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## BRIEFLY

### 9 tourists injured in Qazigund road accident

ANANTNAG, Mar 20 (Agencies): Nine tourists were injured on Thursday when their vehicle hit a road divider in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, officials said. Jammu tourism Jammu travel guide

The accident occurred at Wanpoh on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway.

While four of the injured hailed from Mumbai, three are from Rajasthan, and one each from Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

The injured have been admitted to the Government Medical College Anantnag, and their condition is stated to be stable, the officials added.

**Kashmir Police detain man for inciting sectarian tensions online**

SRINAGAR, Mar 20 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir police has detained a person while taking cognizance of attempts to incite sectarian divisions on social media.

The person whose identity has not been disclosed by police was detained a day after a gruesome abduction and murder of a girl from South Kashmir whose body was found from the accused house in a locality on Srinagar outskirts.

Police on Thursday urged everyone to avoid posting sectarian content lest they face the rigour of the law.

"Srinagar Police has taken cognizance of attempts to spread sectarian division on social media. One person has been detained for questioning, and others have been identified for action. Everyone is urged to avoid posting sectarian content lest they face the rigour of the law," Srinagar Police said in a post on X.

**Pakistani intruder apprehended along IB in Kathua**

KATHUA/JAMMU, Mar 20 (Agencies): Security forces have apprehended a Pakistani intruder along the International Border (IB) in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, police sources said on Thursday.

## Panel formed under Chief Secretary to look into daily wagers' regularisation: CM Omar Abdullah

JAMMU, Mar 20 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said a panel has been formed to address the issue of regularisation of daily wagers in the Union Territory, which will submit its recommendations to the government in six months.

The chief minister also said the National Conference government is committed to ensuring speedy recruitment to fill the vacant posts in government services in Jammu and Kashmir.

Responding to a question by BJP MLA Satish Sharma in the Assembly, Abdullah said, "A committee was announced in the Assembly last time, and a formal order was issued (for its formation). The committee has been constituted under the chief secretary to examine the issue." The panel has been given a six-month time frame to assess the matter, and once the recommendations are received, the government will act accordingly, the chief minister said.

The J-K government on Wednesday consti-



tuted the six-member committee to examine the issues related to the regularisation of daily wage workers in the Union Territory.

On the issue of fast-track recruitment, Abdullah reaffirmed the government's commitment to filling vacancies efficiently.

"The J-K government has accelerated its recruitment process, filling over 15,000 vacancies in the past two years. As many as 13,466 non-gazetted vacancies were referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) in the past two years, of which 9,351 selections have been completed.

"Similarly, out of the 2,390 gazetted vacancies referred to the

Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC), 2,175 selections have been made," Abdullah said.

The chief minister also said that efforts are underway to further streamline hiring.

"We have identified 10,757 multi-task service (MTS) vacancies currently under review by the finance department. These positions will be referred to the recruiting agencies soon. Additionally, 6,000 vacancies are ready for referral and will be sent for recruitment shortly," he said.

To speed up the recruitment process, the government had abolished interviews for all posts up to Pay Level 5 (Rs 29,200-92,300). A recent order dated February 14

has removed the interview requirement for Level 6 posts, including for junior engineers and naib tehsildars.

Emphasising that the government is enhancing transparency and efficiency in recruitment, the chief minister said, "To ensure fair hiring, recruitment regulations were revised and notified on November 22, 2022. Now, computer-based written exams will be conducted, and a single exam will be held for multiple posts wherever possible." The JKPSC and the JKSSB have been directed to adopt a target-based approach and complete recruitment within a set time frame.

"We aim to fill 1,502 gazetted and 5,751 non-gazetted vacancies by the end of this year, including 150 junior engineer posts recently referred to the JKSSB," Abdullah said.

Recruitment in the higher education department is also progressing, he added.

"We are processing 150 gazetted vacancies for assistant professors, librarians and physical

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## Team India to get Rs 58 Crore cash reward from BCCI for CT Victory



NEW DELHI, Mar 20 (Agencies): The BCCI announced a cash reward of Rs 58 crore for the Indian cricket team that won the ICC Cham-

pions Trophy earlier this month in Dubai.

The Rohit Sharma-led India defeated New Zealand by four wickets in the final to grab their

third Champions Trophy title.

The financial windfall will cover the players, coaching and support staff, and members of the men's selection committee headed by Ajit Agarkar. The Board did not give a break-up of the reward in its statement.

