspicious IED was detected at Qaimoh on Shopian Anantnag road by security forces.

"A bomb disposal squad was called in and traffic has been halted on the road," an official said, adding the area has been sealed by the forces.

Sunny Day in Kashmir after week long wet spell

SRINAGAR, Mar 17 (Agencies): After nearly a week-long wet spell, bright sunshine greeted people in Kashmir on Monday. Jammu tourism guide

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar said the weather will generally remain dry till March 26 with a chance of light snow over isolated higher reaches on the night of March 19.

There are chances of a fresh spell of light rain and snow over higher reaches likely during March 27 and 28, it said.

The MeT office has also advised farmers to resume their normal farm operations and cautioned the travellers and tourists to follow the admin traffic advisory before taking any journey.

Amid recent heavy snowfall, it has also asked people living in the upper reaches of the Kashmir Valley to avoid venturing over sloppy and avalanche-prone areas.

Bright sun appeared on Monday with tourists venturing out in Shikaras in the iconic Dal Lake for a ride to experience nature's glory.

The day temperatures dropped by 1 to 8°C in the Kashmir Division, with Kupwara recorded at 12.1°C and Srinagar 12.2°C, remaining the highest among other stations on Sunday.

The minimum temperature recorded during the intervening night of Sunday and Monday witnessed a rise and decreased by 1 to 2°C in the Kashmir Division at many places, with the lowest -5.0°C recorded at the ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The tourist resort of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag

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MHA updates list of 67 banned terrorist organizations, unlawful groups

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): An updated list of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) names a group of 67 terrorist organisations and unlawful associations facing a ban under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for their role in terrorist activities against India, threatening the country's security.

The list released by the Ministry of Home Affairs names 45 organizations that are officially categorized as terrorist organizations under Section 35 of the UAPA and are included in the First Schedule of the Act. The remaining 22 groups are classified as unlawful associations under Section 3(1) of the UAPA.

Many of these organizations have been involved in militancy, separatism, and violent activities across India. The MHA keeps on updating such list. The declaration of these banned organisations is part of India's ongoing efforts to curb terrorism and extremist activities within its borders. Orga-



nizations listed under the UAPA face strict legal action, including asset freezes and arrests of members involved in unlawful activities.

The group of outfits designated as terrorist organisations are Babbar Khalsa International; Khalistan Commando Force; Khalistan Zindabad Force; International Sikh Youth Federation; Lashkar-e-Taiba or Pasban-e-Ahle Hadis or The Resistance Front and all its manifestations and front organisations; Jaish-e-Mohammed or Tahreek-e-Furqan or People's Anti-Fascist-Front (PAFF) and all its manifestations and front organisations; Harkat-ul-Mujahideen or Harkat-ul-Ansar or Har-

kat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami or Ansar-ul-Ummah; Hizb-ul-Mujahideen or Hizb-ul-Mujahideen Pir Panjal Regiment; Al-Umar-Mujahideen; Jammu and Kashmir Islamic Front; United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA); National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) in Assam; People Liberation Army (PLA); United National Liberation Front (UNLF); People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK); Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP); Kangleipak Kanba Lup (KYKL); Manipur Peoples Liberation Front (MPLF); All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF); National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT); Liberation Tigers of Tamil

Eelam (LTTE); Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI); Deendar Anjuman; Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)-Peoples War, all its formations and front organisations; Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), all its formations and front organisations; Al Badr; Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen; Al-Qaida or Al-Qaida in Indian Sub-Continent (AQIS) and all its manifestations.

Dukhtar-e-Milat (DEM); Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA); Tamil National Retrieval Troops (TNRT); Akhil Bharat Nepali Ekta Samaj (ABNES); and organisations listed in the Schedule to the UN Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism (Implementation of Security Council Resolutions) order, 2007 made under Section 2 of the United Nations (Security Council) Act, 1947 and amended from time to time; as well as Communist Party of India (Maoist) all its formations and front organisations, Garo National

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One Terrorist Killed in gunfight with security forces in Kupwara

SRINAGAR, Mar 17 (Agencies): An unidentified terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces in the Zachaldara area of Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Monday, officials here said.

The security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Krumhoora village in Zachaldara following information about the presence of terrorists in the area, the officials said.

The search operation turned into an encounter after the terrorists opened fire towards the security forces' positions. One terrorist was killed in retaliatory firing and some arms and ammunition were recovered from the spot, they said.

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J&K | NC, PDP demand high-level probe into deaths of 2 brothers



JAMMU, Mar 17 (Agencies): Members of the PDP and the NC on Monday raised in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly the issue of the deaths of two brothers, who were among three people missing since last month and demanded a high-level probe. Jammu travel packages Jammu tourism guide

Showkat Ahmad Bajad, his brother Riyaz Ahmad Bajad, and Mukhtar Ahmad went missing on February 13 while on their way to attend a function at the house of a relative in Ashmuji. However, the trio — who were working as labourers — never reached their destination.

Showkat Ahmad Bajad's body was

retrieved from Vaishov nullah in Kulgam district on Sunday while that of his brother was recovered from the same spot a few days ago.

As the assembly proceedings commenced on Monday, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) members, led by Wahid Para, said the deaths of the two tribal men have caused panic among the people and demanded an impartial investigation to bring perpetrators to justice.

Despite Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather's request to allow the Question Hour to proceed, PDP members continued to raise the issue from their seats.

Members of the ruling National Conference

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J&K govt to introduce mandatory service bond for doctors pursuing masters

SRINAGAR, Mar 17 (Agencies): Doctors pursuing MD/MS from J&K Medical Colleges may soon need to sign a mandatory service bond, on the same pattern as is applicable in most medical colleges across India.

This was stated today by Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Masood in

reply to a question. The Minister said that doctors who secure postgraduate courses from J&K medical colleges, are funded by the J & K exchequer.

"They earn degrees on the money of our people," she said.

She stressed that these doctors must also give something in return to the people of J&K.

"We have examined the rules and soon they will need to serve in J&K for two years, like it is mandatory in other medical colleges of India," she said.

The minister said that the service bond will be for a period of 2-3 years. "Rules must be relaxed only where it benefits patient care and health-care delivery," she said.

J&K Police orders inquiry into officer's conduct against woman protester

SRINAGAR, Mar 17 (Agencies): Police on Monday ordered an inquiry after a video surfaced purportedly showing a police officer kicking a woman protester in Kulgam district.

"A video has surfaced on the social media

regarding a police officer's conduct with the public in Kulgam. We have taken cognisance of the yesterday's incident and the allegations regarding the officers conduct," Kashmir Zone Police said in a post on X.

It said the DIG South Kashmir Range (SKR) would enquire into the incident that happened on Sunday and submit a report within 10 days. Earlier, PDP leader Iltija Mufti criticised the officer's behaviour and

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Influencer Orry, 7 others booked for 'Consuming Alcohol' at Vaishno Devi Pilgrimage base camp



JAMMU, Mar 17 (Agencies): Social media

influencer Orhan Awtramani, better known

as Orry, was among eight people booked for allegedly consuming alcohol at a hotel in Katra, the base camp for the pilgrimage to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district, police said on Monday.

The FIR was registered against the eight for "violating the law of the land" and a team was set up to nab them.

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BHOG & ANTIM ARDAS
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform you about the sad demise of our beloved **Late Sdn. Laj Kour W/o S. Punjab Singh*** R/o village Mallikote Chassana Reasi, who left for heavenly abode on *11 March, 2025*. The **Bhog and Antim Ardas** will be as per the following dates: **Arambh Sri Akhand Path Sahib** on 18th March, 2025 at 9:00 AM at our residence, Village Mallikote, Reasi.*
Bhog Sri Akhand Path Sahib on 20th March, 2025 at 9:00 AM at our residence, Mallikote, Chassana Reasi.
Shabad Kirtan & Antim Ardas will be performed on 20th March, 2025 from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM at village Mallikote Chassana, Khalsa mohalla, Reasi.
Grief Stricken:
S. Punjab Singh Budhwal (Husband)
S. Surinder Singh (Son)
S. Durjeet Singh (Son)
Sdn. Mitranjan Kour (Daughter)
S. Harinder Pal Singh (Son)



Late Sdn. Laj Kour

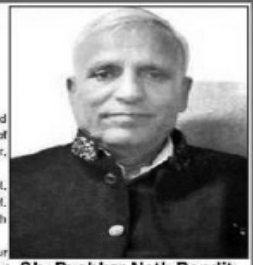
MASWAR AND VAHARWAR
ON 18TH AND 19TH MARCH, 2025
In the loving memory of **Hakim Sh. Arjan Nath Kaul** originally from (Kurigam) Qazigurd. Your life was a blessing and fond memories, a treasurer, Loved beyond words and missed beyond measure. Each day we try to walk on the imprints left by you on the sands of time, guided by your values and Principles. May God give peace to your departed soul. "Om Shanti!"



HAKIM SH. ARJAN NATH KAUL
17TH JULY, 1934 - 30TH MARCH, 2024

YOUR LOVING FAMILY:
Smt. Rani Kaul - Wife
Sons & Daughters-in-law
Sh. Tribki Kaul & Vimesh Kaul
Sh. Hari Kaul & Geeta Kaul
Daughters & Sons-in-law
Smt. Kiran Kaul & Sh. Ramesh Kaul
Smt. Veena Raina & Sh. Shadi Lal Raina
Smt. Sonali Tickoo & Sh. Vijay Tickoo
Grand Children: Jatin, Shivi, Manu, Shrivati, Sandeep, Monu, Sheela, Sushil, Anku, Mohit, Sohil
Maswar & Vaharwar will be performed at our residence Address: 107, Shubham Apartment, Sector-12, Pocket-4, Dwarka, New Delhi.
With love from the Kaul Family

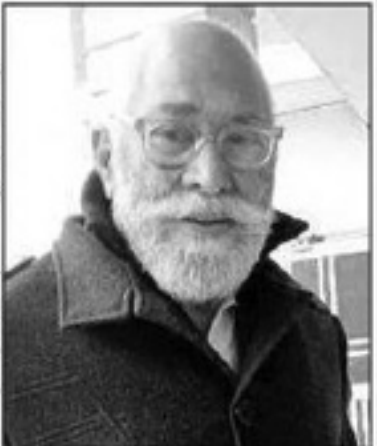
OBITUARY
Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near. Still loved, still missed, and forever dear."
With profound grief we share the demise of our beloved father **Sh. Pushkar Nath Pandit** originally resident of Akinag Bopora, Anantnag, presently at Jawhar Nagar, Udhampur on 13 Mar 2025.
The **Tenth Day Kriya** will be held at Devika Ghat, Udhampur on Friday, 21 March 2025 at 09:00 AM. Residence: Jawhar Nagar, Ward No. 6, Near Tribkainah Temple, Railway Road Udhampur.
Mourning from 'Malyur' side will also be held at our residence as Papa always considered our Mama Ji (Vineet Koul) as his elder son.
WITH OUR DEEPEST LOVE,
Smt. Bita Devi- Wife
Mr. Omkar Nath Pandit- Son
Mrs. Lucy Pandit- Daughter-in-law
Mr. Sunil Hangoo- Son-in-law
Mrs. Yogita Hangoo- Daughter
Mrs. Arjali Pandita- Daughter-in-law
Mr. Pram Nath Pandita- Son
Mrs. Poojya Pandita- Daughter-in-law



Sh. Pushkar Nath Pandit
13 Apr 1950 - 13 Mar 2025


Children/Grandchildren
Amit, Rocky, Shriya, Sahil, Ayushi, Kamal, Sarika, Armaan, Prachi, Manish.
Contact: 9899447511 (Son), 912032637 (Vineet Ji), 9055152777 (wife), 9149454511 (Daughter)

OBITUARY
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Master Lekh Raj Khajuria** (Ex President, All J and K Employees Federation) R/o Ajit Nagar Jammu on 10-03-2025.
Fourth Day will be performed on 13-03-2025 at Shastri Nagar Cremation Ground
Eighth Day will be performed on 17-03-2025 and **Thirteen Day** will be performed on 22-03-2025 at our residence.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt. Urmal Khajuria (Wife)
Son and Daughter-in-law
Sh. Manav Khajuria and Smt Anjali Sharma
Daughters and Sons-in-law
Smt. Rakhee Khajuria and Sh. Ashok Sharma
Smt. Shilpi Khajuria and Sh. Rakesh Sharma
Mob: 9149713847



Master Lekh Raj Khajuria

OBITUARY
With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Bansilal Kaul**, S/O Late Hari Ram Kaul, (Original Resident of Kenni Mohalla, Rainawari, Sriinagar, Kashmir On 12.03.2025
Tenth day Kriya will be held at Murad Nagar, Gaziabad, UP. (Chota Haridwar) Assembly will be held on 21/03/2025 at 15/101, Eastend Apartments, New Ashok Nagar, Mayur Vihar, Extension -1, New Delhi at 11AM.
Grief Stricken...
Wife. Ratna Kaul
Sanjay Kaul and Arti Kaul (Son and daughter in law)
Aalok Kaul (Grandson)
Archana Bhandari and Arvind Bhandari (Daughter and son in law)
Jiya Bhandari (Grand daughter)
Bharti Kaul (w/o late Girdhari Lal Kaul)
Jawahar Lal Kaul and Anil Kaul
Rajesh Kaul S/o Late Mohanlal Kaul and Khem Lata Kaul
Zalpuris Bhandaris kauls Duranis and Yatris
Contact nos.
9971419265
9906205610
+17323718620




TENTH DAY KRIYA
With profound sorrow, we inform the sudden demise of our beloved **Smt. Mohani Karihaloo Saraf**, W/o Late Shri Chaman Lal Saraf resident of Baner, Pune formerly a resident of Nishat and Habba Kadal, Srinagar.
Known as Mummy to her progeny, she was Bengashee and Bhabhjee to the Karihaloo and Saraf families. She retired as a headmistress at Nishat High School. She breathed her last at home on March 12, aged 87. **10TH DAY KRIYA** will be at Pimpri-Chinchwad on March 21.
GRIEF STRICKEN:
Manju and Anil Bakaya
Reeta and Ranjan Nehru
Suresh and Ruby Saraf
The families of Late Dr DN Saraf, Late Rupa Kaul, Raj Dulani Koul, Late Roshanlal Saraf, Late Roshanlal Karihaloo, Bhushan Karihaloo, Tej Karihaloo.
Grandchildren:
Dhiraj, Priyanka, Amaranta, Amol, Kartik, Sneha, and Maegha.
Great grandchildren: Ayan, Sioma, Aditha, Prazlaan, Saiara, and Amaira.
Contact: Ranjan Nehru 98816 64171, Amol Nehru 98590 85877




SMT. MOHANI KARIHALOO SARAF

TENTH DAY/ KRIYA/UTHALA
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Girdhari Lal S/o Late Sh. Pula Ram** R/o Village Badgal Kalan Post Office, Sohail Akhnoor.
10th Day will be performed on 18.03.2025 from 11-12 at Residence R/o Village Badgal Kalan Post Office Sohail Akhnoor.
Kriya and Uthala will be performed on 19.03.2025 from 11-12 at at Residence R/o Village Badgal Kalan Post Office Sohail Akhnoor.
Son and Daughter-in-law
Vijay Amrit Lal and Anta Sharma
Son and Daughter-in-law
Premjit Sharma and Late Babita Sharma
Daughter and Son-in-law
Sunita Sharma and Sweet Sharma
Kids: Payal, Ritika, Kanav, Parul, Harsh, Priyanka Sharma
And All Sharma Family
Mob: 9906316196, 7006493243



SH. GIRDHARI LAL

10TH DAY KRIYA
REST IN PEACE
With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Darshan Lal** (S/o Late Sh. Jattu Ram) who left for his heavenly abode on Monday, 10th March 2025.
TENTH DAY KRIYA will be performed on 19th March, 2025 at Shri Guru Ravidas ji Gurudwara, Krishna Nagar Jammu at 1200 hrs.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt. Asha Devi (Wife)
Nidhi Thapa (Daughter)
Brothers and Sisters in law
Late Sh. Sham Lal and Smt. Darshana Devi
Sh. Raj Kumar and Smt. Anju Devi
Daughters and Sons in law
Mrs. Shipu and Mr. Bodeh Raj
Mrs. Deepika and Mr. Rohit Kumar
DEEPLY REMEMBERED BY
THAPA FAMILY
MOB: 7298001125, 8825037153




SH. DARSHAN LAL

Mourning from Maluin Side
"Noble soul never die but always remain in our heart and mind."
It is with profound sadness, heart broken and teary eyes to share the sad news of our beloved **Karamyogi Sister Smt Vijay Rayu D/o Lt. Sh Triloki Nath Dembi** W/o Sh Girdhari Lal Rayu erstwhile of Rawalpota Sanatnagar Srinagar Kashmir on 12th March 2025 at Pune.
She was a woman of great compassion and unwavering dedication. Her love for everyone was evident she did. She leaves behind a legacy of kindness and a heart full of love. Though she is gone, her spirit will live on in the lives she touched.
We will miss her dearly.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Dembi's (Kapoors), Bachoo's, Mawa's, Mantoo's Mattoo's, Amberkar's
Mob: 6006512660



Smt Vijay Rayu

TENTH DAY/ KRIYA/UTHALA
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Girdhari Lal S/o Late Sh. Pula Ram** R/o Village Badgal Kalan Post Office, Sohail Akhnoor.
10th Day will be performed on 18.03.2025 from 11-12 at Residence R/o Village Badgal Kalan Post Office Sohail Akhnoor.
Kriya and Uthala will be performed on 19.03.2025 from 11-12 at at Residence R/o Village Badgal Kalan Post Office Sohail Akhnoor.
Son and Daughter-in-law
Vijay Amrit Lal and Anta Sharma
Son and Daughter-in-law
Premjit Sharma and Late Babita Sharma
Daughter and Son-in-law
Sunita Sharma and Sweet Sharma
Kids: Payal, Ritika, Kanav, Parul, Harsh, Priyanka Sharma
And All Sharma Family
Mob: 9906316196, 7006493243



SH. GIRDHARI LAL

TENTH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Father Sh. Shyam Lal Pandita S/o Late Vishnu Jee Pandita** originally resident of Raghunath Mandir / Channapora, Sgr, Kashmir A/P residing at C-24/C, BG, Raj Heights Shalimar Garden Extension-II, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad on 11/3/2025.
Tenth Day will be performed on 20/3/2025. (Tuesday) at Muradnagar Ghaziabad at 9.30 am. **Assembly** will be held at our residence Shalimar Gardens Extension-II, Sahibabad at 11.30 am.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Son & Daughter-in-law
Kuldeep Pandita & Dr. Saroj Pandita (7006481903, 7006728326)
Daughter & Son-in-law
Meena Raina, Dr. A.K. Raina (7042153091, 9410320517)
Sushma Pandita (9818244576) - Daughter
Grand Children : Shibu, Vivek, Richa, Vikas, Ankit, Kanav, Mozas, Haks, Rainas & Kouls



Sh. Shyam Lal Pandita

TENTH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow we inform the untimely and sad demise of **Smt. Neha W/o Badal Kumar** on 10.3.2025 originally resident of Devika Angan (Hari Parbath), Srinagar. A/P H.no. 144-B-10 Vinayak Nagar Sector-1 Muthi, Jammu.
TENTH DAY KRIYA will be performed on 19.03.2025 (Wednesday) at Akhnoor **SMT. NEHA** Ghat. **MOURNING ASSEMBLY** will be held at Muthi ghat (Near Director Education Office) at 10 A.M.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Badal Kumar (Husband)
Samast Parivar
Mob: 9906029114



MLA Akhnoor inaugurates road widening project to boost connectivity to Sumah Devsthan
Top News Report
AKHNOOR, Mar 17: In a major step towards enhancing infrastructure and promoting religious tourism, **MLA Akhnoor, Mohan Lal Bhagat, on Monday inaugurated the balance work of widening, improvement, and upgradation project of the Akhnoor to Sumah Road in Block Akhnoor under RIDF XXV Phase-II (NABARD).** This crucial road serves as a key route to Sumah Devsthan, a revered religious tourism destination, and its development is set to greatly improve accessibility for devotees and visitors alike.
The project, spanning a length of 4.50 km, has been sanctioned with an allotted cost worth Rs 89 Lakhs.
Speaking at the occasion, **MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat highlighted the importance of the road in promoting religious tourism and improving local connectivity.** He directed the engineers and contractor to ensure speedy completion with top-quality standards, ensuring the project's timely delivery for the benefit of pilgrims and locals. The **MLA also**

addressed concerns regarding electric poles obstructing the road and assured that the matter has already been taken up with the concerned department, promising their relocation within days.
The inauguration ceremony saw the presence of several prominent personalities, including **AEE Sunil Baogia, JE Rakesh Radha, JE Deepak Gupta, Ex Sarpanch Manisha Devi, Ex Sarpanch Ashwani Sharma, Ex Sarpanch Kuldeep Singh, Madan Lal, Rajay Sharma, Panch Sarpanch Tilak Raj, Ex Panch Sanjeev, Ex Panch Satveer Kour, Naib Sarpanch Amit Sharma, Vishal Sapolia, Anil Sharma, Vishal Sharma, and KD Sharma.**
Locals expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the **MLA for addressing long-standing infrastructure needs and ensuring smoother access to Sumah Devsthan.** This project is expected to provide a significant boost to the region's religious tourism potential and overall development, marking a new era of progress for Akhnoor.

Poonch boys win 23rd Sub Junior UT Kabaddi Championship trophy
Top News Report
UDHAMPUR, Mar 17: The final day of the 23rd Sub-Junior UT Kabaddi Championship for Boys & Girls, organized by the Udhampur District Kabaddi Association under the aegis of the Jammu & Kashmir Amateur Kabaddi Association and J&K Sports Council at Indoor Sports Complex Subash Stadium Udhampur, witnessed an exciting finale in the Boys' section on Monday.
Poonch emerged as the champions after defeating Baramulla in the final match with a score of 43-27. The winning team was presented the trophy by the Chief Guest, **Kuldeep Gupta, Technical Director of the Asian Kabaddi Federation.**
 Ashok Kumar Salotra, Former Director of Sports SMVD Katra and Sr. Vice President of the School Games Federation of India, was the Guest of Honor. He acknowledged the overwhelming enthusiasm for Kabaddi in Udhampur and assured that **J&K Kabaddi Association will strive to bring more championships, including matches from the proposed Federation Cup, for which a request has already been submitted.**
Earlier in the semifinals, **Baramulla defeated Budgam in a closely contested match with a margin of 6 points, finishing 53-47. In another thrilling semifinal, Poonch outper-**

formed Udhampur with a decisive 16-point victory, ending at 40-24.
The **Chief Guest, along with Ashok Kumar (Patron-in-Chief), Sheikh Tanveer (President, Udhampur District Kabaddi Association), Ashok Kumar (Chairman), Abdul Rehman Paddar (Joint Secretary, J&K Kabaddi Association), Vikas Dogra (Manager, Subash Stadium), and Vishal Bamotra, awarded trophies and medals to the winning teams.**
The event was organized under the active guidance of **Anil Gupta, President of J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association, and under the special direction of Secretary Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, who is dedicated to promoting Kabaddi across the districts of J&K.**
The **President extended gratitude to all team coaches, the District Administration, Police Department, officials from the Department of Youth Services & Sports, Manager Sports Stadium Udhampur, Dr. Vikram Gulati (Principal, Happy Model School Udhampur), Vishal Bamotra (Owner, Vikas Palace & 99 Market), the press, and media for their support in making the event a grand success.**
All matches were officiated by a panel of technical experts from the Department of Youth Services & Sports, Udhampur. The event concluded with the National Anthem.

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Advocate Purnima raises concerns over insufficient healthcare infrastructure at GMC Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Advocate Purnima Sharma, Spokesperson J&K BJP and former Deputy Mayor, highlighted pressing concerns regarding the inadequate healthcare infrastructure at Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu. She emphasized that GMC Jammu is currently overburdened, catering to the medical needs of residents from ten districts, underscoring the urgent need for infrastructural enhancements.

Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge, J&K BJP and Arti Koul, Office Incharge, BJP Mahila Morcha were also present in the Press Conference held at party headquarter, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Purnima Sharma pointed out that the existing infrastructure at GMC Jammu is insufficient to meet the growing healthcare demands of the region. She noted that the hospital presently operates with only one CT scan machine and lacks a dedicated trauma center. Consequently, patients requiring CT scans face wait



ing periods extending up to two months, leading to delayed diagnoses and treatments.

Purnima Sharma also expressed grave concerns regarding the deplorable conditions of Shri Maharaja Gulab Singh (SMGS) Hospital in Jammu. She highlighted that the hospital's infrastructure is severely inadequate, leading to overcrowding where pregnant women, even infants, have been forced to share a single bed, even in critical areas like the emergency ward. This overcrowding not only compromises the quality of care but also poses significant health risks to women as well as vulnerable children.

Purnima Sharma asked the Omar Govt to address these pressing issues to enhance the hospital's capacity and

resources to ensure the well-being of pediatric patients.

The senior BJP leader asked the NC Government to prioritize the establishment of a new, fully-equipped tertiary government hospital in Jammu on nearly 200 kanals of land, aiming to fulfill the medical needs of the Jammu region. In light of upcoming population growth, this hospital should be located away from city congestion, ensuring better accessibility and convenience for residents.

Furthermore, Purnima stressed that all medical facilities, should be placed under one roof, catering to the growing healthcare needs of the region. The Bone & Joint Hospital in Jammu currently only offers OPD services, and surgeries are still being performed at GMC Jammu. While

the government has initiated a cancer hospital, she requested for an associated dedicated cardiac research institute toward comprehensive healthcare development.

She also questioned the NC leadership regarding the status of the State Health Policy, which was prominently featured in their election manifesto. She highlighted several unfulfilled promises made by the NC, including formulation of a comprehensive State Health Policy, creation of a Medical Trust providing free insurance coverage of Rs 5,00,000 per annum for terminal diseases such as cancer, heart ailments, and kidney transplants; establishment of a state-of-the-art cancer hospital; setting up Village and Mohalla Clinics to offer basic healthcare and emergency services; provision of dialysis facilities in all Sub-District Hospitals (SDHs) across Jammu and Kashmir; and offering diagnostic and imaging services in all District Hospitals.

Expressing disappointment over the lack of progress, Purnima

remarked, "Despite the passage of five months, the NC Government has failed to take even a single step towards fulfilling these promises."

Reflecting on the achievements of the previous BJP-led administration, she noted the initiation of ward-wise health centers in Jammu. She recommended that the NC Government upgrade these centers into fully functional Mohalla Clinics equipped with basic healthcare services, thereby reducing the patient load on GMC Jammu for primary health needs.

The senior BJP leader asked the NC Government to prioritize the establishment of trauma centers at the district level to effectively manage emergencies and reduce preventable deaths resulting from delayed medical attention.

Purnima called on the NC Government to focus on fulfilling its commitments. She asserted, "Healthcare is a basic necessity, and the NC Government must act swiftly to address the gaps in the system."

39 Health institutions functional in SMVD Constituency: Sakeena Itoo

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Monday informed the House that 39 health institutions are functioning in Shri Mata Vaishno Devi (SMVD) constituency besides Narayana Super Speciality Hospital is providing advanced healthcare facilities to locals in the constituency.

The Minister said while replying to a question raised by Baldev Raj Sharma in the Legislative Assembly.

The Minister further informed that 1 CHC, 2 PHCs, 5 NTPHCs and 31 Sub Centres are functional in SMVD constituency adding that Bhomag village falls under Block Medical Officer Reasi and there is no such sanctioned post of BMO Bhomag. Further, no such office building for the office of BMO is being constructed at Bhomag, she said.

The Minister also informed that a Sub Centre at Kothroo and Kroonkote is under construction under district Capex besides

CHC Katra is functioning as 30-bedded SDH with 5 specialities and additional specialized services of Sinologist and Orthopaedics. She said that as per the IPHS standard there is no provision of any specialist doctor for PHCs, adding that PHC Tote is operational and adequately staffed with both Medical and Paramedical staff.

While giving details regarding filling up of vacancies in health department, the Minister said the department appointed 365 Medical Officers and posted them in far-flung/peripheral health institutes across J&K for strengthening the healthcare facilities at grassroots level in the month of November, 2024. She informed that the department is also in process of operating waitlist in respect of 91 selectee Medical Officers, whose services will also be utilized in the underserved areas across the J&K.

The Minister added that 181 posts of Medical Officers are about to be received from Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, which will sig-

nificantly reduce the staff shortages in various health institutions. She further informed that 292 vacancies in the non-gazetted/paramedical category from the Directorate of Family Welfare, Maternity and Child Health (MCH) and Immunization besides 290 vacancies in respect of Directorate of Health Services Jammu have also been referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) for recruitment which will significantly strengthen and improve the healthcare system.

Regarding up gradation of CHC Katra to SDH or ADH, the Minister said that up gradation of any health institute will be taken under IPHC norms, if needed.

Regarding staff position in healthcare institutions in SMVD constituency, the Minister said that against 184 (Medical and Paramedical) sanctioned posts, 107 have been filled up while additional NHM staff of 105 (Medical and Paramedical) has been posted in the SMVD constituency.

CII J&K felicitates newly elected president Dr. MA Alim

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: The CII J&K UT Council hosted a felicitation ceremony to honour Dr. MA Alim, the newly elected Chairman, led by Sanjay Gupta and Rakesh Dogra.

CII J&K members, including Drone Gupta, Vinay Jamwal, Siddhant Choudhary, Sunil Gupta, Minna Dubey, Shivang Mahajan, Sanjay Sachdeva, Abhishek Sachdeva, Atul Sharma, and other spe-

cial guests, extended congratulations and pledged their support for collective progress under his leadership.

In his address, the Chairman emphasized his commitment to driving transformative initiatives for the council.

Dr. Alim concluded the event by expressing gratitude to all attendees and assured a proactive approach to addressing member concerns, reaffirming the council's dedication to collaborative growth.

CIS hosts Junior Sports Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Cambridge International School (CIS), Purkhoo Camp, Domana, Jammu hosted its Annual Junior Sports Day "Vijayaa Ghosham" on Monday.

The event aimed to promote Physical Fitness, Teamwork and Sportsmanship among young students.

The event was dignified by the presence of Chief Guest Er Vidhi

S. Singh Jamwal, Chairman, CIS. The grandeur of the event was elevated by the presence of distinguished dignitaries including the Managing Director, Er. Renu Bangroo, Vice-Chairman, Shiv Dev Singh Jamwal, Principal, Pooja Chib and Vice-Principal Rajni Malhotra.

The day commenced with symbolic release of a pigeon representing peace and harmony followed by Ganesh Vandana,

March-Past and Mass P.T. A variety of athletic competitions were held including Sack Race, Diving for dollars, Hopscotch Hustle and Relay. Students showcased their synchronized drills, Zumba and other performances highlighting their hardwork.

The event culminated with a medal ceremony honoring the winners. The management expressed gratitude for the hard work of the staff and the students.

200 juice packets distributed to students, staff at GMS Digiana Camp

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: In a heartwarming initiative to promote health and well-being, approximately 200 packets of KG juice were distributed among students and staff of Government Middle School (GMS), Digiana Camp, as part of a special program.

The event aimed to encourage good health, discipline, and patriotism among students through meaningful interactions and motivational activities.

The juice packets were generously provided by Dabur India Limited under the Nutrition &

Health Supplement Program through the efforts of Sanjeev Parihar, Founder of Social Reform Charitable Organisation (SRCO), Kishtwar, and Mr. Amarjeet Singh.

The event was graced by Dr. Shreyansh Kumar Jain, State Yoga Commissioner & President of Vichar Kranti Manch International, as the Chief Guest.

The Guests of Honour included K.S. Samyal, Chief Advisor, Confederation of Voluntary, Social & Charitable Organisations & President, Senior Citizens Rejuvenation Centre, and Ashok Gupta, Founder

Chairman Trustee Sarv Uthan Trust & National Executive Member, Bharat Vikas Parishad. The program commenced with Guru Vandana, melodiously sung by Samyal, setting a spiritual and disciplined tone for the gathering.

Dr. Jain engaged students in an interactive advisory session, emphasizing the importance of yoga, discipline, good character, and dedicated studies. His inspiring lead-and-follow song created an atmosphere of motivation and enthusiasm.

Additionally, Dr. Jain shared valuable health tips with the staff mem-

bers. Further enriching the event, Ashok Gupta sang a motivational song, instilling in students a deep sense of respect for elders, teachers, and patriotism.

Recognizing the importance of health consciousness among staff and students, Dr. S.K. Jain assured the organization of a dedicated yoga session in the near future, reinforcing a commitment to holistic well-being and personal development.

The event concluded on a note of enthusiasm and gratitude, with students and staff expressing their heartfelt appreciation for this noble initiative.

Moratorium on establishment of air polluting units in Khrew, Khonmoh areas: Dy CM

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, on Monday informed the House that Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC) has imposed a moratorium on establishment and registration of new units of air polluting industries in Khrew, Pulwama, and Khonmoh in Srinagar of Kashmir division for a period of two years since 2021.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by Hasnain Masoodi in the Legislative Assembly.

He added that the order, in this regard, was reviewed by the Committee on 20.12.2023 which vide its decision dated 01.01.2024 resolved that the moratorium on establishment of new units shall remain in force only in respect of Cement Plants, Stone Crushers, Brick Klin, Mining and Hot Mix Plants till the



annual average AQI falls below 100 or CEPI score falls below 60. All necessary steps shall be taken to regularly monitor the ambient air quality of Khrew and Khonmoh areas, he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister informed the House that presently all the three Plants of JKCL have been closed since, 2019, due to poor power supply leading to regular interruptions in the operations causing a huge loss in production of the Plant besides non-availability of sufficient working capital.

He said that lack of

proper maintenance was causing regular break down to the Plant and machinery besides several unforeseen factors like September 2014 flood and unrest of 2016 and 2019 Covid lockdown in the valley adversely affected the performance of the company. He added that huge losses were other reasons for complete closure of the plant operations. He further said that the company has been burdened by its own liabilities on account of salaries/bills raised by the contractors and various departments, CP Fund of employees, GST liabili-

ties, etc. The Deputy Chief Minister said that presently, the JKCL is under the process of disinvestment. He added that in view of non viability of revival of JKCL, the Administrative Council of Union Territory of J&K vide Administrative Council Decision No. 113/15/2021 dated 19.10.2021 gave in-principle approval for complete sale of the JKCL and its assets on as-is where-is basis, through strategic disinvestment and exploration of the options for e-auction from the qualified bidders.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that pensionary benefits for the retired employees of JKCL have been worked out and projected in the revised budgetary provisions for the current financial year 2024-25. However, the 6th Pay Commission benefits have been implemented for the employees, he added.

Pakistan's self-made pit has become its own grave: Pawan

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Today, we observe the stark reality of Pakistan's own creation. The very pit they dug for others has now become their own grave. Their policies, rooted in deceit and terrorism, have ultimately led to their downfall, as stated by Pawan Sharma, BJP Senior leader and former state secretary J&K.

For years, Pakistan has harbored and supported terrorist organizations, posing a significant threat to regional and global security. Their actions have resulted in countless innocent lives lost, families torn apart, and communities shattered.

Now, as Pakistan struggles to cope with its own internal turmoil, economic instability, and social



unrest, it's clear that their destructive policies have come full circle. The country is facing an unprecedented crisis, with rising poverty, inflation, and unemployment.

Pawan Sharma stated that we have directly observed the catastrophic consequences of Pakistan's actions on our country. We've lost brave soldiers, innocent civilians, and suffered immense economic losses due to their proxy

war. However, India remains steadfast in its commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity. We'll continue to support democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, while firmly countering any threats to our national security.

To the people of Pakistan, Pawan Sharma urged to recognize the destructive path your leaders have chosen. Demand accountability, seek peace, and work towards a brighter future for your nation.

Pakistan's downward spiral serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of promoting terrorism and hatred. India will always stand ready to support those seeking peace and stability, while firmly protecting our national interests," said Sharma.

High Level Committee holds 5th Consultation Meet with Katra stakeholders

Top News Report

KATRA, Mar 17: The High Level Committee (HLC) framed by the Lt. Governor, JK-UT also Chairman of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) held its fifth crucial meeting with the representatives from various associations and groups including MLA, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Constituency, Katra; MLA Reasi, Chairman DDC, Reasi; Muskan Charitable Trust, Katra and Banganga-Charanpaduka Shops Association.

The meeting was promptly convened in response to requests from various associations and groups, demonstrating the committee's proactive approach to community engagement and its commitment to soliciting local input on the ropeway project.