"Winning back-to-back ICC titles is special and this reward recognises Team India's dedication and excellence on the global stage," said BCCI

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## Jammu and Kashmir's Unemployment rate stands at 6.1%: Govt

JAMMU, Mar 20 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday said that the current unemployment rate in the Union Territory stands at 6.1% for individuals aged 15 years and above in 2023-24, as per the MoSPI.

Responding to a query by MLA Tanvir Sadiq, the government, also informed that 3,70,811 unemployed youth have voluntarily registered on the employment portal by the end of January

2025.

The concerned minister said that the government has implemented several self-employment schemes under initiatives like Mumkin, Tejaswani, Mission Youth, PMEGP, and REGP.

He said that these schemes have facilitated the generation of approximately 9.58 lakh self-employment opportunities since 2021. In the current fiscal year (2024-25), 1.36 lakh opportunities have been created.

"Additionally, under the MG NREGA program, the government has generated 3.01 crore person-days of employment, benefiting 8.07 lakh households."

He added that to further encourage entrepreneurship and skill development, the government has launched Mission YUVA — this ambitious initiative aims to establish 1.35 lakh entrepreneurship units and create employment for 4.5 lakh youth in

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## Punjab Police busts drugs-hawala racket with 5 arrests; Seizes narcotics, cash, weapons



CHANDIGARH, Mar 20 (Agencies): Punjab Police has dismantled a drugs and hawala racket with the arrest of five persons after a brief exchange of fire, and seized illegal weapons,

narcotics and cash from their possession.

"In a decisive action against drug financing, @TarnTaranPolice dismantles a drug and hawala syndicate, leading to the arrest of five

persons and the recovery of illegal weapons, narcotics, and cash," Director General of Police (DGP), Gaurav Yadav, posted on X on Thursday.

"During the operation the accused opened fire on the police party, prompting a swift response. Two accused sustained leg injuries and were immediately provided medical care," the DGP said.

Subsequent investigation led to the arrest of Iqbal Singh, "a key

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## Pulwama leads Kashmir in milk processing with Over Rs 7.45 Lakh litres daily

JAMMU, Mar 20 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir government has revealed that Pulwama district remains the largest contributor to processed milk in Kashmir, with daily milk production reaching approximately 7.45 lakh litres during the flush season. In the Pampore constituency alone, milk production exceeds 1.5 lakh litres per day in the summer months. However, only 10 per cent of this milk is currently being processed, prompting efforts to enhance commercial processing capacity.

According to information tabled in the Assembly, the Jammu and Kashmir Milk Producers Cooperative Limited (JKMPCL) procures 20,300 litres daily from 203 dairy cooperative societies in Pulwama for processing. Additionally, private milk plants such as Haleeb, Zamzam, and Khyber, located in Pulwama, collectively process around 60,000 litres per day. Another 15,000 to 20,000 litres of loose milk are lifted daily and supplied to Srinagar.

To increase commercial processing and

value addition in the dairy sector, several schemes have been introduced. Under the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS), subsidies are provided for setting up milk processing and packaging units. These include a subsidy ceiling of Rs 15 lakh for modular milk pasteurisation and packaging units, Rs 5 lakh for bulk milk cooling units, and Rs 3.5 lakh for setting up machinery for paneer, khoaya, dahi, ice cream, softy, butter, ghee, and cheese production. Additionally,

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## EDITORIAL

## Censorship in Social Media

Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate, share information, and express opinions. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and YouTube have become virtual public spaces where individuals engage in discussions, debate ideas, and voice their concerns. However, as social media companies implement stricter content moderation policies, the question arises: Is censorship on social media necessary, or does it go too far?

While social media companies argue that content moderation is crucial to combat misinformation, hate speech, and harmful content, critics worry that excessive censorship threatens free speech, political neutrality, and open discourse. This article examines the extent of social media censorship, its necessity, and the challenges associated with it.

Censorship on social media is often justified as a means of maintaining a safe and ethical online environment. It serves several key purposes.

Firstly, it helps in preventing misinformation and fake news. Social media platforms have become breeding grounds for false information, especially during critical events such as elections, pandemics, and conflicts. To counteract this, companies have implemented fact-checking mechanisms and flagged or removed misleading content to prevent the spread of false narratives.

Secondly, censorship plays a vital role in combating hate speech and violence. Many platforms have introduced policies to curb cyberbullying, discrimination, and extremist content. These regulations protect vulnerable communities from online abuse and prevent the incitement of violence.