The committee headed by Dr. Ashok Bhan and also comprising of Suresh Sharma, Members of the SMVDSB, Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner of Jammu and Anshul Garg, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB held discussions with associations and

groups focused on addressing concerns and gathering feedback from stakeholders ensuring that their voices are also heard in the decision-making process for ropeway project as per directions of Hon'ble Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT).

The groups unanimously extended their wholehearted support to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board's development initiatives, including the Passenger Ropeway project. They emphasized the need for sustainable development that enhances infrastructure, amenities and overall experience for pilgrims and locals. However, they also stressed the importance of considering the concerns, needs and aspirations of the local population pertaining to safeguarding their livelihoods & up-gradation of the traditional track of the Banganga and termed it as crucial for striking a delicate balance between fostering developments and preserving the region's unique religious, social and cultural heritage. The stakeholders appreciated

the priority darshan facility extended by the Board to the residents of Katra Town and all 41 villages in Sub-Division, besides, development of Trikuta Hills Parikrama Marg through construction of temples undertaken by the Board.

Muskan Charitable Trust, a Katra-based NGO dedicated to empowering differently-abled children advocated for the Ropeway Project with an aim to facilitate effortless access of divyang devotees to the revered Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, promoting inclusivity and accessibility for all devotees, especially the differently-abled community.

Dr. Bhan expressed his satisfaction with the meeting's outcome stating that it concluded on a positive note with stakeholders committing to collaborative efforts for the region's overall development. He emphasized that the HLC is committed to ongoing dialogue and collaboration, ensuring that every stakeholder's voice is heard before reaching a final decision.

EDITORIAL

BRIDGING SKILL GAP

India, one of the world's fastest-growing economies, is experiencing rapid industrialization and digital transformation. However, despite the country's demographic advantage with a young workforce, a major challenge looms large—the skill gap. The mismatch between industry requirements and the skill sets of graduates poses a significant threat to employment, economic growth, and global competitiveness. Addressing this challenge requires a multi-pronged approach involving educational reforms, industry collaboration, technological advancements, and government initiatives.

The skill gap in India is largely attributed to an outdated education system that often emphasizes theoretical knowledge over practical skills. Many graduates lack the industry-relevant expertise that employers seek. According to a report by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), nearly 50% of Indian graduates are not employable due to inadequate skills. The gap is most pronounced in sectors such as IT, healthcare, manufacturing, and artificial intelligence (AI), where technological advancements are evolving at an unprecedented pace.

Additionally, vocational and technical education has long been overlooked, resulting in an insufficient number of skilled workers in key trades like plumbing, electrical work, and construction. The rapid digitalization of industries has further widened the skill gap, as many workers lack proficiency in emerging technologies such as blockchain, machine learning, and cloud computing.

The traditional curriculum in many Indian educational institutions is not aligned with industry needs. The focus on rote learning and lack of practical exposure hinder skill development.

There is a significant disconnect between academia and industry. Universities often fail to equip students with the skills that industries demand, leading to a mismatch in expectations.

In addition to technical expertise, employers seek soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability. Many job seekers struggle in these areas, making them less competitive in the job market.

Rural and semi-urban areas face greater challenges in accessing quality education and skill development programs compared to urban centers, exacerbating the skill gap.

Many institutions and educators resist updating curricula and teaching methodologies due to bureaucratic hurdles, lack of funding, or a reluctance to adopt new technologies.

A fundamental shift is needed in India's education system to make it more skill-oriented. Institutions must incorporate experiential learning, project-based assignments, and hands-on training in their curricula. The adoption of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a step in the right direction, as it emphasizes skill development, vocational training, and flexibility in learning.

Collaboration between educational institutions and industries is crucial to align coursework with market requirements. Companies should actively participate in curriculum design, offer internships, and conduct workshops to prepare students for real-world challenges. Initiatives like the 'Skill India' program aim to promote such collaborations, ensuring graduates possess job-ready skills.

Vocational education should be promoted as a viable career path, rather than being seen as secondary to traditional degrees. Countries like Germany have successfully integrated vocational training into mainstream education, leading to lower unemployment rates. India must expand initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) to equip workers with relevant skills in sectors with high demand.

The rise of e-learning platforms has created new opportunities for skill enhancement. Online courses, virtual labs, and artificial intelligence-driven training programs can help bridge the skill gap efficiently. Platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and India's own SWAYAM provide accessible, affordable, and industry-relevant courses to millions of learners.

Given the rapid pace of technological advancements, lifelong learning is essential. Employees must be encouraged to continuously upgrade their skills through corporate training programs, certifications, and online courses. Organizations should foster a culture of continuous learning by investing in employee development.

Employability is not just about technical expertise; soft skills play a vital role in professional success. Schools and colleges should integrate communication skills, teamwork, leadership, and emotional intelligence training into their curricula. Mock interviews, group discussions, and presentation exercises can help students develop these essential skills.

With India's ambitious goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy, bridging the skill gap is no longer optional—it is imperative. The future of work is evolving, with automation and AI transforming industries. To stay competitive, India must create a workforce that is agile, adaptable, and technologically proficient.

Encouraging entrepreneurship and fostering a culture of innovation will also play a significant role in closing the skill gap. By equipping young professionals with the right tools, India can harness its demographic dividend and emerge as a global leader in the digital economy.

Patients suffering under the burden of rare diseases

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

A rare disease is a health problem that occurs occasionally and affects a limited number of individuals. This category includes genetic disorders, uncommon cancers, infectious diseases, and degenerative conditions. Only 5% of the more than 7,000 recognized diseases globally have effective treatments available. In India, less than half of the approximately 450 recognized rare diseases are curable. Most patients often receive only basic care that helps manage symptoms. Some treatments for rare diseases involve extremely expensive drugs and supportive therapies, making affordability a significant concern. Pharmaceutical companies often overlook rare diseases as a viable market due to the small number of patients affected by each condition. As a result, these diseases are labeled as 'orphan diseases,' and the associated drugs are called 'orphan drugs.' In India, it typically takes an average of seven years to diagnose a rare disease. Delay or misdiagnosis can greatly increase the suffering of patients. The lack of trained health professionals to recognize early symptoms of rare diseases further complicates the situation in India.

Rare diseases are conditions that affect a small segment of the population, yet they collectively affect over 70 million people in India. The National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021 seeks to address the challenges associated with their treatment, but financial limitations remain a significant barrier. With treatment costs ranging from ₹10 lakh to ₹16 crore per patient every year, inadequate funding mechanisms make it difficult for patients to access the necessary care, further adding to their suffering. Most rare diseases have a genetic basis and often cause serious, chronic health problems. Many lack proper diagnostic methods or treatment protocols, and existing treatments typi-

cally only manage symptoms rather than provide a cure. In India, as in many developing countries, there is no universally accepted definition of rare diseases. The burden of rare diseases in India is very high, accounting for about one-third of the global patient population. The National Policy for Rare Diseases suggests that about 50-100 million individuals in India are affected by these conditions. There are over 450 recognized rare diseases in the country, including well-known conditions such as spinal muscular atrophy and Gaucher disease. About 80-100 million Indians suffer from rare diseases, of which more than 75% are children. The high rates of morbidity and mortality associated with these serious conditions are a major reason why many of these children do not survive to adulthood.

One-time funding of ₹50 lakh per patient is insufficient for life-long management of chronic rare diseases, resulting in treatment discontinuation. Although ₹143.19 crore has been allocated to 12 Centres of Excellence, delays in fund disbursement hinder access to essential treatments. Some Centres of Excellence have delayed using funds effectively, delaying enzyme replacement therapy for patients with Gaucher disease, despite its established benefits. Ultra-rare conditions such as acid sphingomyelinase deficiency are not covered in 2021, leaving eligible patients without financial support. In India, patients with acid sphingomyelinase deficiency are without government support, even though clinically approved treatments are available. There is no oversight to monitor fund use and provide timely treatment. Implementation of initiatives supported by Parliament is delayed, leaving patients with lysosomal storage disorders suffering without the necessary support. Long approval processes and poor inter-agency coordination lead to hindrances in treatment. Patients

waiting for funds from crowdfunding portals often face delays due to unclear eligibility criteria and procedural hurdles. The National Rare Diseases Policy 2021 relies on one-time grants rather than a sustainable funding model, making ongoing treatments unviable. Patients with lysosomal storage disorders require lifelong enzyme replacement therapy, but policy provisions phase out funding after ₹50 lakh.

The National Rare Diseases Policy 2021 covers less than half of the more than 450 rare diseases, leaving many patients without any support. Conditions such as Pompe and Fabry disease, which have effective treatments available, are not fully covered by the policy. The absence of performance audits leads to ineffective implementation and underutilization of funds at centers of excellence. These centers have been slow to provide transparent fund disbursement, resulting in severe delays for patients with lysosomal storage disorders. Both doctors and patients often lack information about available treatments and financing options, which hinders outreach efforts. Many families who qualify for National Rare Diseases Policy 2021 benefits are not aware of these, resulting in low enrollment rates at centers. The lack of a centralized database leads to miscalculations of patient outcomes and slow policy responses. A national registry can effectively monitor real-time treatment needs, facilitating better fund disbursement and timely policy adjustments. It is essential to create a permanent government fund of over ₹50 lakh per patient to cover lifetime treatment expenses. Countries such as Germany and the UK have set up special funds for rare diseases, ensuring continuous patient care. We should use corporate social responsibility funding, partnerships with pharmaceutical companies, and crowdfunding efforts to augment government resources. For example, Novartis' corporate social responsibility ini-

tiative in India has provided support to spinal muscular atrophy patients requiring expensive gene therapy. It is important to expand Ayushman Bharat and state insurance programs to include lifetime treatment for rare diseases. Additionally, a digital platform should be developed to monitor fund utilization, track patient treatment progress, and ensure accountability of the CoE. Implementing a blockchain-based tracking system can guarantee transparent fund distribution without bureaucratic hurdles.

Accelerate the ₹974 crore initiative to ensure prompt diagnosis, affordable treatment, and better infrastructure. Fast-tracking this program can greatly benefit thousands of untreated patients and help reduce child mortality. A holistic rare disease policy must move beyond mere intentions and focus on effective execution. Sustainable financing combining government support, corporate social responsibility efforts, and public-private partnerships is essential. Simplifying administrative processes, enhancing early diagnosis, and broadening insurance coverage will make treatment more accessible. A patient-centric approach supported by strong institutional frameworks is crucial to address the challenges faced by rare disease patients in India. Healthcare professionals need training to enhance their diagnostic accuracy. Pregnant mothers with a family history of rare diseases should undergo mandatory prenatal screening and postnatal care. The government should establish a clear definition of rare diseases, increase budget allocations, allocate funds for drug development and therapies, and expand the number of centers of excellence. These steps will strengthen the National Policy on Rare Diseases 2021. Both the public and private sectors should get involved in funding social support.

Is technology reaching women farmers ?

By: Priyanka Saurabh

India's agri-food systems, including agriculture, livestock, agroforestry, and fisheries, are heavily dependent on both paid and unpaid labor of women. Women are vital to Indian agriculture, playing a vital role in food production, livestock management, and supporting rural economies. Women account for nearly 75% of the full-time rural workforce and account for 33% of cultivators. Their participation is spread across a variety of activities such as sowing, weeding, harvesting, post-harvest processing, dairy farming, and livestock care. Despite their essential contribution, land ownership remains a challenge, with only 12-13% of women farmers owning land. However, advances in digital technologies and small initiatives are helping to reduce the gender gap in agriculture, empowering women to become more independent, financially stable, and influential in decision-making. To further scale their impact, it will be important to increase digital literacy, improve access to smartphones, and provide policy support.

Digital technology and microinterventions have transformed the landscape for women in Indian agriculture. These innovations have enabled women farmers to break traditional barriers related to land ownership, access to markets, financial inclusion, and knowledge sharing. Digital tools are empowering women in agriculture. Apps and helplines provide real-time weather forecasts, optimal farming techniques, and current market prices. Resources such as Kisan Suvidha, Pusa Krishi, and IFFCO Kisan App help women farmers make well-informed choices. WhatsApp groups and YouTube tutorials facilitate peer learning and knowledge exchange. Digital payment systems, including UPI, digital wallets, and online banking, enable women to secure loans and subsidies directly. Kisan credit cards and digital microfinance platforms, such as Paytm and NABARD's e-Shakti, provide financial support to women-led self-help groups. Platforms such as e-NAM (National Agriculture Market) and Agrib-

azaar allow women farmers to sell their produce directly to consumers, eliminating the need for intermediaries.

Women-led cooperatives are using Facebook and Instagram to promote their organic farming products. AI technologies provide valuable information on soil health, pest detection, and precision farming techniques. Advanced irrigation systems and solar-powered pumps are designed to reduce water use and ease the physical workload of women farmers. Members of self-help groups benefit from group credit, training, and access to agricultural resources. The Deccan Development Society in Telangana supports millet cultivation through these women-led cooperatives. Simple agricultural equipment such as seed sowers, hand-operated tractors, and solar dryers is available to help reduce the burden on women. Government initiatives provide subsidies for mechanized equipment, which is beneficial for women. NGOs and government programs such as the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana provide the necessary skill training. Digital literacy initiatives empower women farmers to adopt new technological solutions. Women are increasingly getting involved in organic farming, permaculture, and climate-smart agricultural practices. Small-scale interventions such as vermicomposting pits, rooftop gardens, and agroforestry contribute to sustainable incomes. The Lakhpati Kisan initiative by Tata Trusts has trained tribal women in Jharkhand in agricultural technology and e-commerce. The Digital Green initiative uses videos to educate rural women about better farming practices. Farmer production organizations (FPOs) such as Vaagdhara help women collectively negotiate better prices.

In today's world, digital technology and small interventions are playing a vital role in empowering women in agriculture. Traditionally, women have been tasked with labor-intensive and time-consuming tasks such as weeding, threshing, and de-hulking. However, mechanization helps lighten their workload, allowing them to engage in more valuable agricultural activities. Digital tools, including mobile apps, helplines, and advisory services, pro-

vide women with up-to-date market and weather information, which aids in better crop planning and resource management. Many women face challenges in accessing credit and financial resources, which limits their ability to invest in modern agricultural techniques. Fortunately, digital payment systems and e-commerce platforms enable women such as fish vendors and farmers to transact independently, reducing their dependence on intermediaries. By equipping women with the skills to operate agricultural machinery, these small interventions challenge ingrained gender biases and empower women to take leadership roles in farming. Access to information and technology enhances women's ability to overcome traditional barriers and assert their independence.

Many women in rural areas struggle with digital literacy, which hinders their ability to effectively use mobile applications and online services. The situation is further worsened by limited access to smartphones and unreliable internet connections. Social norms continue to restrict women's participation in decision-making processes. Investment at the household level often focuses on technologies that primarily benefit men, neglecting women's unique needs. Additionally, government policies and agricultural extension services often ignore gender-specific issues. Only 13% of rural women own land, so their access to credit and agricultural programs is very limited. Increased mechanization in agriculture and fisheries has led to women losing jobs, pushing them into more unstable and informal employment. The growing dominance of large buyers and export traders in fish markets has marginalized small-scale women vendors, restricting their access to fish supplies and fair prices. Although mobile applications, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems offer new opportunities, many rural women still face barriers due to lack of smartphones, internet access, and digital skills. The report revealed that only 31% of rural women in India own smartphones, while the figure for men is 51%. To bridge this gap, government initiatives can provide subsidies for smartphones for women farmers.

Additionally, it is important to incorporate digital literacy training in self-help groups. What do you think has a greater impact in limiting women's access to technology: financial barriers or social norms? Small-scale solutions like solar pumps, digital payment systems, and microloans can bring immediate, significant improvements. On the other hand, broader reforms like land rights and the adoption of agritech will require policy changes and take more time. In Odisha, the "Mission Shakti" initiative has successfully educated thousands of women in financial literacy and digital transactions. However, the e-NAM platform, India's digital agriculture marketplace, still struggles with low female participation due to land ownership challenges. Which strategy do you find more effective for empowering women: targeted, small-scale interventions or broader systemic reforms? Several women-led agritech startups are making significant progress in this area. For example, Apurva B.K. Kamal Kisan, founded by, provides affordable agricultural equipment for small-scale farmers, while Farmizen connects women farmers directly to urban consumers through an organic farm-to-table model. Should the government consider providing dedicated funds for women-led agritech ventures?

A collaborative approach that combines government policies, community initiatives, and private sector innovation is critical to ensure that women farmers in India have equal access to technology.

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SCCU unveils Mata Pingla Bhajan



Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Mar 17: This was a wonderful initiative where a bhajan dedicated to Mata Pingla, written and sung by Smt. V.D. Sarishta, a resident of Seuna, was released on the platform of Senior Citizens' Club - Udhampur (SCCU).

The event was presided over by the Club President, Mahadeep Singh Jamwal.

The presence of distinguished guests from various sections of society made the occasion even more special.

This event not only promoted spirituality and cultural awareness but also strengthened the values of Ganga-Jamuni

Tehzeeb, which the club actively fosters.

The audience thoroughly appreciated the bhajan, recognizing it as an inspiring effort to connect society through music, spirituality, and faith.

At the event, Mahadeep Singh Jamwal, President of Senior Citizens' Club - Udhampur, emphasized the significance of releasing devotional songs dedicated to religious deities.

He stated that such initiatives enhance the popularity of revered places, strengthen religious faith, and create awareness about these spiritual sites among a wider audience.

He further added that devotional music plays a vital role in connecting people with their spiritual roots and helps in preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

He appreciated V.D. Sarishta's contribution encouraged more such efforts to keep alive the essence of faith and devotion in society.

Others who spoke included Raj Guru General-Secretary of Club, Sandeep Khajuria, Promoter 'Meri Jaan Dogri', Meri Shaan Dogri', Suhani Vishal Katoch. V.D. Sarishta, writer and singer of the Bhajan thanked the SCCU for releasing her compilation.

Raman Suri condemns Bollywood artists for violating sanctity of Katra

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Executive Member Raman Suri has commended the Jammu and Kashmir Police for their swift action against Bollywood influencer Orhan Awatramani (Orry) and seven others for consuming liquor at a hotel in Katra, the base town of the holy Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine.

The police registered an FIR after receiving a complaint on March 15, stating that the accused were consuming alcohol at a hotel despite being explicitly informed that liquor and non-vegetarian food were prohibited in the vicinity of the revered pilgrimage site.

The crackdown was carried out under the supervision of SP Katra, DySP Katra, and SHO Katra.

Suri strongly condemned the actions of the accused, calling them a blatant disregard for the religious sentiments of Hindus. "Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine is one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites for Hindus, and any act that undermines its sanctity will not be tolerated.

Such irresponsible

behavior hurts the faith of millions of devotees who visit the shrine seeking spiritual solace," he asserted.

Raman Suri further warned against any attempts to play with Hindu sentiments, emphasizing that Katra is not a place for such activities.

"Those who try to disrupt the religious sanctity of our holy sites must face legal consequences. No one, regardless of their celebrity status, is above the law," Suri added.

The BJP leader urged authorities to remain vigilant and ensure that strict action is taken against anyone attempting to disturb the spiritual atmosphere of pilgrimage sites.

He also called upon visitors to respect the traditions and religious significance of such places.

"The government and law enforcement agencies must remain proactive in safeguarding the sanctity of our temples and pilgrimage centers. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi is a symbol of devotion and faith, and any attempts to defile its sanctity will be met with strong resistance," he concluded.

Plantation drive held at Panchari



Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Mar 17: A Plantation Drive was held at Block Panchari by District President, J&K Mountaineering Association Jammu in order to involve the local youth in the ongoing Green J&K Drive.

Tehsildar Panchari Vipam Kumar, Manohar Lal Sharma, Naib Tehsildar Lander, Parkash Singh, Pyar Chand, Sham Lal members of the Shavlik Mountaineering and Adventure Sports Club Jammu participated in the plantation drive.

During the drive Apple Grafted and Apricot Grafted were distributed and planted in Panchari

area. The mega fruit plantation drive is an initiative to tackle the issue of climate change for the protection of the environment and to improve the green cover in J&K.

On the occasion, District President Rakesh Goswami said that the spring season plantation is being carried out in all the Panchari area of Udhampur Region and more than 300 fruit plants shall be planted by ending of March 2025 and it is mentioned by District President in last year 300 plants of different varieties were distributed and planted.

Sanjeev Singh, Horticulture Technician of Panchari Zone highlighted the importance

of planting cash crops such as walnuts, apples and apricots for the benefits and economically upliftment of living standard of farmers. Technical support shall be provided by the Horticulture Department to farmer.

Tehsildar & Naib Tehsildar Panchari also appreciated Rakesh Goswami, District President for organizing this Mega Plantation Drive.

In last, Rakesh Goswami expressed gratitude to Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar and Sanjeev Singh, Horticulture Technician of Panchari Zone for providing guidance in distribution to needy and poor people of the area.

Seminar on Cyber Hygiene and Regulations held to promote digital safety

Top News Report

AKHNOOR, Mar 17: A seminar on Cyber Hygiene and Regulations was successfully conducted at GDC Akhnoor to raise awareness about safe online practices and cyber security regulations. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from around 100 students, along with esteemed faculty members and experts in the field.

The resource persons for the seminar included Ashok Kumar (General Secretary) and Arvinder Paul Singh from Helpage Social Welfare Society (NGO), Ajay Kumar and Kamal Sharma from BSNL, Goverdhan Singh from Airtel, and Rajinder Kumar from JIO.

They shared valuable insights on the role of the Telecom Regula-

tory Authority of India (TRAI) in ensuring digital security, methods to safeguard personal data, protection against cyber threats, and the legal aspects of cyber crime.

The session was formally inaugurated by Dr. Pinki Manhas, who welcomed the guests and emphasized the importance of cyber hygiene in today's digital era. Organizing committee members including Dr. Monika Malhotra, Dr. Pinki Manhas, Dr. Seema, Dr. Vishali Sharma, Dr. Amit Kumar and Dr. Kanchan actively contributed to the discussions.

The experts highlighted key cyber security measures such as creating strong passwords, enabling two-factor authentication, recognizing phishing attacks, and staying updated

with cyber laws and regulations.

Additionally, they elaborated on TRAI's policies and their role in regulating the digital and telecom sectors to ensure a safer online environment.

The seminar concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Amit Kumar, who expressed gratitude to the esteemed speakers, faculty members, and students for their active participation in making the session engaging and informative.

This initiative successfully enhanced awareness among students and faculty about the significance of cyber hygiene and the necessary measures to ensure online safety in an increasingly digital world.

NSS unit of GDC Samba inaugurates 7-day camp

Top News Report

SAMBA, Mar 17: The NSS unit of SPPND Government Degree College Samba, inaugurated its 7 days special camp with a visit to a special school, focusing on engagement and inclusivity. NSS Volunteers distributed crayons to the children, encouraging creativity and self-expression through art.

To add joy to the day, a fun-filled "Blow the Balloon" activity was organized, bringing smiles to the faces of the children as they actively participated alongside NSS volunteers.

The NSS unit will hold a series of events including Blood donation Camp, Anganwari Visit, Awareness Campaign on Drug Addiction, Poster Making, Rally, Wall Paint, Swachh Bharat Campaign and lecture on Personal Health and Hygiene in the forthcoming week.

Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Twinkle Suri, lauded the initiative, emphasizing the role of youth in community service. She highlighted that such activities foster empathy, teamwork and a sense of social responsibility among students. The camp will continue with various interactive and service-oriented programs throughout the week, aimed at holistic development and community outreach.

Residents of Laxmipuram demand for removing of water logging on road due to poor drainage



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: The residents of Laxmipuram, Sector-B-2, JMC ward N0.62, are grappling with severe inconvenience due to water accumulation in the area, as highlighted by Social & Political activist, Kuldeep Kumar Rao, in a press statement issued here said that the lot of water has got blocked in way

between the Chowk near the residence of Om Parkash Kotwal & Modern Secular Institute of Education, causing distress to the public.

The situation has worsened due to poor drainage & improper infrastructure, making daily movement difficult for residents.

In light of the ongoing issue, Rao has appealed to Dy. Chief

Minister, Surinder Kumar Chaudhary and the concerned MLA Jammu North, Sham Lal Sharma, to personally intervene and direct the concerned authorities to visit the site, assess the situation and take immediate remedial measures to alleviate the sufferings of the local populace. Furthermore, Rao also called for the urgent repair of the road stretching from the residence of Om Parkash Kotwal to Chinore-Pattian road via the residence of Joginder Pal Thapa, stressing the need for swift action to ensure better connectivity and relief for commuters. Residents now await immediate intervention from the authorities to resolve the issue before it escalates further.

DPS Jammu students shine in SOF National Science Olympiad

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Continuing its legacy of excellence, the students of Delhi Public School (DPS), Jammu, have once again made their mark on the national stage by achieving outstanding success in the National Science Olympiad (NSO) organized by the Science Olympiad Foundation (SOF).

The Olympiad, conducted offline on 12th November 2024, witnessed the participation of bright young minds from across the country, and the recently declared results have brought immense pride to the school.

A total of 31 meritorious students from DPS Jammu secured top honours, winning the prestigious gold medals of distinction, and certificates of distinction, a testament to their academic brilliance and

scientific acumen.

Gold Medal of Distinction & Certificate of Distinction Winners were Safal Pranjal (Class VII), Chirag Luthra (Class VIII), Rishita Mahajan (Class VIII).

Gold Medal of Excellence Winners were Class III: Sachika Kohli, Mohammad Zayan, Anhadpreet Singh. Class IV: Ayank Jaiswal, Amanah Adeen, Avni Suri, Upmanyu Sharma. Class V: Yatharth Salathia, Shivika Manhas, Aayush Silwal. Class VI: Namanveer Singh Bhalwal, Niaa Verma, Advik Khosla. Class VII: Sabal Chagotra, Paras Gupta, Mohd Umair Malik. Class VIII: Smarth Saini, Sana Gupta, Navya Vuthoo. Class IX: Taransh Mahajan, Ridham Pal Singh, Parv. Class X: Tarini Gupta, Manit Sharma, Ketan Gupta. Class XI: Arihant Manhas, Danish Talwar,

Neelaksh Pargal.

The distinguished management of DPS Jammu, under the visionary leadership of President-RCT, Ajatshatru Singh, Pro VC, Dr. Ritu Singh, and Director, S.S. Sodhi, along with Principal, Ruchi Chabra, congratulated the young achievers, their proud parents, and the dedicated faculty for their unwavering support and guidance.

A special appreciation was extended to the Olympiad Coordinators, Dr. Paramjeet Singh and Navneet Kaur, for their relentless efforts in nurturing the scientific temperament among students.

DPS Jammu remains committed to fostering academic excellence and empowering its students to excel in competitive platforms at national and international levels.

Literary Club of GCW Gandhi Nagar hosts book review event

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: The Reading/Literary Club of Government College for Women (GCW), Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, organized an intellectually enriching event centred on book reviews and literary discussions.

The event was held in the college smart classroom and witnessed enthusiastic participation from the students.

The event was conducted in the presence and guidance of Prof. Archana Bakshi- Convenor Literary club & HOD English, Dr. Anuradha Seth - Librarian, Dr. Bindu Chib - HOD Hindi, Dr. Tarsem - HOD Dogri, Dr. Vipin and Dr. Jasmeet.

The gathering aimed to promote a culture of critical thinking, literary appreciation, and a deeper engagement



with diverse texts among students.

The event commenced with a warm welcome address by the Librarian- Dr. Anuradha Seth, who highlighted the significance of literary conversations in today's fast-paced world and emceed by the anchor, Palshin Dutta.

She emphasized how books act as mirrors

to society and tools for shaping informed perspectives. A total of 25 students and several esteemed professors participated in the session, sharing their reviews and interpretations of various literary works spanning different genres, cultures, and time periods.

Each participant offered critical insights

and personal reflections on the selected texts, making the event both insightful and thought-provoking. The students showcased their analytical skills and creative expression, demonstrating a mature understanding of literary nuances.

Their presentations were followed by interactive discussions, where

professors shared their expert perspectives, enriching the discourse with academic depth and contextual clarity.

The event ended with a vote of thanks and a token of appreciation presented to the participants by the Literary Club Coordinator, who acknowledged the efforts of all participants and encouraged more such initiatives in the future.

The success of this event marks another step in GCW Gandhi Nagar's ongoing commitment to holistic education and nurturing a vibrant academic environment.

The Literary Club continues to be a dynamic platform for students to express themselves, discover new ideas, and grow as articulate, thoughtful individuals.

Pranjal Khandhdiya, producer of the romcom Sweet Dreams, is excited to create something out of just a thought

Filmmaking for Pranjal Khandhdiya was pretty accidental. A Gujarati, born and brought up in Mumbai, there was hardly an opportunity for an absolute outsider to enter the industry. Beginning as a live events' director, he moved on to directing television shows; and then films with Red Chillies Entertainment and multinational film studios, to finally becoming an independent film producer.

His filmy journey reflects in the production houses he has established—Mango People Media and Outsiders Films—and it is his way of signalling that he has arrived, and how! "Telling stories on a big scale has always been my motivation," says Khandhdiya, whose latest romcom Sweet Dreams, which premiered on Disney+ Hotstar, has been received well by the audience.

While the actors fetch limelight, increasingly, directors too have become visible, but the producers largely remain behind the shadows still. What made him choose this branch of filmmaking? "It's very exciting to

create something out of just a thought. This thrills me to the core." It sure comes with its own set of challenges. Filmmaking being a human-intensive work, the pressure on the producer to lead the team is often too high. "A producer has to manoeuvre and ensure that the film is complete and gets a due release," he shares.

Khandhdiya's professional journey has been nothing short of a filmy story. From being an outsider with no godfather in the industry, to being able to direct and produce for television and films has been the biggest high for him. "As an independent producer, I am now finding a unique voice for myself and my productions. On a lighter note, I have seen the perks of a studio executive drawing a seven-figure monthly salary and now as an independent producer, cutting cheques for many people who work with us. Life's been pretty amazing."

What's in a name? Mango People Media and Outsiders Films are more than just company names for Khandhdiya. "It's an emotional identi-



ty for us," he says. Neha Anand is his partner at Mango People Media (the significance here being the aam aadmi). She is also Khandhdiya's life partner. Whereas his partnership in Outsiders Films is marked by his friendship with Taapsee Pannu. "We both have worked our ways up in the industry and now feel the need to

tell stories with creative liberties. Our ideology behind these names is representative of who we are and, in a way, inspire people to dream about joining the industry."

Khandhdiya finds a deep connect with this region. "I am married to a Punjabi. My previous films Mubarakan and Soorma have been

shot in Punjab, and have highlighted stories from there. In fact, our next comedy film is also set in Ambala."

He is pretty kicked about his upcoming projects. Besides the Dhak Dhak sequel, a mega web series on the life and times of Maharani Gayatri Devi is in the pipeline. "I feel that we do not have enough documentation of our modern royal history. These were different times when our kings were richer than the Queen of England. It's their royal fairy tale story, which ended up with monarchy coming to an end. This is one very fascinating part of our history and I am very excited to make this," he signs off.

Playing favourites
Film: Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara: For the sheer celebration of life.

Actor: Ranbir Kapoor: For his unique ability to blend and own up characters.

Actress: Alia Bhatt: For her versatility.

Director: Sanjay Leela Bhansali: For the master craftsmanship.

Music composer: Pritam: For great melodies.

Actress Geeta Basra says Punjabi film Mehr has the vibe of the '90s



Health, happiness and peace is what Geeta Basra wishes for herself and her loved ones. Enjoying a working birthday recently (March 13), along with the cast and crew of the film Mehr, at Seville, Geeta enjoyed her day to the fullest.

Not a party person per se, good food, music

and masti marked her celebrations. Enjoying City Beautiful through the shoot, Geeta shared, "We do have a house in the city but we usually go to Jalandhar, where my parents-in-law and extended family is. But I am really enjoying Chandigarh now that I am here." Birthdays are sure special

and she recounts her last, when she was in Goa with her girl pals, as a special one. "We had long been planning a girls' trip and last year we finally took it on my birthday. It was awesome. The pleasant weather in Goa, along with my friends, was truly special. This time it is also special with Mehr's team," she beamed.

Mehr marks the Punjabi debut for Raj Kundra, who was last seen in biographical drama UT69. Geeta is upbeat about the film and her co-actor Raj. "Mehr brings in that entertaining '90s vibe — high on action, romance and emotions. It is a family drama to the hilt." In Raj Kundra she finds a fun co-actor. "He is a fantastic actor and the most enjoyable person to be with. Working with him is absolutely delightful."

Almost over with the shoot in Chandigarh, Geeta is looking forward to the Manikaran shoot. "We are heading out to Himachal after this and I am super-excited about it." With a South Indian film project and another one in Hindi lined up, the Dil Diya Hai actress is sure in a happy space.

Shot for Paatal Lok Season 2 and Baksho Bondi back to back, says Tillotama Shome

Actress Tillotama Shome says she shot for her latest film Baksho Bondi three days after she finished work on the second season of Paatal Lok, both projects in which she played women who weren't 'decorative' pieces. While the latest chapter of Paatal Lok saw the actress essay the role of SP Meghna Barua, a no-nonsense Nagamese-speaking cop, Baksho Bondi stars her as a Bengali woman named Maya, who works multiple jobs to support her family in a dusty Kolkata suburb.

Paatal Lok season two premiered on Prime Video in January and Baksho Bondi premiered last month at the 75th Berlin International Film Festival under the newly introduced section, Perspectives.

"I shot for Baksho Bondi three days after I wrapped Paatal Lok (season two). So, I carried all the wishes of the team of Paatal Lok with me to Baksho Bondi," Shome said.

"In both the projects, women are not decorative and actually have something to say and do. I'm so glad to be living this phase of my life," the 45-year-old added.

Baksho Bondi, titled Shadow Box in English, follows Maya, who, along with her teenage son, tries to keep their family together when her husband, a retired soldier suffering from PTSD, goes missing in the middle of the night under suspicious circumstances. The Bengali film is co-directed by debutants Tanushree Das and Saumyananda Sahi, who has also penned the screenplay. Asked what made her trust the first-time filmmakers, Shome said the script spoke volumes about the people behind the script.

"You can have wonderful scripts written by extremely dysfunctional people and I really was hoping against hope that was not the case. I was happy to



be proven right. And for that illusion in my heart to survive... This work affected me so deeply because the people were going to play an important part in my life."

Nice collaboration

The actor, also known for Monsoon Wedding, Qissa, Sir, Lust Stories 2, and Delhi Crime 2, said in her very first meeting with the filmmakers, she realised that it would be a privilege for her to collaborate with them. "In our 40s, friendships are very intentional and meetings are not just chances. For me, being able to commemorate a friendship like this with a film like this was truly extraordinary," she added.

Shome has received rave reviews and critical acclaim for Baksho Bondi, which explores themes of class, privilege, family dynamics and mental health. Shome, who is yet to sign her next gig, said being part of wonderful projects has been a fulfilling experience which has also 'spoilt' her in a way.

Baksho Bondi also stars Chandan Bisht, Sayan Karmakar and Suman Saha.

Almost no difference in acting between films and OTT series: Sheeba Chadha

Actor Sheeba Chadha, known for her roles in movies such as "Badhaai Do" and "Dum Laga Ke Haisha" as well as series like "Mirzapur" and "Bandish Bandits", says there is hardly any difference between working in a feature film and web shows.

According to the actor, the only difference could be that a performer is allowed more time to get into the depth of their character.

"I really don't find much difference. The crews are so osmotic that people working in one medium are also working for the other. One is long format and the other has finiteness in features. Actors like us get more compounded, fleshed-out characters in OTT with more space and time to explore, which is not possible in a film."

"That difference is there. In the sheer experience of working, I don't find it much different. In the performance, I don't find any difference... But sometimes a really well-nuanced and well-written character in a film too will give you that (satisfaction). You can have a long drawn out, fleshed-out series in a character but it might not give you the same satisfaction," Chadha told



agency in an interview.

The acclaimed actor started her career with 1998's "Dil Se..." and played pivotal roles in "Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam", "Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani", "Murder", "Parzania", "Delhi-6", "Raees", "Gully Boy", and "Doctor G", among others.

Chadha, 52, said she didn't have any 'ideal or dream character' on her list.

Asked how she chooses her characters, she said: "There is no science to it. I don't go about it in a very detailed way. Of course, the charac-

ter has to be interesting enough with a definitive space in the story. After that, it's just the maths of dates, money and other things. It's quite simple." Chadha, also a well-known theatre actor, said she is not getting enough time to do plays due to her busy work schedule.