Thirdly, censorship is often used to protect national security and public order. Governments and social media companies work together to restrict content related to terrorism, illegal activities, or threats to public safety. Such measures help in preventing radicalization and unlawful activities.

While these measures are designed to maintain a secure and respectful online space, the way they are enforced has led to controversies and accusations of overreach.

Despite its benefits, many argue that social media censorship often crosses ethical and legal boundaries, raising concerns about free speech and fairness.

One major criticism is the suppression of free speech. Social media companies have been accused of silencing dissenting opinions on controversial topics such as politics, COVID-19 policies, and social justice issues. Many believe that Big Tech companies have too much control over deciding what content is acceptable and what should be removed.

Another concern is the perceived political bias in content moderation. Critics argue that platforms often favor certain ideologies while suppressing others. A well-known example is the banning of former U.S. President Donald Trump from Twitter, which sparked debates on whether social media companies have the right to silence political figures. Additionally, in some countries, governments pressure social media platforms to censor opposition voices, raising questions about political influence over content moderation.

The lack of transparency in censorship policies is another major issue. Users often complain that they receive no clear explanations when their posts are removed or accounts suspended. Additionally, AI-driven moderation systems lack human judgment, leading to unfair content removals and inconsistencies.

Furthermore, the overreach of artificial intelligence (AI) moderation has led to errors in content filtering. Automated systems sometimes flag harmless content as harmful while failing to detect actual threats. The reliance on AI without adequate human oversight has resulted in numerous wrongful bans and content removals.

These concerns highlight the dangers of excessive censorship, where legitimate discussions and differing opinions are wrongly suppressed.

Several incidents demonstrate how controversial social media censorship can be.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many posts discussing alternative treatments, vaccine concerns, or lockdown policies were removed or labeled as misinformation. Even medical professionals and scientists faced censorship for presenting alternative viewpoints, leading to concerns about one-sided narratives on critical health matters.

In countries like China and India, social media platforms have been used as tools for government censorship. In China, discussions about democracy, human rights, and government criticism are heavily restricted on platforms like WeChat and Weibo. In India, posts critical of government policies, particularly during protests, have been taken down by social media companies.

Additionally, the Twitter Files controversy revealed how social media companies and government agencies allegedly collaborated to suppress certain topics, raising questions about political influence over online speech.

These cases underscore the need for accountability in social media censorship and highlight the potential risks of allowing too much control over online conversations.

## The growing problem of pesticide residues in food

By: Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

Pesticide residues have been found in more than 50% of food samples tested in India. Some foods, such as vegetables, fruits, cereals, pulses and spices, have been found to contain more than the maximum residue limits (MRLs) set by regulatory bodies. Pesticides are used on crops to control insects, fungi and weeds and can be transported through water, soil and air, affecting nearby crops. Additionally, some pesticides are used to prevent spoilage during storage and transport. Common fruits and vegetables such as apples, grapes, strawberries, spinach, tomatoes and potatoes often contain significant residues of pesticides. Staple foods such as rice, wheat, lentils and chickpeas may also contain harmful pesticides.

Pesticide residues in food are small amounts of pesticides that remain on or within foods after they have been used on crops. These residues can potentially pose health risks, depending on the specific pesticide and its concentration. India is one of the top consumers of pesticides globally, using them extensively in agriculture to protect crops from pests and diseases. However, the detection of pesticide residues in food has emerged as a significant health issue. Research shows that most foods in India contain these residues, some of which have levels higher than safe limits. This situation raises serious health concerns and highlights the need for better food safety regulations and greater public awareness. The recent appeal by the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare for a comprehensive national strategy for monitoring pesticide residues in food is important to enhance public health and food safety in India. Contamination of food with pesticides poses a serious health risk, which is further worsened by modern farming practices and reckless use of chemicals. Although several regulatory measures are in place, there are gaps in monitoring, enforcement and public education, which require stronger government action at both the central and state levels.

Reports from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and various independent studies show that pesticide residues have been found in more than 50% of food samples tested in India. Some foods, such as vegetables, fruits, cereals, pulses and spices, have been found to contain pesticides in excess of the maximum residue

limits (MRLs) set by regulatory bodies. Pesticides are used on crops to control insects, fungi and weeds and can be transported through water, soil and air, affecting nearby crops. Additionally, some pesticides are used to prevent spoilage during storage and transportation. Common fruits and vegetables such as apples, grapes, strawberries, spinach, tomatoes and potatoes often contain significant residues of pesticides. Staple foods such as rice, wheat, lentils and chickpeas may also contain harmful pesticides. Spices such as turmeric, coriander and cumin can sometimes contain pesticide levels above safe limits. Consuming food with pesticide residues can cause a variety of health problems, which vary depending on the amount and duration of exposure. Short-term effects can include nausea, dizziness, headaches and allergic reactions, while long-term exposure can result in serious conditions such as cancer, hormonal imbalances, neurological disorders and developmental problems in children.