"Yes, I am doing less theatre. I don't think I should be calling myself a theatre practitioner right now, because I am not practising theatre right now," she added.

The actor said she earlier used to think that being away from the stage would be impossible for her.

"But I have found out that it has not been so. Organically, cinema and OTT have been at the centre of my life now, but it's (theatre) not going to go anywhere. Right now it's just not allowing me the time and investment needed for theatre."

"You can't just start a rehearsal (for a play) and say one of my film projects has come and I am not going to do it. You cannot do that. I am not finding that kind of space right now to truly invest, but in times to come it will happen, I know it. I will be doing it for sure." Chadha also said she hasn't been able to watch many movies in the recent years due to her work engagements.

"Especially Malayalam cinema that I really want to start watching. I have been hearing wonderful stuff about it," she said, adding that every kind of cinema has its place in society.

Bollywood has its place because its reach is of another kind and everybody consumes Hindi cinema all over the country, added the actor.

"Now, we have access to regional cinema. When we started, we used to watch a lot of world cinema, but not

so much regional. Of course, (Satyajit) Ray and (Ritwik) Ghatak used to be classics. Now, we have a lot of Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam (films). So, any kind of cinema is good. The more we can make, the better." Chadha, who has portrayed some of the most layered characters in cinema, said it is immaterial if a film telling a story of a woman is directed by a man or a woman.

"It depends on how deeply you are immersed in the story that you want to tell. Then I think beyond a point gender may not matter so much," she added.

When asked if Indian cinema, especially Bollywood, has been true in projecting women, the actor said she wasn't sure if it was easy to answer this question.

"At all points of time, people will be represented and shown as in the society, maybe not on centre stage. One will have films where one sees a lot of representation in a more nuanced and explorative way, and we are seeing that over time. Has it been done to its best? Probably not. That scope is limitless for any kind of exploration because it (cinema) is evolving."

'All We Imagine As Light', 'Santosh' actor Shahana Goswami win big at Asian Film Awards

Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine As Light", "Santosh" star Shahana Goswami and its director Sandhya Suri won top honours at the Asian Film Awards 2025.

The 18th edition of the awards took place at the Xiqu Centre in the West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong.

The Asian Film Awards shared the winners list

on its official website.

"All We Imagine As Light" went on to win the Best Film award. It was in the competition alongside "Black Dog" (China), "Exhuma" (South Korea), "Teki Cometh" (Japan) and "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In" (Hong Kong). Goswami was named the Best Actress for her role in "Santosh", which

also won Suri the trophy of Best New Director.

"All We Imagine As Light", an official India-French co-production, charted history by becoming the first Indian title from India to win the Grand Prix Award at the Cannes Film Festival last year.

The widely-feted Malayalam-Hindi movie



follows two nurses Prabha (Kani Kusruti) and Anu (Divya Prabha) from Kerala navigating life and love in Mumbai along with their friend and cook Parvaty (Chhaya Kadam).

"Santosh" revolves around a newly widowed housewife (Goswami) as she inherits her late husband's job as a police

constable and becomes embroiled in the investigation of a young girl's murder. It is a joint production of India, United Kingdom, France, Germany.

Other nominees in the Best Actress category were: Kani Kusruti ("All We Imagine..."), Sylvia Chang ("Daughter's Daughter"), Kawai

Yuumi ("Desert of Namibia"), and Kim Go-eun ("Exhuma").

Suri, a British-Indian filmmaker, bested Yamanaka Yoko ("Desert of Namibia"), Sora Neo ("Happyend"), Dong Zijian ("My Friend An Delie"), and Truong Minh Quy ("Viê and Nam") in the Best New Director category.

Prez asks naval officers to continuously update knowledge about latest technological developments

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): President Droupadi Murmu on Monday asked naval services officers to continuously update their knowledge about the latest technological developments around the globe.

At a time when global geopolitical tensions are rising, countries are enhancing maritime cooperation and undertaking joint exercises, she said while addressing officer trainees of the Indian Naval Material Management Service



and the Indian Naval Armament Service who had called on the president at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

With India acquiring a bigger role on the global stage, naval services

officers will play important roles in supporting the Indian Navy through efficient logistics management by leveraging advanced technologies, Murmu said.

The president advised

the officers to continuously update their knowledge about the latest technological developments around the globe, according to an official statement.

She told them to adopt

innovative approaches to make inventory management and service delivery systems seamless and effective.

Murmu urged the officers to dedicate themselves to the service of the nation and the Indian Navy.

She expressed confidence that they would contribute towards nation-building by providing the best services to the Indian Navy, according to the statement issued by her office.

Sonia, Mamata among those who inquired about my health: VP Jagdeep Dhankhar



NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee were among the leaders who got in touch with the family of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar to inquire about his health after he was hospitalised for cardiac-related ailments.

Dhankhar revealed this in the Rajya Sabha on Monday as he resumed chairing the proceedings of the House.

He said he was "greatly touched" by the concerns expressed across party lines which contributed to his speedy recovery.

"The Leader of the House (and Union Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mallikarjun Kharge) were the first ones to get in touch with my family.

"Sonia Gandhi got in touch with my wife as did the chief

ministers of several states including West Bengal," he added.

Gandhi was present in the House when Dhankhar mentioned this.

Dhankhar, who is also the chairman of the Rajya Sabha, was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in the national capital on March 9 following cardiac-related ailments. He was discharged on March 12 and advised to take adequate rest.

In the Rajya Sabha on Monday, he said the concern shown was an "enlightenment" to him that "when it comes to a situation (like this), our hearts are connected".

"This will be a source of inspiration and enlightenment to me," he said.

He went on to say that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others visited him in the hospital and several others too wanted to but couldn't due to

restrictions.

"I express my deep sense of gratitude," he said, adding there was hardly anyone who had not shown concern over his health.

Narrating his conversation with TMC leader Derek O'Brien last week, Dhankhar said he had called the opposition leader to wish him on his birthday, but he advised him to take rest.

"Derek O'Brien, irrepresible as usual, when I called him on his birthday during this period, he said shut up (and) take rest," Dhankhar said.

The period he referred to was the one when he was recuperating.

Monday was the first day when Dhankhar chaired the Rajya Sabha proceedings since being discharged from the hospital.

Earlier, Leader of the House and Union Minister Nadda wished for his speedy recovery and resumption of duties. He also wished Dhankhar good health and a long life.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Kharge.

He said that he thought the Rajya Sabha chairman would not attend the House for another four to six days. Kharge said he was pleasantly surprised by Dhankhar's enthusiasm and dedication towards work and resuming office quickly.

PM Modi holds bilateral meeting with visiting New Zealand PM Luxon

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): PM Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of New Zealand Christopher Luxon held a bilateral meeting at the Hyderabad House in the national capital on Monday.

"PM Narendra Modi warmly welcomed PM Christopher Luxon of New Zealand at Hyderabad House today. Extensive discussions on - bilateral relationship lie ahead," MEA official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

Luxon had arrived in the city on Sunday on a five-day official visit to India. Earlier this morning the New Zealand PM paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat.

The meeting comes amid a growing push to enhance bilateral ties, with both leaders set to discuss economic cooperation, trade expansion, and regional security. The visit has already seen the announcement of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two nations.

During his visit, Luxon emphasised New Zealand's commitment to deepening ties with India, calling the Indian government "incredibly generous and very welcoming." He highlighted that he has brought the largest-ever delegation of business and community leaders to accompany a New Zealand Prime Minister on a foreign trip, underscoring the importance of strengthening economic and cultural ties. Speaking to reporters, Luxon stressed the immense potential in India-New Zealand relations and how trade expansion would benefit the New Zealand economy.

Luxon also acknowledged the significant role of the Indian community in New Zealand, noting that Indian-Kiwis are the third-largest ethnic group in the country, the largest source of skilled migrants, and the second-largest contributor to international student enrolments. He praised their contributions across various sectors, reinforcing the deep people-to-people



connections between the two nations. Luxon met with community and business leaders who travelled with him and was also seen with cricketers Ajaz Patel and Ross Taylor, further highlighting the strong cultural links between the two countries.

Luxon arrived in New Delhi on Sunday and met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who appreciated his commitment to strengthening India-New Zealand relations.

Luxon is set to be the chief guest and keynote speaker at the Raisina Dialogue, India's

premier conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, which will be inaugurated by PM Modi.

Following his meeting with PM Modi, Luxon is expected to witness the exchange of MoUs at Hyderabad House before heading to Rashtrapati Bhavan to meet President Droupadi Murmu.

With diplomatic relations dating back to 1952, India and New Zealand continue to build on their shared Commonwealth ties, democratic values, and commitment to economic growth and regional stability.

Tulsi Gabbard, Rajnath Singh hold talks; focus on expanding defence ties

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard on Monday held wide-ranging talks focusing on enhancing the overall India-US strategic ties, especially in areas of defence and information sharing.

Gabbard arrived in the national capital early Sunday on a two-and-a-half-day trip in the first high-level visit to India by a top official of the Donald Trump administration.

In a social media post, Singh said he was "happy" to meet the US national intelligence chief and that they discussed ways to further deepen the India-US partnership.

"We discussed a wide range of issues which include defence and information sharing, aiming to further deepen the India-US partnership," he said.

Gabbard's talks with Singh came a day after she met National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and attended a conclave of global intelligence



czars in the national capital that was hosted by India.

In their one-on-one meeting, Doval and Gabbard mainly discussed ways to strengthen intelligence sharing and working closely in the security domain in sync with the India-US global strategic partnership, it is learnt.

The US Director of National Intelligence, Canadian spy chief Daniel Rogers and UK National Security Advisor Jonathan Powell were among top global

intelligence czars who attended the India-hosted security conclave that was chaired by Doval.

The deliberations at the conclave were held behind closed doors.

It is learnt that the top intelligence and security officials focused on sharing of intelligence and cooperation to tackle terrorism and threats posed by emerging technologies.

The meeting also focused on security in the Indo-Pacific

region, cooperation to counter terror funding and money laundering, and issues related to extradition and immigration, people familiar with the matter said.

The Indian side also raised concerns about anti-India elements operating from foreign soil, including pro-Khalistan elements, they said.

Intelligence chiefs of the UK and New Zealand and several other friendly countries of India were learnt to have attended the conclave.

The intelligence chiefs were understood to have also deliberated on various global challenges, including implications of the Russia-Ukraine war and the conflict in the Middle East.

Gabbard is visiting India as part of a multi-nation tour of Japan, Thailand and France.

She will also address the Raisina Dialogue on Tuesday.

Last month, Gabbard met Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Washington DC.

Modi govt robbing people: Kharge on petrol, diesel prices

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday slammed the government for not transferring the benefits of the reduction in crude oil prices to the people.

For how long will the BJP keep collecting "ransom" from the public, Kharge asked as he shared a media report, which said that crude oil prices are at a 42-month low, and accused the Modi government of "robbing" the people.

"The price of crude oil has been continuously falling, petrol and diesel prices have not



been reduced... Modi government is robbing the public fearlessly!" Kharge said in a post in Hindi on X.

"Modi ji only tells his 'Mann Ki Baat' to the public through long one-sided podcasts," he said and claimed that the PM

is making people shed tears due to inflation.

"Crude oil prices have fallen by 34 per cent since May 2014. Tax collection game of Rs 36 lakh crores in 10 years! When will the price of petrol and diesel be reduced?" he said.

Four children charred to death in Jharkhand's Chaibasa

CHAIBASA, Mar 17 (Agencies): Four children were charred to death in a fire that broke out in a haystack near their house in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district on Monday, police said.

The incident happened in Gitilipi village in the Jagannathpur police station area in Chaibasa around 11 am, they said.

"A team has been sent to the spot for a detailed investigation," Superintendent of Police Ashutosh Shekhar told agency.

The children were playing near the haystack when the fire broke out, he said.

The exact cause of the fire is being ascertained, he added.

Six sites added to India's tentative list by UNESCO's World Heritage Centre: Shekhawat

NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): Six sites, including Mudumal Megalithic Menhirs in Telangana and palace-fortresses of the Bundelas in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, have been added to India's tentative list by the UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said on Monday.

Other sites included in the list are Kanger Valley National Park in Chhattisgarh, Ashokan Edict Sites along the Mauryan Routes

(multiple states), Chausath Yogini temples (multiple states) and Gupta temples in north India (multiple states), the minister said in the Lok Sabha.

Shekhawat said this while replying to a suggestion by BJP MP Sambit Patra to take the initiative to include Puri's Jagannath Rath Yatra in the UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Shekhawat said it was a good suggestion given by Patra.

The six new sites were added to the list



on March 7, the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO said in a statement.

Addition to the World Heritage Centre's tentative list is mandatory if a property is to be nominated for inscription to the World Heritage List in future.

With these additions, India now has 62 sites on the tentative list, an inventory of properties each country intends to consider for UNESCO nomination.

According to the UNESCO website, the Chausath Yogini temples, considered seri-

ally, include sites at multiple locations in the country.

At present, a total of 43 properties from India are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, including 35 in the 'Cultural' category, seven in 'Natural' and one in 'Mixed' category.

India hosted a World Heritage Committee meeting for the first time in 2024, during which the Moidams — the mound-burial system of the Ahom Dynasty in Assam — was accorded the coveted UNESCO tag.

Trump to speak to Putin as Russia demands 'ironclad' guarantees for Ukraine deal

Russia is demanding 'ironclad' security guarantees in a peace treaty with Ukraine to end the three-year war, as talks advance on a US-proposed 30-day ceasefire.

WASHINGTON, Mar 17 (Agencies): US President Donald Trump said that he planned to speak with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Tuesday to further discussions on ending the war in Ukraine. It came hours after the Kremlin, on Monday, sought "ironclad" guarantees that NATO countries would exclude Kyiv from its membership and that Ukraine would remain neutral.

"We want to see if we can bring that war to an end. Maybe we can, maybe we can't, but I think we have a very good chance I'll be speaking to President Putin on Tuesday. A lot of work's been done over the weekend," the US President told reporters.

The US has proposed a 30-day ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has agreed to it. Moscow has also agreed to the deal "in principle," but Russian President Vladimir Putin said that certain conditions must be addressed before signing any agreement to end the three-year war.

Stressing that any lasting peace treaty must meet Moscow's demands, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said, "We will demand that ironclad security guarantees become part of this agreement".

Reaffirming Russia's strong opposition to NATO forces in Ukraine, Grushko stated, "Part



of these guarantees should be the neutral status of Ukraine, the refusal of NATO countries to accept it into the alliance".

He added, "It does not matter under what label NATO contingents were to be deployed on Ukrainian territory: be it the European Union, NATO, or in a national capacity".

Responding to the US peace proposals last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that Moscow "supports the idea of ending this conflict through peaceful means" but emphasised the need to address fundamental issues for lasting peace.

"The idea itself is correct, and we certainly support it. But there are issues that we need to discuss. And I think we need to talk to our American colleagues as well," Putin said in Moscow.

On March 14, US President Donald Trump stated that Washington had a productive discussion with Putin and expressed optimism that there was a "very

good chance" the war between Russia and Ukraine could end soon.

"We had very good and productive discussions with President Vladimir Putin of Russia yesterday, and there is a very good chance that this horrible, bloody war can finally come to an end," Trump said, referring to the talks held by US envoy Steve Witkoff.

Putin had sent Trump a message about his ceasefire plan via Witkoff, expressing "cautious optimism" that a deal could be reached to end the conflict.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, while expressing hope for a swift end to the war, accused Putin of imposing conditions to delay the process.

"Putin is afraid to tell President Trump directly that he wants to continue this war and keep killing Ukrainians. That's why, in Moscow, they are surrounding the ceasefire idea with such preconditions that it either fails or gets dragged out for as long as

possible," he said earlier.

Zelenskyy has consistently said that the sovereignty of his country is not negotiable and that Russia must surrender the territory it has seized. Russia seized the Crimea peninsula in 2014 and now controls most of the four eastern Ukrainian regions since it invaded the country in 2022.

Trump said, "We will be talking about land. We will be talking about power plants".

Earlier this month, US and Russian delegations held a lengthy meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where both countries agreed to mend their ties, with the first step being an end to the Ukraine war. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy strongly rejected the outcome of the Jeddah talks, stating that any decision made without Kyiv's involvement would be unacceptable.

In the following days, tensions rose between the two leaders, leading to a war of words, with even Donald Trump calling Zelenskyy a dictator. The tensions culminated in an explosive Oval Office clash, after which Zelenskyy was asked to leave the White House.

However, Zelenskyy later softened his stance towards the US while continuing to target Russian President Vladimir Putin. The US and Ukraine held talks in Jeddah last week, and subsequently, Zelenskyy announced his agreement to the ceasefire.

Pak's NA speaker summons closed-door session, military leadership to brief lawmakers on security situation



ISLAMABAD, Mar 17 (Agencies): Pakistan's National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq has convened an in-camera meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security on Tuesday, amid a surge in the deadly terror attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has asked the National Assembly speaker to convene the security meeting at Parliament House on Tuesday at 1:30 pm, Dawn reported on Monday.

The military leadership will provide a comprehensive briefing to the parliamentary committee on the prevailing security situation, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The development comes in the wake of a series of deadly terror attacks in the two provinces, which share a

border with neighbouring Afghanistan.

Citing a source in the National Assembly, Dawn reported that since no parliamentary committee on security was formed, therefore, members of the Standing Committees on Defence and Foreign Affairs from the National Assembly, federal cabinet members, chief ministers of the four provinces and leaders of all parliamentary parties or their representatives will attend the closed-door session.

Prime Minister Sharif and Army Chief Gen Asim Munir will join the briefing.

Meanwhile, the government is said to be planning a massive operation against the BLA and other terror groups, involved in growing terror attacks in the province, the paper reported.

One of the Prime Minister's aides, Rana Ahsan Afzal, said the

government will soon convene a Multi-Party Conference (MPC) to discuss the security situation.

He also revealed plans to carry out a massive operation against terrorists in Balochistan but did not offer any details.

On Sunday, five people, including three security personnel, were killed and 30 others injured when a paramilitary convoy was attacked by suspected Baloch militants in Noshki district of Balochistan.

The attack was claimed by the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).

Earlier last week, the BLA militants ambushed a train carrying 440 passengers in the same province and killed 21 passengers and four paramilitary soldiers. The army eliminated all 33 terrorists and rescued passengers.

On Sunday, three security personnel were killed in five separate terrorist attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces accounted for over 96 per cent of terrorist attacks and deaths in Pakistan in 2024.

World Uyghur Congress hails US sanctions on Thai officials over Uyghur deportations

MUNICH, Mar 17 (Agencies): The World Uyghur Congress (WUC) has expressed its appreciation for the recent sanctions imposed by the US State Department on Thai officials involved in the deportation of Uyghur refugees to China.

In a statement shared on the social media platform X, WUC stated, "The World Uyghur Congress welcomes and thanks the US Department of State for imposing sanctions on Thai officials involved in the deportation of Uyghurs to China. This decisive action sends a strong message that complicity in persecution of Uyghurs will not go unpunished. We urge other governments to follow this example and take concrete measures to protect Uyghur refugees and hold those responsible for their deportation accountable."

The US State Depart-

ment announced that it would impose sanctions on an undisclosed number of current and former Thai officials involved in deporting at least 40 Uyghur men to China, despite concerns they could be imprisoned or even executed there. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that he has swiftly taken action to enforce visa restrictions on those responsible for the deportations.

The deportation of Uyghur refugees from Thailand to China has been a long-standing point of contention for human rights organisations. Human rights organisations have urged countries to adopt policies that protect the rights and safety of Uyghur refugees, ensuring they are not forcibly returned to a country where they face grave human rights abuses.

Earlier, Amnesty International had also condemned Thailand's decision to deport Uyghur

detainees to China, calling it "unimaginably cruel." Sarah Brooks, Amnesty's China Director, emphasised that returning these Uyghurs to China exposes them to serious human rights violations, including torture, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance, as seen in Xinjiang. Brooks highlighted that the men had already suffered over a decade of arbitrary detention in Thailand after fleeing repression in China.

The Uyghurs, a Muslim ethnic group in China's Xinjiang region, face severe persecution, including mass detention in "re-education" camps, forced labour, surveillance, cultural suppression, and torture. According to several media reports, the Chinese government's crackdown aims to eliminate Uyghur identity, religion, and autonomy, leading to widespread human rights violations and international condemnation.

Canada's Carney to meet with European allies amid tensions with Trump administration

PARIS, Mar 17 (Agencies): New Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney arrived in Paris Monday to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron, seeking support from one of Canada's oldest allies as U.S. President Donald Trump continues to attack Canada's sovereignty and economy.

This is Carney's first official foreign trip since he was sworn in on March 14. He will next land in London where he will sit down with U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and King Charles III, the head of state in Canada.

Carney has deliberately chosen the two European capital cities that shaped Canada's early existence. During his swearing-in ceremony, he noted the country was built on the bedrock of three peoples, French, English and Indigenous, and said Canada is fundamentally different from America and will "never, ever, in any way shape or form, be part of the United States."



Since Trump came to office, he has imposed whopping tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum and repeatedly commented on turning Canada into the 51st state, infuriating Canadians and sparking a call to boycott U.S. products across the country.

On Monday, a senior Canadian government official briefed reporters on the plane before picking up Carney in Montreal, saying the purpose of the trip is to double down on partnerships with London and Paris.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity as he is not allowed to speak publicly, said Canada is a "good friend of the United States but

we all know what is going on."

Carney will visit the Notre-Dame Cathedral before meeting with Macron at the Palais de l'Élysée. However, Macron isn't expected to hold a joint news conference with Carney, a sign the French president might not want to upset Trump by siding with Canada.

Before returning to Ottawa on Tuesday, Carney will travel to the edge of Canada's Arctic to "reaffirm Canada's Arctic security and sovereignty." There, he is expected to call for a federal election within days, before the Canadian parliament resumes.

"The choice of this itin-

erary for Prime Minister Carney's first official trip emphasizes the strong connection of Canada with the arctic as well as with the two former colonial powers Canada remains attached to, through the Commonwealth on the U.K. side and La Francophonie on the France side, said Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal.

"The fact that Canada never broke away from the U.K. in a violent fashion is a key historical and institutional difference between the United States and Canada, a constitutional monarchy rather than a republic that has adopted and retained a U.K.-style parliamentary system."

The trip to London will be a bit of a homecoming, as Carney became the first non-British governor in the Bank of England's 319-year history when he took over the top job on July 1, 2013. He served until March 15, 2020.

Carney, a former cen-

tral banker who turned 60 on Sunday, has said he's ready to meet with Trump if he shows respect for Canadian sovereignty. He said he doesn't plan to visit Washington at the moment but hopes to have a phone call with the president soon. His government is also reviewing the purchase of U.S.-made F-35 fighter jets in light of Trump's trade war.

Meanwhile, Macron has been ramping up efforts to persuade France's allies to move away from purchases of American military hardware, which dovetails with Canada's rethink on F-35s and also coincides with mounting questions and concerns in Europe that European defenses are overly dependent on U.S. weaponry, technical support and goodwill.

Canada's governing Liberal Party had appeared poised for a historic election defeat this year until Trump declared economic war. Now the party and its new leader could come out on top.

Fighting erupts along Lebanon-Syria border after 3 Syrian soldiers killed

BEIRUT, Mar 17 (Agencies): Fighting erupted along the border between Lebanon and Syria overnight into Monday, Syrian state media reported, after three Syrian soldiers were killed in earlier clashes. The violence came a month after dayslong fighting between the Syrian military and armed Lebanese Shia groups closely allied with the ousted Bashar Assad government in Syria's Al-Qasr area. Lebanon has been seeking international support to boost funding for its military as it gradually deploys troops along its porous northern and eastern borders with Syria and along its

southern border with Israel. The Lebanese and Syrian armies said they are communicating with each other to ease tensions. Lebanese troops have been deployed in large numbers in the area. Families in the border areas fled toward Hermel in Syria amid the overnight clashes and shelling. Syria's interim government accused militants from the Lebanese Hezbollah group of crossing northeastern Lebanon into Syria on Saturday, kidnapping three soldiers and killing them on Lebanese soil. Hezbollah in a statement denied any involvement. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based

war monitor, said the Shia groups were involved. The circumstances of the incident remain unclear.

Syrian state media, citing an unnamed Defense Ministry official, said the Syrian army shelled "Hezbollah gatherings that killed the Syrian soldiers" along the border.

Though the clashes largely calmed before sunrise, Lebanese media reported low-level fighting at dawn after an attack on a Syrian military vehicle. The number of casualties remains unclear. The Lebanese military said it delivered the bodies of the three killed soldiers to their Syrian counterparts.

North Korea vows to 'strengthen' nuclear capabilities, rejecting G7 call for denuclearization

SEOUL, Mar 17 (Agencies): North Korea on Monday vowed to "steadily update and strengthen" its nuclear capabilities, a firm rejection of the G7's call for Pyongyang to "abandon" its nuclear ambitions.

The country's Foreign Ministry said that its "nuclear armed forces will exist forever as a powerful means of justice which defends the

sovereignty of the state, territorial integrity and fundamental interests," according to the Korean Central News Agency, a state-run media outlet.

North Korea's nuclear development program "prevents a war in the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia and guarantees a strategic stability of the world," a ministry spokesperson said on Monday.

North Korea's state-

ment followed last week's meeting of the G7 foreign ministers, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in Quebec, Canada.

Those ministers on Friday called on the secretive state to "abandon all its nuclear weapons and any other weapons of mass destruction as well as ballistic missile programs in accordance with all relevant

United Nations Security Council resolutions."

North Korean diplomats in their statement said the nuclear program was "fixed permanently" by the country's laws, adding that those laws "will not change according to the recognition of anyone."

North Korea is building a nuclear-power submarine, state media said earlier this month.

All JKSGRS to hold General Body Meeting on Mar 23

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: The All J&K Shree Guru Ravidass Sabha (JKSGRS) held a press conference to finalize preparations for the grand celebration of the 134th Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna Baba Sahib Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on April 14, 2025.

Additionally, the Sabha announced that the General Body Meeting (GBM) of the Biradari will be convened on March 23, 2025, at Krishna Nagar, Jammu, to discuss crucial matters regarding the election of the President and General Secretary for the 2025-27 term.

The newly elected Adhoc Committee of the Sabha convened under the leadership of Er R.C. Bhasin at its headquarters in Krishna Nagar, Jammu. During the meeting, it was unanimously decided that the 134th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar will be celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Sabha's headquarters. The



event will be a state-level celebration, with invitations extended to all SC/ST/OBC organizations, Sabhas, and Biradaris to participate.

In his address, Er. Bhasin emphasized that the 134th Birth Anniversary celebration will be a significant occasion, bringing together various community leaders at the Sabha's headquarters in Krishna Nagar, Jammu.

He also announced that the third GBM of the Sabha will take place on March 23, 2025, where important issues related to the election of the President

and General Secretary for the next term will be discussed. All prominent citizens, branch Sabha heads, and representatives from village and Mohalla committees are expected to participate.

The GBM follows the General Ijlas held on December 29, 2024, during which the former President and General Secretary were removed from their positions by the Biradari.

Er. D.K. Kalsotra informed that the election process has already begun, and membership booklets have been distributed to various branch

Sabhas, Mohalla Committees, and village committees. He announced that the last date for submitting the counterfoils of these booklets has been fixed for March 20, 2025.

All branch heads and committee leaders have been urged to ensure timely submission of membership records at the office of the Chairman, Election Board, at the Sabha's headquarters in Krishna Nagar, Jammu.

Furthermore, Er Kalsotra appealed to all Biradari members to participate in the election in large numbers and exercise their democratic right to elect a new President and General Secretary for the 2025-27 term. He assured that the election dates will be announced separately in due course.

The event is expected to be a momentous occasion for the Sabha, reflecting its commitment to upholding the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and strengthening the unity of the Biradari.

Samsung launches Galaxy F16 5G with Segment-Leading features in India

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, today announced the launch of the Galaxy F16 5G, expanding its popular Galaxy F series portfolio.

The Galaxy F16 5G continues the legacy of the Galaxy F series, offering fun and segment-leading features such as a stunning sAMOLED display, 50 MP triple camera, and a promise of six generations of Android upgrades and six years of security updates.

"The launch of the Galaxy F16 5G reaffirms our commitment to meaningful innovation, empowering users to reach their full potential. Galaxy F16 5G is tailored for Gen Z's fast-paced lifestyle and seamlessly blends performance, longevity, and fun for an exceptional user experience," said Akshay S Rao, Director, MX Business, Samsung India.

All New Design and Segment Leading Display Boasting a refreshing new design with a Ripple Glow Finish and measuring just 7.9mm slim, Galaxy F16 5G is crafted for both style and comfort. Galaxy F16 5G will feature segment-leading 6.7" FHD+ sAMOLED display, delivering stunning visuals with vibrant

colours and deep contrasts.

Featuring a stylish, linear-grouped camera design, Galaxy F16 5G's segment-leading 50MP triple-camera setup helps users capture stunning photos and videos. Galaxy F16 5G also features a 13MP front camera for stunning selfies.

Powerful Performance Powered by MediaTek Dimensity 6300 processor, Galaxy F16 5G ensures smooth multi-tasking and lag-free gaming.

Galaxy F16 5G comes with 5000mAh battery with 25W fast charging to keep users powered throughout the day. Galaxy Foundations Setting new industry benchmarks, Galaxy F16 5G will offer segment's best 6 generations of Android upgrades and 6 years of security updates, ensuring a future-ready experience.

Samsung is also introducing its innovative Tap & Pay feature with Samsung Wallet for the first time in this segment with the Galaxy F16 5G, allowing consumers to make secure payments effortlessly. Galaxy F16 5G will come in three stunning colours- Viving Blue, Glam Green and Bling Black and will be available on Flipkart, Samsung.com and across select retail stores.

Wage enhancement of Cooks-cum-Helpers to be taken up in upcoming PAB meeting: Sakeena Itoo

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Minister for School Education and Higher Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Monday informed the House that the matter of enhancement of wages of Cooks-cum-Helpers working under the PM POSHAN (Mid Day Meals Scheme) would be taken up in the upcoming Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting.

The Minister said this while replying a question raised by Muzaffar Iqbal Khan in the Legislative Assembly.

The Minister informed the House that as per the guidelines and norms of the Union Ministry for Education, with the sharing pattern of 90:10, the Cooks-cum-Helpers are being paid monthly honorarium of Rs.1000 only for preparation of single time meals.

The Minister informed that the demand for enhancement of honorarium of the Cooks-Cum-Helpers was projected during the previous meeting of PAB under the PM POSHAN scheme, but the same was not accepted with remarks that cooks-cum-helpers are uniformly paid throughout the country and the same cannot be enhanced in isolation for any state or UT.

The Minister also informed the House that there had been a provision for engagement of land donors as casual workers under SRO 520, but that has ceased to exist now and as such, there is no such policy by virtue of which employment can be provided to the land donors. She added that School Education department is providing land compensation under the UT CAPEX BUDGET to liquidate the claims of land donors in a phased manner including those of Thanamandi Constituency.

Mir Saifullah, Mehraj Malik and Balwant Singh Mankotia raised the supplementaries.

Cancer Awareness and Screening Camp held

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: In alignment with the visionary goal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to eliminate cancer from India, a transformative mega cancer awareness and screening campaign was successfully organized in Jammu from March 15 to March 17, 2025.

The event, spearheaded by the "World Cancer Care Charitable Society" in collaboration with the Health Employees Welfare Association Jammu, DGPC & NGO SUPPORT brought together government bodies, medical professionals, NGOs, and community leaders to address the critical need for cancer awareness and early detection in rural and underserved communities.

The campaign was held at Gurdwara Guru Nanak Dev Ji Chand Nagar and saw the participation of over 800 women and 350 men who availed advanced screening services,

including mammography and Pap smears. The event was inaugurated by Justice Sanjeev Kumar Shukla in the presence of prominent dignitaries, including Ravinder Singh (President, Health Employees Welfare Association Jammu), Ranjit Singh Tora (President, DGPC Jammu), Rotarian Dr. Navneet Kaur (Chairperson, Rotary Community Corps SUPPORT), and other key stakeholders.

Ravinder Singh and DGPC President Ranjit Singh Tora emphasised that the campaign was a significant step toward bridging the healthcare gap in rural communities, particularly for women who often face barriers to accessing medical services. By bringing advanced screening techniques to their doorstep, the initiative empowered women with the knowledge and tools to take charge of their health.

Dr. Navneet Kaur, a renowned social reformer and health-



care advocate, highlighted the critical role of early detection in combating cancer. She stressed the importance of community outreach health initiatives and encouraged women to prioritize their health by participating in regular screenings. "Early detection saves lives. Our goal is to ensure that no one is left behind in the fight against cancer," she said.

The campaign was supported by a diverse network of organizations, including the State Cancer Institute, Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu

& Kathua, NGO SUPPORT, Kunwar Rani Ritu Singh Maharaja Hari Singh Foundation, CMO Jammu Harbaksh Singh, Rotary Club Bahu under the flagship of Rotary 3070.

The involvement of CMOs, BMOs, ASHA, and Anganwadi workers further strengthened the outreach, ensuring that the message of cancer prevention and early detection reached the most remote areas.

The valedictory ceremony was graced by MLA R.S. Pura, Narinder Singh, and MLA Bahu, Ch Vikram Singh Randhawa, who com-

mended the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders. They stated, "We care about our country and our community. There is nobility in compassion and beauty in empathy. Together, we can achieve so much if we decide to do good."

Dr. Navneet Kaur expressed gratitude to all support groups, government and semi-government sectors, and NGOs working in the field of cancer. "Our attempt is to provide an opportunity for patients, families, and friends to discuss concerns, ask questions, and share information. Screening

increases the likelihood of catching the disease at an earlier and more treatable stage," she said.

Ravinder Singh concluded the event with a vote of thanks, thanking Kulwant Shungi Dhaliwal Chairperson WCC Charitable Society, Jatinder Singh Dhilon and his team of 25 doctors and paramedics with a mobile fleet of 5 Buses with Hitech Diagnostic labs stating, "This camp is a testament to the impact of collaborative efforts in improving healthcare access and outcomes for underserved populations. Together, we can make a difference."

The success of the campaign underscores the power of collective action in addressing one of the most pressing health challenges of our time. It serves as a model for future initiatives aimed at creating a cancer-free India.

From Page No:1

MHA updates list of 67 banned terrorist organizations, unlawful groups

Liberation Army (GNLA), all its formations and front organisations; Kamatapur Liberation Organisation, all its formations and front organisations; Islamic State or Islamic State of Iraq and Levant or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or Daish, and all its manifestations; National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), all its formations and front organisations; The Khalistan Liberation Force and all its manifestations; Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM); Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh or Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen India or Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Hindustan and all its manifestations; Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force (JKGF) and all its manifestations and front organisations; Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and all its manifestations and front organisations; and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HuT) and all its manifestations and front organisations are other terrorist groups named in the list as designated organisations.

The groups declared as unlawful associations are Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI); United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA); All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF); National Liberation Front (NLFT); Hynniewtre National Liberation Council (HNLC); Liberation Tigers

of Tamil Elam (LTTE); National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang); Islamic Research Foundation (IRF); Jamaat-e-Islami, Jammu and Kashmir; Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (Mohd Yasin Malik faction); Sikhs For Justice (SFJ); Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party; Muslim League Jammu Kashmir (Masrat Alam faction); Tahreek-e-Hurriyat, Jammu and Kashmir; Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Bhat faction); Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir (Sumji faction); Jammu and Kashmir National Front; Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Freedom League.

Besides, seven Meitei Extremist Organisations namely People's Liberation Army and its political wing the Revolutionary People's Front; United National Liberation Front and its armed wing, also called the 'Red Army'; Peoples' Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak and its Armed wing, the 'Red Army'; Kangleipak Communist Party and its armed wing, also known as 'Red Army'; Kanglei Yaol Kanba Lup; Coordiantion Committee; and Alliance for Socialist Unity Kangleipak are among the list of unlawful associations. Popular Front of India and its associates or affiliates or fronts including Rehab India Foundation, Campus Front of India, All India Imams Council, National Confederation of Human Rights Organization, National Women's Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala are

also named in the list of unlawful associations.

Four factions of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League namely JKPL (Mukhta Ahmad Waza), JKPL (Bashir Ahmad Tota), JKPL (Ghulam Mohammad Khan alias Sopori), and JKPL (Aziz Sheikh) led by Yaqoob Sheikh are also named in the list.

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, is India's primary anti-terrorism law which allows the government to declare organizations as terrorist groups or unlawful associations, enabling authorities to take action against them. The Act has been amended multiple times to strengthen its provisions, especially after the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

The designation of an organization as a terrorist group has serious consequences, including banning its operations in India, freezing its financial assets, preventing its members from raising funds or recruiting, and legal action against those associated with the group.