Long-term exposure to pesticide residues in food causes a number of health problems, including cancer, neurological problems, hormonal disruption, reproductive challenges, and a weakened immune system. Pesticides also pollute our soil, water, and air, which has a negative impact on biodiversity. The continued presence of banned pesticides in farming fields contributes to soil degradation in the long term. Additionally, harmful chemicals used in agriculture can harm pollinators such as bees, disrupt ecological balance, and reduce crop yields. Children and pregnant women are particularly at risk from these toxins. Over time, pesticides can accumulate in the human body, potentially resulting in chronic health conditions. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India monitors pesticide residues in food through the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011, which sets maximum residue limits (MRLs) for various pesticides based on scientific assessment of risk. However, enforcement of these regulations is challenging due to the widespread use of pesticides and inadequate monitoring. Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has introduced specific maximum residue limits for spices and culinary herbs to enhance food safety. Continuous efforts are being made to align national standards with international guidelines, such as those established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

India lacks advanced testing laboratories capable of detecting pesticide residues on a large scale. Most testing facilities are located

in urban centres, complicating the monitoring of agricultural produce in rural areas. The Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 establishes maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides, but adherence to these standards is often low. Many pesticides banned in other countries are still legally permitted in India. Farmers and traders often resort to chemical sprays to artificially ripen fruits, such as using carbide on mangoes. Additionally, harmful substances such as formalin are used to preserve fish and meat, posing long-term health risks to consumers. Milk, pulses and vegetables are particularly vulnerable to contamination with chemicals that aim to improve their appearance and shelf life. Many farmers are not well aware of safe pesticide practices and continue to use highly toxic, banned chemicals. Consumers lack awareness of proper washing techniques or alternative methods to reduce pesticide exposure. Although demand for organic food is growing, its reliability is often questioned due to inadequate certification processes. Testing and monitoring agencies are plagued by corruption, which allows unsafe food products to infiltrate the market. Many businesses evade regulations through bribery, making it challenging for officials to maintain food safety standards.

Consumers can take a variety of steps to avoid exposure to harmful pesticide residues. Start by washing fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water; peeling them can reduce residue levels even further. Soaking produce in a solution of water with vinegar or salt can also help remove pesticide residues. Cooking can break down some pesticide residues, reducing their effect. Generally, organic foods have lower levels of synthetic pesticide residues than conventionally grown alternatives. Some commodities, such as bananas, avocados, and onions, naturally contain low pesticide residues. A comprehensive strategy is needed to ensure food safety in India. Strict regulations and monitoring are essential; government agencies must effectively enforce maximum residue limits (MRLs) and regularly test food products. Promoting the use of biopesticides and integrated pest management (IPM) can help reduce reliance on chemical pesticides. Increasing awareness among people about the risks associated with pesticides and safe food handling practices can further reduce the risk. The Pesticide Management Bill, 2020 should be prioritised and fully implemented to phase out harmful pesticides. It is also important to review the list of approved pesticides and ban pesticides that are considered hazardous and have been banned in other countries.

Promote collaboration between state food safety departments and agricultural universities to establish a consistent monitoring system. Increase the number of certified food testing laboratories in different states and implement random inspections of agricultural products. Leverage artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain technology to monitor pesticide use in food supply chains. Motivate private companies to engage in food testing by offering incentives to set up state-of-the-art testing facilities. Provide financial support for organic farming and encourage farmers to adopt biopesticides and natural fertilizers. Adopt integrated pest management (IPM) strategies to reduce dependence on chemical pesticides. Educate farmers on safe pesticide application methods, crop rotation practices, and sustainable agricultural techniques. Mandate labeling disclosing pesticide residues and their potential health effects on food products. Launch nationwide campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of washing and detoxifying food before eating. Strengthen consumer protection regulations to take legal action against food suppliers who violate safety standards. Impose tougher penalties on businesses found guilty of pesticide contamination. Increase whistleblower protections for individuals who report illegal pesticide practices in food supply chains. Improve collaboration among state agencies to ensure consistent enforcement of food safety regulations.

The Union Minister's call to enhance monitoring systems is both timely and necessary. However, simply enforcing regulations will not be enough; an intensive, collaborative approach is necessary, involving government bodies, farmers, consumers and the food sector. As an agricultural country, India must focus on food safety not only for public health, but also to boost economic growth and maintain global competitiveness. The presence of pesticide residues in Indian food is a major concern.

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## The little bird chirping in the courtyard of the house on the verge of extinction

By: Vijay Garg

Many bird species have disappeared in the world of birds, and many are on the verge of extinction. The first house is grazing in the courtyard. The sparrow now looks little, and the risk of its extinction is increasing. This little bird has joined the red list today.

Everyone's lifestyle has changed. Because of this changed lifestyle, the little sweet bird sparrow chirping in the house-to-courtyard is getting away from humans. Because of the growing population of humans, the blessing of birds is decreasing today. The fields and barns are also decreasing due to urbanisation. Sparrows that we call 'human friends' are not equal to their place of living today. Though villages still have a better environment, they have a substantial number, the situation in the city is alarming. But people can easily hear the chirping of sparrows even around them when they try a little. That is why many of the capital people are coming forward to conserve it.

Many steps being taken to conserve sparrows

In the capital too, several steps are being taken regarding the declining number of

sparrows. Many of the civil societies, NGOs and government institutions here are engaged in the work of spreading awareness to conserve sparrows. These efforts aim to prevent the declining number of this bird and reestablish them in their natural habitat.

It was included in the Red List in 2016

According to UK's 'Royal Society of Protection of Burdous and Andhra University studies, sparrow population has decreased by 60-80 per cent. For the same reason, the International Union for Conservation of Nature included it in the red list in 2016. Despite this, birds, including sparrows, are at risk of extinction.

Life of many birds is in distress

Climate change and humanitarian activities such as indiscriminate deforestation, urbanization and increased use of pesticides, have become a big threat to birds. The life of sparrows and other birds is in distress by the rise in temperature and the continuous changes in the weather. This change is affecting the processes of their food, shelter, and reproduction, thereby declining their numbers.

Protection has to be initiated  
The Government of India

has included sparrows in the Schedule-II of the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, to ensure the prevention and protection of prey. Under this, special permission is required to move the sparrow from one place to another. Despite this, despite these attempts, there has been no significant change in the population of sparrows.

Challenges in wildlife conservation

The main reasons behind the declining population of sparrows and other birds are – the use of excessive pesticides in agriculture, the destruction of natural habitats, and urbanisation. In place of fields, orchards and ponds, concrete forests have become scarcity of food and shelter for birds. This condition is making the existence of birds even more dangerous.

It is necessary to promote greenery

The main reason for the declining population of sparrows is urbanization and climate change. Unless we make changes to our lifestyle, efforts to conserve it will remain incomplete. Granting grain water for sparrows in homes, creating artificial nests, and increasing greenery in cities, can be its conservation measures. Especially in urban

areas, where concrete walls and glass windows are proving dangerous to birds, it is extremely necessary to promote greenery.

be environmental consciousness and personal efforts

The dwindling population of birds, including sparrows, is not just an environmental crisis, but a sign of deep disturbances in the ecosystem connected to our lives. Everyone has to work together to conserve it. We have to sharpen our efforts to bring back the sparrows in our homes and courtyard like the old days. We have to take small steps around our homes, such as keeping grain and water for birds and preparing their habitat-friendly environment. In addition, it is also necessary to promote tree-plants and conserve natural resources. With such an effort, we can keep sparrows and other birds safe.

**(Vijay Garg Retired  
Principal educational  
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Chand MHR Malout  
Malout Punjab)**

## GDC Katra organizes motivational lecture on "Fit Mind, Fit Body, Fit India"



### Top News Report

KATRA, Mar 20: As part of the Fit India Initiative, the Sports Club of Govt. Degree College (GDC) Katra organized a motivational lecture on the topic "Fit Mind, Fit Body, Fit India." The event commenced with a welcome address by Prof. Mohd Younus Saleem, who also coordinated the program. He outlined the upcoming activities planned under the initiative, aimed at promoting fitness and well-being among students. The program was conducted under the esteemed guidance of the Principal, Dr. Rajni