The Indian government periodically updates the list to counter evolving threats from militant, insurgent, and extremist groups operating within and outside India.

One Terrorist Killed in gunfight with security forces in Kupwara

also joined in and called for a high-level inquiry into the deaths.

NC member Peerzada Feroze Ahmed pointed towards the "rising" cases of people going missing, which he said has caused panic among the people.

The members said similar incidents had been reported from Kathua.

Some NC members entered the Well of the House, seeking a probe into the deaths and the alleged mistreatment of a woman by the local police, triggering a ruckus.

The Speaker intervened and acknowledged the reports of misconduct involving a woman. He also reassured that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who was present in the House, would address the issue and ensure appropriate action.

"The chief minister is sitting here. He has heard your issue. He will look into it. He will ensure action", the Speaker said.

Speaking to reporters outside the assembly, Para expressed concerns over the deaths, saying, "Such incidents have created insecurity among the people. We are not accusing anyone, but there is a critical need for an impartial probe as one community feels targeted." A group of protesters had blocked the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway in Kulgam district on Sunday night, demanding that the police initiate an investigation into the case and take action against those whom the kin of the deceased suspect to be responsible for the deaths.

On February 13, three Gujjar youths from Devsar had gone

missing after leaving Ashmuji in Kulgam to attend a function. They were identified as Riyaz Ahmad, Showkat, and Mukhtar Ahmad Awan, all residents of Kulgam.

J&K Police orders inquiry into officer's conduct against woman protester

demanding a probe.

"Shocking & unbecoming for a policeman to kick a woman only because she was peacefully protesting against the mysterious deaths in Devsar Kulgam. It is this high handed behaviour from officers expected to uphold law that creates a trust deficit alienating people even further," Mufti posted on X.

Protests broke out in the district on Sunday after the body of a youth, who was among three persons missing since last month, was recovered from a water body.

Three days earlier, his brother's body was recovered from the same stream. Meanwhile, a search operation is underway for the third missing person.

Influencer Orry, 7 others booked for 'Consuming Alcohol' at Vaishno Devi

Pilgrimage base camp

for "hurting the sentiments of people", the Jammu and Kashmir Police said in a statement.

The Katra Police Station received a complaint on March 15 that some guests staying at a hotel were found consuming alcohol on the premises in violation of rules. An FIR was then registered against the eight. "Orhan Awatramani, Darshan Singh, Parth Raina, Ritick Singh, Rashi Dutta, Rakshita Bhogal, Shagun Kohli and Anastasia Arzamaskina consumed liquor on the hotel premises despite being told that alcohol and non-vegetarian food were not allowed inside the property due to its proximity to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine," a police officer said, citing the complaint. "Sensing the gravity of the matter, instructions were issued by Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Paramvir Singh to nab the miscreants and set an example of zero tolerance of any such act at a religious place which can hurt the sentiments of people," he said.

Sunny Day in Kashmir after week long wet spell

recorded a low of -0.3°C, while Srinagar recorded a low of 3.8°C, and this was 1.2°C below the average for the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir during this period of the season, the MeT office said.

DC Kishtwar inaugurates Compost Unit for wet waste

Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Mar 17: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan, on Monday inaugurated a Compost Unit for Wet Waste at Shalamar, Kishtwar.

This initiative is part of efforts to manage and recycle wet waste, transforming it into useful organic fertilizers.

The newly constructed unit, built at an approximate cost of Rs 22 lakh, has a capacity to process 500 kg of wet waste at a time. The project was developed by the Department of Horticulture, Planning, and Marketing in collaboration with the Municipal Council Kishtwar.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of



proper waste management and directed the Municipal Authorities to collect wet waste, such as kitchen scraps, vegetable waste besides other waste from households and establishments. This waste will be segregated and converted into valuable organic fertilizers. This composting initiative is expected to contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable environment in Kishtwar, reducing waste and promoting

organic farming practices in the region.

It is pertinent to mention that the DC Kishtwar is continuously working to improve the sanitation conditions of the town. He has banned the use of polythene.

Further, the work of beautification of Chowgan Ground has been taken up, besides desilting the choked drains of the town.

Other initiatives include the creation of parking, traffic regulation, and emphasis on door-to-door collection of garbage.

The inauguration was attended by ACD Kishtwar, Phulail Singh, EO Municipality/Dy. Registrar Cooperative Kishtwar, Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal, and other senior officers and officials from various departments.

DC, SSP Kulgam meet nomad victims' families, assures full Govt support

Handed over 2 lakh aid to victims family



Top News Report

KULGAM, Mar 17: The Deputy Commissioner Kulgam (DC) Kulgam Athar Amir Khan along with SSP Kulgam Sahil Sarangal visited two nomad victims family

at Chandian Pajan in Kulgam district on Monday.

According to Top News JK correspondent Kulgam, during his visit, the DC expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved

family for the irreparable loss they suffered. He assured the family members all support from the government. he said, "The administration fully stands with the bereaved family in this hour of tragedy and grief."

He also met with the family whose son is still 'missing'. ADC, ACR, ASP, Tehsildar and others senior officer from Police and civil administration were present on the occasion.

LPEF holds condolence meeting

Top News Report

DODA, Mar 17: The Low-Paid Government Employees Federation (LPEF), Doda, has expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Ghulam Hussain Gattu, a highly respected figure in the region. Gattu, who was an employee of the Rural Department, was known for his honesty, dedication, and commitment to his work and colleagues.

A condolence meeting was held under the chairmanship of the federation's district president, Niaz Ahmad Rahi. Speaking on the occasion, senior leader Ghulam Hassan Pampori described the late Ghulam Hussain Gattu as the backbone of their association, highlighting



his unwavering dedication and hard work.

Other leaders, including Shakeel Ahmad Dev and Er. Nazir Ahmad Sheikh, praised his significant role in maintaining communal harmony in the city.

They emphasized that Gattu remained loyal to the federation until his last breath and was a strong pillar of their association.

Niaz Ahmad Rahi, who was also Gattu's nephew, expressed deep grief, calling him an honest and kind-

hearted individual. "His loss is not only a personal tragedy but also a great setback for our federation and the entire city," he stated.

Many prominent figures attended the condolence meeting, including Gopal Singh, Vishwamitter, Ghulam Hassan Bagwan, Vickey Kumar, Thakur Hem Raj, Mohd Ashraf Khokhar, Ghulam Rasool (PDD), Nizam-ud-Din Butt, Nayeem Ahangar (Kishtwar), Mohd Hafeez Fani (Bhaderwah), Faizan Ali Trambo, Abid Pampori, Naseer Ahmad Khoda, Ishtiaq Ahmad Dev, Salah-ud-Din, Mohd Rafiq Malik, Abdul Rasheed Sheikh, Mehboob Ahmad Tak, Mohd Iqbal Balwan, and many more.

Farmers training programme held, best districts and farmers felicitated

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 17: A farmers training program under the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) was conducted at the Directorate of Animal Husbandry Department in Kashmir.

This significant event saw the participation of 280 progressive farmers from various districts, specifically focusing on the Dairy and Poultry sectors.

During this comprehensive training session, participants were equipped with the latest knowledge and techniques in animal husbandry.

The program aimed to enhance their skills and understanding of modern practices that can improve productivity and sustainability within their farming operations.

In addition to technical training, farmers were provided with crucial information regarding Employment Generation schemes offered by the Department, including the Holistic Agricultural Development Program (HADP).



These schemes are designed to support farmers in accessing resources and opportunities that can lead to increased employment and economic growth within their communities.

The farmers also visited different facilities provided by the department including laboratory evaluation, feed formulation, treatment Clinics etc.

The training program was organized by the Publicity Wing of the Animal Husbandry under the Guidance and directives of Director Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir Dr Parvinder Singh Sudan Director Animal

Husbandry Department Kashmir who spoke to the audience through Video confrence from Jammu.

Function was physically presided over by the Joint Director of Poultry, Dr. A.A. War. Director AHD emphasized the importance of continuous education and skill development for farmers.

The event also saw the presence of various Deputy Directors and other officials from the department, all dedicated to supporting local Animal Husbandry Sector.

Dr Stressed upon comprehensive approach for adopting poultry husbandry he invited

the formers to take the benefits of Scheme convergence to have better subsidy.

Dr.Purnima Bhat Extension officer welcome the farmers and thanked them for attending despite Ramzan. The proceedings and two Technical Session were conducted by Dr Anwar Hussain Nagoo.

The trainers Dr S.Arshid and Dr Faazil Rather provided the comprehensive update of Animal Husbandry Sector evaluation, Technology and advancement followed by the executive interactive session headed by Dr Shabir Ahmad Teli Deputy Director Poultry. The training concluded

with the visit of farmers to different facilities of Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir. As part of the valedictory function, several accolades were presented to recognize outstanding contributions within the sector.

The best Chief Animal Husbandry Officers were felicitated for their exemplary service and commitment to advancing animal husbandry practices in Kashmir. Additionally, certificates were awarded to some of the best-performing farmers from various districts, highlighting their achievements and encouraging others to strive for excellence.

This training program served as a platform for knowledge sharing besides fostered a sense of community among farmers, reinforcing their role as vital contributors to the agricultural landscape in Kashmir.

The event marked a significant step towards empowering local farmers with essential skills and resources necessary for thriving in today's competitive agricultural environment.

Eugenix Hair Sciences: Leading surge in hair transplant

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: The global hair transplant industry is experiencing remarkable growth, with the market expected to reach USD 141.88 billion by 2032, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25.2% from 2018 to 2032. This surge is driven by increasing awareness, technological advancements, and rising demand for cosmetic procedures from high-profile individuals, including celebrities and athletes.

In India, the hair transplant sector is witnessing a significant expansion, with Eugenix Hair Sciences at the forefront of this transformation.

Founded by Dr. Pradeep Sethi and Dr. Arika Bansal, Eugenix has built a strong reputation, having performed over 16,000 hair transplant procedures, including more than 1,800 cases of Grade 6/7 baldness. Their unmatched success rate has established Eugenix as a go-to destination for individuals seeking reliable and natural-looking hair restoration solutions.

Dr. Sethi and Dr. Bansal are pioneers in the field of hair restoration, having developed the Direct Hair Transplant (DHT) technique, which has set new standards in the industry.

Their innovation has garnered attention from a wide range of clients, including Bollywood actors, cricketers, and



corporate leaders. Notable figures who have undergone hair restoration at Eugenix include Bollywood actor Boney Kapoor, cricketers Mohammed Shami, Ravi Shastri, and Mohammed Azharuddin, as well as singer Anup Jalota.

What sets Eugenix Hair Sciences apart is its unwavering commitment to excellence, making it one of the very few clinics exclusively dedicated to hair restoration. This singular focus ensures an unrivalled level of expertise, precision, and patient care.

As a trusted destination for global clientele, including international patients, A-list celebrities, and celebrated athletes, Eugenix has raised the bar in the industry. With world-class facilities, cutting-edge procedures, and a bespoke approach to patient care, Eugenix remains the top choice for discerning individuals seeking flawless hair restoration.

The increasing prevalence of hair loss, combined with rising dis-

posable incomes and a growing emphasis on personal appearance, has contributed to the industry's expansion. In India alone, around 350,000 hair transplants are performed annually, with the market valued at USD 195.25 million in 2022 and projected to grow at a CAGR of 17.12% by 2029. Modern hair transplant techniques, such as Follicular Unit Extraction (FUE), which offers minimally invasive procedures and natural-looking results, have become increasingly popular, further driving the market's growth.

Eugenix's commitment to excellence and innovation has solidified its position as a leader in the global hair transplant industry. The clinic's focus on personalized care, advanced techniques, and optimal outcomes continues to set industry standards both in India and abroad.

For more information about Eugenix Hair Sciences and their services, please visit www.eugenixhairsiences.com

United Forum of Bank Unions calls for 2-day nationwide bank strike from Mar 23



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), a joint coordination body of nine bank unions representing over 8 lakh employees and officers across Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Banks, Foreign Banks, Co-operative Banks, and Regional Rural Banks, has announced a 48-hour nationwide bank strike. The strike will take place from midnight of March 23 to midnight of March 25, 2025.

The decision to go on strike comes as a protest against various unresolved demands that directly impact bank employees and officers. UFBU has urged the government and bank management to address these press-

ing concerns to avoid disruptions in banking services.

One of the primary demands of UFBU is adequate recruitment in all cadres and the regularization of temporary employees. The forum has pointed out that the shortage of staff has put excessive pressure on existing employees and affected customer service.

Another major demand is the implementation of a 5-day work week in the banking industry, aligning with the schedule followed by RBI, insurance companies, and government offices. UFBU has been pushing for this demand, citing the need for better work-life balance and consistency across financial institutions.

UFBU is also calling for the immediate

withdrawal of recent DFS/Govt. directives on performance review and PLI. According to the unions, these directives pose a threat to job security and create unnecessary divisions among employees.

Ensuring the safety of bank officers and staff against assaults and abuse by unruly banking customers is another key concern raised by UFBU. The forum has emphasized the need for stricter security measures to protect employees in their workplaces.

Additionally, UFBU is demanding the filling of vacant posts of Workmen/Officer Directors in Public Sector Banks, as these positions have remained unfilled for a long time. They are also pushing for the resolution of residual issues pending with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA).

Another important financial demand includes the amendment of the Gratuity Act to increase the ceiling to 25 lakhs, bringing it in line with the scheme for government employees, along with a tax exemption. Similarly,

UFBU has demanded the exemption of staff welfare benefits from income tax, arguing that the management should bear the tax liability instead of employees.

UFBU is also advocating for maintaining a minimum of 51% government equity in IDBI Bank to ensure its stability and control. The forum is further urging the government to stop the micromanagement of Public Sector Banks by the DFS on policy matters affecting service conditions of employees.

In addition, UFBU has strongly opposed the outsourcing of permanent jobs in banks and has demanded an end to unfair labor practices within the banking industry.

UFBU has highlighted the severe staff shortage in public sector banks, which has significantly impacted customer service and increased the workload on employees.

In contrast, Private Sector Banks have significantly increased their workforce from 2,29,124 in 2013 to 8,46,530 in 2024 (+6,17,406).

UFBU has demanded immediate recruitment to address this growing disparity and ensure better banking services.

Despite recommendations from Indian Banks to the government more than a year ago, the demand for a 5-day work week for banks has not been implemented. UFBU has pointed out that institutions like RBI, insurance companies, and many private sector organizations already follow a 5-day work schedule. The forum has reiterated its demand for immediate implementation without further delay.

With the government and bank management failing to address these critical issues, UFBU has been compelled to escalate its agitation. The two-day nationwide strike aims to bring attention to the unresolved problems affecting bank employees and officers.

UFBU has appealed to the public for their understanding and support while urging authorities to resolve these matters amicably to prevent further disruptions in banking services.

“Every moment seemed like going back in time...”: Sachin Tendulkar celebrates IML 2025 title win

India Masters etched their name in history by clinching the inaugural International Masters League (IML) 2025 title, after defeating West Indies Masters by six wickets in a grand finale.

RAIPUR, Mar 17 (Agencies): Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar expressed happiness at winning the International Masters League (IML) 2025 tournament with his team India Masters, saying that every moment in the competition, be it the practice sessions or match days, felt like “going back in time”.

India Masters etched their name in history by clinching the inaugural International Masters League (IML) 2025 title, after defeating West Indies Masters by six wickets in a grand finale on Sunday.

Taking to his official X handle, Tendulkar wrote, “C.H.A.M.R.I.O.N.S. From practice sessions to match days, every moment at the @iml2025official seemed like going back in time. It felt incredible to be back on the pitch alongside some of the game’s greatest players. I’m grateful to everyone who made this experience so memorable, including the spectators, organizers, and my India Masters teammates.”

Sachin enthralled his fans with some entertaining cricket during the tournament, displaying the fitness, shot-making and agility of the days of old and triggering nostalgic memories among all cricket lovers, scoring 181 runs in six matches at an average of 30.16 and a strike rate of 153.38 with a half-century. His best score was 64.

For India, Ambati Rayudu (188 runs in five innings with two fifties at a strike rate of 142.42 and an average of 47.00), Yuvraj Singh (179 runs in five innings at an average of 179.00 and a strike rate of 184.53 with a fifty and three wickets), Stuart Binny (122 runs in four innings at an average of 40.66 with a strike rate of 187.69 and a half-century) and Irfan Pathan (113 runs in five matches at an average of 56.50 with a strike rate of 185.24 and a half-century, six wickets), Pawan Negi (nine wickets in six matches at an average of 15.66) and Vinay Kumar (eight wickets in five matches at an average of



23.62) delivered standout performances in the competition.

A tournament built on nostalgia, skill and the undying spirit of the game had delivered dream matchups, and the summit clash between the two cricketing powerhouses -- India Masters and West Indies Masters-- couldn't have been more befitting of a setting for the climax. The contest had all the makings of a classic -- a packed stadium, cricketing greats rolling back the years as fans braced themselves for an epic battle after the India Masters contained the opposition for a sub-par 148/7, and then rode a fluent 67-run opening stand from Master Blaster Tendulkar (25) in the company of Ambati Rayudu (74), setting the tone for the chase.

The India Masters made a statement with their batting might as Tendulkar and Rayudu treated the packed stadium to some vintage strokeplay. While Tendulkar played with finesse, threading the field with his signature cover drives and flicks, Rayudu took the attacking route, dismantling the West Indies Masters bowling with calculated aggression. The 51-year-old star entertained the crowd with a couple of boundaries and a six during his fluent 18-ball knock before a sharp delivery from Tino Best ended his stay, briefly quieting the roaring stands.

Rayudu, however, ensured that the fireworks continued as India Masters cruised along towards the target. In the process, the right-handed opener got to a 34-ball fifty with a boundary off

Best, even as his second-wicket stand with Gurkeerat Singh Mann (14) added another 28 runs to the Indian total. Mann perished while attempting for a glory shot to off-spinner Ashley Nurse, paving the way for Yuvraj Singh's (13 not out) arrival into the middle amid loud cheers.

Just when the India Masters were romping home towards victory, the West Indies Masters spinners delayed the inevitable with the wickets of Rayudu, who fell to left-arm spinner Suleiman Benn after belting nine fours and three mammoth sixes in his 50-ball knock, and new man Yusuf Pathan after being trapped in front by Nurse. However, with the equation down to 17 off the final 28 deliveries, Stuart Binny (16 not out) applied the finishing touches in style by smoking two gigantic sixes.

Earlier, the India Masters bowlers dictated terms after the Caribbean side opted to bat, restricting them to a modest 148/7, built mainly around Lendl Simmons' half-century.

Brian Lara (6) made a bold call by stepping up to open the innings himself. At 55, Lara's mere presence was enough to send a surge of emotion through the crowd and alongside the explosive Dwayne Smith (45), he set the stage for a dream start. The Caribbean duo tore into the new ball, racing to 34 in just under four overs, making Indian Masters captain Sachin Tendulkar and his bowlers rethink their plans.

But as they say, cricket is a great leveller, and it was Vinay Kumar who delivered one such

twist by getting rid of Lara to bring the West Indies Masters' charge to a screeching halt. As the iconic left-hander walked back, the capacity crowd, which had been silenced by his side's initial onslaught, rose in unison, acknowledging not just the wicket but a cricketing great who had defined an era.

William Perkins (6) stepped in to replace Lara but soon fell victim to Shahbaz Nadeem's guile. Meanwhile, Smith continued to impose himself, smashing six boundaries and two sixes before Nadeem struck again, ending his 35-ball knock. From there, India Masters tightened their grip on the game with the spin duo of Nadeem and Pawan Negi strangling the middle order, to leave the Caribbean side gasping for momentum. Ravi Rampaul's (2) elevation in the order to combat left-arm spin didn't pay off, with Stuart Binny removing him cheaply.

Negi then dealt another body blow, casting Chadwick Walton (6) right after being dispatched for a towering six. Amidst the chaos, Lendl Simmons stood tall with a counterattacking 34-ball fifty as he held his fort to anchor the West Indies Masters innings with a vital 61-run sixth wicket partnership with wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin (12 not out), who was happy playing second fiddle. Simmons, however, perished after facing 41 deliveries for his 57, laced with five boundaries and a six, while attempting to shift gears in the final over of the innings as India Masters eventually restricted them to a below-par total.

For the home side, Vinay Kumar emerged the pick of the bowlers, returning 3/26, while Shahbaz Nadeem came up with two wickets. Pawan Negi and Stuart Binny also chipped in with a wicket apiece.

Brief Scores: West Indies Masters 148/7 (Lendl Simmons 57, Dwayne Smith 45; Vinay Kumar 3/26) vs India Masters 149/4 (Ambati Rayudu 74, Sachin Tendulkar 25; Ashley Nurse 2/22).

It's been a 360-degree turnaround: Hardik Pandya reflects on roller-coaster last few months



NEW DELHI, Mar 17 (Agencies): From incessant boos to frenzied adulation—star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya has seen it all in the last few months, during which his life underwent a “360 degree turnaround” and keeping himself afloat in the turmoil was his determination to “never leave the battlefield”.

As he gears up for his second IPL season as Mumbai Indians captain, Pandya can expect a markedly warmer reception at the Wankhede stadium after playing crucial roles in India's T20 World Cup and the ICC Champions Trophy triumphs.

The backlash he faced in IPL 2024 was triggered by the team's decision to hand him the leadership role, replacing Mumbai's very own Rohit Sharma, who led the franchise to five trophies.

“For me, it has always been about never leaving the battlefield. There have been phases in my career where my focus wasn't necessarily on winning but on surviving and holding my ground,” Pandya told ‘JioHotstar’ ahead of the IPL starting March 22.

“I realised that no matter what was happening around me, cricket would always be my greatest ally...I kept pushing through, and when all the hard work finally paid off, it was beyond anything I could have scripted.”

“The six-month phase where we won the World Cup, and then the kind of love and support I received upon returning—it was a complete 360-degree turnaround for me,” he added.

The 31-year-old said he never wavered from the belief that if he remained persistent, he would come out stronger.

“I didn't know exactly when that would happen, but as they say, destiny had its plan, and in my case, everything changed within two and a half months,” he said.

Pandya played a pivotal role with the new ball alongside Mohammed Shami in India's victorious Champions Trophy campaign recently in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah. He was also a part of India's T20 World Cup-winning squad in the Americas last year. The 2024 IPL season was challenging for him as MI finished at the bottom of the points table. But Pandya said MI have put together a well-balanced squad and is optimistic about the team's chances this year.

“Having played in the IPL for almost 11 years now, each season brings new energy and fresh positivity. The 2024 season was undoubtedly challenging for us as a group, but it also provided invaluable lessons,” Pandya said.

“We analysed those learnings and applied them while building our

team for 2025. This time, we have assembled an experienced squad—players who have played a lot of cricket at the highest level. That in itself is exciting.”

Pandya said the side has been focussed on building a strong bowling attack, considering that Wankhede is a “challenging venue”.

“Playing in the IPL in Mumbai, particularly at Wankhede, can be intimidating due to the high-scoring nature of the pitch. We wanted bowlers with experience, pace, and the ability to generate swing and bounce.”

“I believe we have put together a well-balanced team, one that meets all our requirements from top to bottom. Now it's about turning up and delivering on the field.” To all the youngsters who would be new to the glitzy league, Pandya has just one message.

“...believe in yourself...the biggest challenge at this stage is self-doubt. Sometimes, players start questioning whether they belong at this level, and that doubt can take away from their skill set. Managing that mental aspect is crucial.”

“In this game, there will be highs and lows. The key is to remain balanced, not just for one season but throughout their careers,” he said.

Pandya said all one needs is a little patience to navigate the tough times.

“In terms of skill set, they are far ahead of where we were at 21 or 22. Their talent and fearless approach are already there—it's just about reinforcing their belief in themselves.” MI will open their IPL campaign against Chennai Super Kings in Chennai on March 23.

“Let the experience flow...”: Pant's message to LSG during team meeting

LUCKNOW, Mar 17 (Agencies): After arriving at the Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) camp ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025, franchise's skipper Rishabh Pant had a team meeting with his teammates, where he shared the message of expressing themselves freely on the field and “letting the experience” flow in the group through interaction of senior stars with youngsters.

Pant's IPL journey with LSG could not be more poetic as he would start off his campaign as LSG's skipper against his former side Delhi Capitals at Visakhapatnam on March 24.

Speaking in a video posted by LSG, Pant said that he as a captain along with the team management wants to create a place “where people can come and express themselves”.

“We want to create a place where people can come and express themselves. It is just a very simple idea. It is easier to say than to do it because it requires a lot of effort from each and every individual. It is not just the management, I think it is because of the players we can create that envi-



ronment,” said Pant. The swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batter also said that if players are backed well and given trust, they can perform at any level.

“I feel there is a lot of experience in the group. I think management has a lot of experience. We have a lot of senior players, Nikky P (Nicholas Pooran) is there, (Aiden) Makram is there, (David) Miller is there. I think a lot more are there. Just keep sharing your experience with the younger guys and let that experience flow in this group. I think that is something we can learn a lot from all the senior guys. And just take it forward one day at a time, just giving your 100 per cent, keeping the best interest of the team without even thinking that our team will back you or not,” he added.

Pant also urged his players to create good

memories together, highlighting the trust they have among themselves.

“Let us create lots of love among each other. So when we go back from here, I think we should look to improve ourselves as a player, as a human being, and just have lots of fun together,” he concluded.

Pant has represented Delhi Capitals (DC) for his entire IPL career since 2016, scoring 3,284 runs in 110 matches at an average of 35.31, with a century and 18 fifties. He was appointed as the team's captain in 2021 and led them to playoffs in the same season. He was let go by the franchise in 2024 ahead of the mega auction and became the league's most expensive player ever at Rs 27 crore, bought by LSG, who later appointed him as a captain too.

Jio announces unlimited offer for the upcoming cricket season

MUMBAI, Mar 17 (Agencies): In a game-changing move for cricket lovers, Jio has announced an exclusive offer for existing and new Jio SIM customers.

With just a Jio SIM and a plan of Rs. 299 or above, customers can experience the ultimate cricketing season like never before.

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2. New Jio SIM users: Get a new Jio SIM with Rs 299 (1.5GB/day or more) or above plan.

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Other Offer Terms:

- 1). Customers who

have recharged before March 17, can opt for Rs 100 add-on pack.

2). The Jio Hotstar pack will be activated from 22nd March 2025 (opening match day of the cricket season) for a period of 90 days.

For more details, visit jio.com or visit the nearest Jio store today. This offer is powered by Jio-AiCloud.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025, one of most important tournaments in the yearly cricket calendar, will kickstart from March 22 onwards and will kickstart with an exciting clash between Kolkata Knight Riders, the defending champions and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB).

Bihar's young cricketer Mohammed Izhar selected by CSK as net bowler, family expresses pride

SUPAUL, Mar 17 (Agencies): Mohammed Izhar, a young cricketer from Supaul, Bihar, has been selected as a net bowler for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 season, triggering a wave of pride and happiness in the family and his state.

Chennai Super Kings, the five-time IPL champions, will kickstart their campaign against arch-rivals and five-time champions Mumbai Indians (MI) at the home arena of Chepauk Stadium on March 23. Ahead of their campaign, they have roped in the Bihar youngster as a net bowler, promising him the exposure and memories that could take him very far in his cricketing journey.

Izhar's mother, Shabnam Khatun, was happy about her son's selection, saying to agency, “We did not expect this. He faced a lot of struggles and hardships to reach here. We are really happy. He said that he will make us proud and my blessings are with them.”

Izhar's brother, Saad Aalam also said he wants him to play for Team India.

“We are happy for his selection. He has struggled a lot to get here,” he added.

The bowler's uncle, Mohammed Jahangir, also said that Izhar always wanted to play cricket and worked really hard for his game.

“He is my nephew and there is a lot of happiness about this within the family and com-

munity. He always wanted to play cricket. Despite us asking telling him not to play, he did not obey. He was chosen at the state level for Bihar in 2019-2020, and from then he kept progressing and a lot of people supported him. He studied and played cricket. We hope that he plays international cricket for India and makes us proud,” he said.

Bihar Minister Neeraj Kumar Bablu also told agency, “I congratulate Izhar for making the district and the state proud. We hope he will keep playing like this in the future and move forward. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi encourages players so much that they keep playing with all their passion and dedication. We will felicitate him when he return.”

Multi-Speciality free medical camp organised by People's Hut Foundation in collaboration with Army

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: People's Hut Foundation in collaboration with the Indian Army conducted a "Free Medical Camp" at Government High School Sarote, Jammu and was supported by Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity Jammu. The camp was inaugurated by Ramesh Kumar Bhan (HM of GHS Sarote) and the main aim of conducting this medical camp was to provide essential free health care services to the villagers in the Area.

The People's Hut Foundation headed by Dr. Rohit Koul and Dr. Ritu Koul which is a national level registered NGO registered with Govt of India & Niti Aayog brought together a team of dedicated health care professionals who volunteered to offer medical consultations.

The medical camp themed "Mobile Health Clinic Program" saw an overwhelming participation where 348 patients availed the free services from the camp. In addition to medical consulta-



tion in Gynaecology, Orthopaedics, Dentistry, Physiotherapy, Pathology, General medicine, Oncology, Clinical Psychology the camp also provided free Allopathic and Ayush Medicines along with basic health screening and awareness about Nutrition, Hygiene and preventive care.

The Directorate of Ayush also participated in the camp and was represented by Medical Officers Dr. Dheeraj Raina, Dr. Sushil Kumar Bhat and Dr. Supriya Thakur along with other Ayush Staff. The medical camp provided medical serv-

ices to the villagers which lacked basic medical facilities. A special ECHS service camp for the people and nearby villages was also organized by Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity under the guidance of Dr. Harmeet Singh, MD - Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity and Group Director Ujala Cygnus Emergency and Trauma in collaboration with People's Hut Foundation. It received a great response from the ex Servicemen.

Team of doctors and supporting staff who participated and provided their services in the camp were Dr. Muskan Sarwar

Khan (Medical Officer), Dr. Foza Khan (Medical Officer), Dr. Dheeraj Raina (Medical Officer), Dr. Sushil Kumar Bhat (Medical Officer), Dr. Supriya Thakur (Medical Officer), Shivani (Nursing Officer), Vijay Sharma (Pharmacist), Sunita Bhat (Head-HR and Admin. - People's Hut Foundation), Vikas Koul (Chief Advisor and CTM People's Hut Foundation), Dinesh Sharma (Marketing and Sales Head at Ujala Cygnus Jammu), Mehraj Masood Dar (Marketing and Sales Officer at Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity)

The village elders and Ex-Servicemen of the area of responsibility conveyed their heartfelt gratitude to the Indian Army, People's Hut Foundation, Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity and Directorate of Ayush for organising the multi-disciplinary camp.

The representatives of People's Hut Foundation, Ujala Cygnus JK Medicity, Directorate of Ayush including doctors and Paramedical Staff were also felicitated by the Indian Army.

JPDCL completes 1500 mark on PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: In a significant achievement, Jammu Power Distribution Company Ltd (JPDCL) has completed 1500 installations under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. This initiative aims to promote rooftop solar installations across India, providing free electricity and promoting sustainable energy practices.

The PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,

targets to install solar panels in one crore households, supplying power and allowing excess electricity output to be sold back to the grid. Eligible households can receive subsidies ranging from Rs. 36,000 to Rs. 94,800, depending on the solar plant capacity.

JPDCL's accomplishment is a testament to the growing adoption of renewable energy sources in Jammu.

The MD JPDCL efforts to facilitate smooth implementation, in collaboration with the District Level Committee, have been instrumental in achieving this milestone.

As part of this initiative, five villages in Jammu district have been short-listed for large-scale implementation under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The village with the highest adoption rate will receive a grant of Rs 1 crore as Central Financial Assistance.

This achievement underscores JPDCL's commitment to promoting sustainable energy solutions and reducing reliance on non-renewable energy sources.

Meanwhile, Sub-Division Gandhi Nagar leading in Jammu division with 120 installations followed by Sub-Division Shastri Nagar with 111 installations.

Amit Kapoor demands waiver of old electricity bills, slams officials for Cutting Connections

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Amit Kapoor has strongly demanded the waiver of old electricity bills, condemning the actions of department officials and linemen for cutting power connections.

Addressing a press conference in Jammu, Kapoor criticized the administration for failing to provide relief to the



people, particularly in the Janipur area, where multiple connections have reportedly been disconnected.

Kapoor accused the BJP government of installing smart meters that have led to a sharp

rise in electricity bills, burdening the common people.

He also questioned the silence of BJP MLAs on the issue, stating that they have failed to raise the matter in the assembly.

"If the department does not stop disconnecting power and does not waive off old bills, there will be strong protests in the coming days," Kapoor warned.

The demand for waiving old electricity dues has gained momentum as citizens struggle with rising costs, and Kapoor's statement has added fuel to the ongoing debate over power tariffs and governance in the region.

General EDP training programme concludes at SBI RSETI Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: A Training Program of General Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) conducted by SBI Rural Self Employment Training Institute (SBI-RSETI) Jammu concluded at RSETI Roop Nagar, Jammu, in which 21 candidates from different parts of Jammu District participated.

On this occasion, function was organized in which certificates of participation were distributed by Mohd Sadiq, District Officer, J&K Khadi and Village Industries Board, (JKKVIB) Jammu and Bikramjit Singh, Director SBI RSETI Jammu. He elaborated that JKREGP Scheme is a new credit linked sub-

dy scheme launched by Govt. of UT of Jammu & Kashmir which is being implemented by J&K Khadi & Village Industries Board Jammu and a 35% Subsidy is being routed through J&K Bank for eventual distribution to the beneficiaries in their bank accounts.

He also motivated the candidates to successfully start their business ventures after getting the loan disbursed from the banks.

Bikramjit Singh, also assured them to extend every possible help from RSETI in future. He also encouraged the candidates to open their self employment business ventures with the help of JKREGP Scheme and also motivated them to be a successful entrepreneur by generating employment at their ventures. He

wished them good luck in their future endeavor.

Director, RSETI, Bikramjit Singh maintained that SBI RSETI Jammu which is aimed at skill building of prospective small entrepreneurs / borrowers specially for rural youth, is unique as it is intensive short term residential self employment training programme with free food and accommodation designed especially for unemployed rural youth. He motivated the candidates to stand on their own, after completion of the training programme.

Vote of thanks was delivered by Shaluu Sharma Faculty, SBI RSETI Jammu.

Dimple leads protest against land allotment to outsiders in J&K, demands statehood restoration



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 17: Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood, led a strong protest and demonstration against the allotment of land to 200 outside investors for business in Jammu & Kashmir. He alleged that J&K is on "grand sale" and that the region's demography is under threat.

Addressing the protest, Dimple claimed that since the abrogation of Article 370, lakhs of canal lands have been allotted to investors from states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, and others. He further accused the Jammu Development Authority (JDA) and the Housing Department of selling flats to outsiders.

Dimple urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to disclose in the Assembly the conditions and terms under which land has been allotted to outsiders for residential and business purposes. He stressed that this move is a serious threat to the demography of Jammu & Kashmir, par-

ticularly the Dogra state.

He demanded that 100% of jobs in these industries be given to local youth and that land be allocated on a 100-year lease basis instead of outright sale. He further accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of refusing to restore Jammu & Kashmir's statehood and compared its actions to those of the East India Company, alleging that the region is being exploited.

Dimple also claimed that after the downgrade of J&K to a Union Territory, various resources, including power projects, have been sold off. He raised concerns over the influx of liquor and mining mafias and criticized the discontinuation of the traditional Darbar Move.


Raising the issue of liquor sales, Dimple alleged that alcohol is being openly sold in hotels in Katra, with viral videos circulating on social media as proof. He urged Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to introduce a bill in the Assembly to ban the sale of liquor in Jammu

& Kashmir.

Additionally, he demanded that Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reinstate the Darbar Move from April this year. Dimple also strongly criticized the BJP, the Prime Minister, and the Home Minister for their lack of commitment to restoring Jammu & Kashmir's statehood.

Expressing concerns over law and order, he alleged that the situation in J&K has deteriorated, with incidents of kidnappings and later recovery of dead bodies becoming frequent. He claimed that when people protest for justice, they are met with brutal police action, including violence against women. He pointed out that several videos of these excesses have gone viral in the media.

Several senior leaders, including Mohinder Kumar, Sudesh Kumar, Bishan Das, Sudershan Sharma, Mohan Lal, Sanjay Sharma, and Bram Data, participated in the protest, expressing solidarity with the demands put forth by Mission Statehood.



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