Bhagat. Large number of students from all the semesters showed their presence and made the event a great success. Prof. Mohd Younus Saleem, from the Department of English, served as the resource person and delivered an insightful lecture on the importance of fitness. He urged students to adopt a healthy lifestyle by avoiding junk food and incorporating natural fruits and homemade meals into their diet. He further emphasized the significance of exercise, yoga, meditation, and gym workouts in daily life. "If you adopt a healthy lifestyle at this young age, it will strengthen

your immunity and help you combat diseases in later years of your life" he advised. Principal also encouraged the students to change their eating habits and make exercise a routine in their life. The event was graced by the presence of several faculty members, including Prof. Shikha Bhasin, Dr. Manisha Kumari, Dr. Harmmeet Kour, Dr. Sinduja Gupta, Somallya Dogra, Dr. Reetika, Dr. Abdul Hafiz, and Rita Kumari. The session concluded with an interactive discussion, leaving students motivated to embrace fitness as an essential part of their lives.

## Raman Suri asks Govt to prioritise education sector

*Calls for filling vacant posts, expediting promotions to strengthen schools*

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Executive Member Raman Suri has urged the government to take immediate steps to improve the education system in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir by addressing the pressing issues of vacancies and stagnation in promotions within the school education department. With over 8,000 vacancies in the department, it is evident that the education sector has not been given due priority. Suri emphasized that quality education is impossible when there are not enough teachers in government schools. The shortage of teachers, lecturers, headmasters, and principals is a serious concern, and the situation is further aggravated by the challenge of appointing teachers in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir. Highlighting the stagnation in career progression, Raman Suri stressed the urgent need to promote teach-

ers to the master's level and masters to lecturer positions. "Several masters are awaiting their promotions, and once these are processed, schools will get subject matter specialists. The resultant vacancies should be filled transparently through the Services Selection Recruitment Board, (SSRB)" he stated. Raman called upon the government to review its decision to ban teacher recruitment. While Rahbar-e-Taleem teachers were regularized seven years ago, the vacant posts must still be filled to ensure the improvement of government schools. The deterioration of public education has contributed to the rise of private schools, making education unaffordable for many. "Health and education are two fundamental sectors that cannot be ignored. The government must take corrective measures to uplift government schools by immediately recruiting teachers and addressing stagnation in promotions," Suri asserted.

## GCoE organizes donation drive for RRR Initiative



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: The Government College of Education (GCoE), Canal Road, organized a donation drive, reinforcing its commitment to social responsibility and environmental sustainability. The initiative encouraged teaching and non-teaching staff members, along with students, to contribute old clothes, toys, books, and shoes, which were then deposited at the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (RRR) center. The event witnessed the esteemed presence of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Commissioner, Dayansh Yadhav; Ex-Corporator, Ashok Singh Manhas; Health Officer,

Ramesh Wazir; and IEC Team members – Sanjay Vayas, Ankush, Kapileshwar, Ashfaq, Tabrez, and Dr. Priyanka. Leading from the forefront, Dr. Jyoti Parihar, Principal of GCoE, played a pivotal role in organizing the drive. Several faculty members, including Professor Satish Kumar, Dr. Shalini Rana, NSS Programme Officer Professor Sarita Dogra, Dr. Shubhra Jamwal, and Professor Roopa, participated in the event. Around 30 students and non-teaching staff also joined hands to make the drive a success. Speaking at the occasion, Principal Dr. Jyoti Parihar emphasized the significance of sustainable practices and how small contributions can

make a big difference in the lives of the underprivileged. She appreciated the efforts of the college community in supporting the noble cause and thanked the JMC officials and guests for their participation. The event concluded with an interactive session, where officials from JMC highlighted the importance of waste management, recycling, and community-driven initiatives in promoting environmental consciousness. This donation drive stands as a testament to the commitment of Government College of Education, Canal Road, towards social welfare and sustainable development. The college remains dedicated to organizing such impactful activities in the future.

## J&K EJAC lauds CM's decision to constitute committee on regularization of daily wagers

### Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 20: The Jammu and Kashmir Employees Joint Action Committee (J&K EJAC) has extended appreciation and gratitude to Chief Minister J&K Omar Abdullah for taking a landmark step by constituting a high-level committee to examine the regularization of casual, seasonal, and other temporary workers in the Union Territory. According to a press handout issued by the EJAC official UT Spokesperson Mir Bashir, J&K EJAC President Wajahat Hussain Durrani, General Secretary, and President of Casual Daily Wagers Forum Sajad Ahmad Parry, along with other leaders, welcomed the move, terming it a significant breakthrough toward addressing the long-standing plight of thousands of daily wagers who have been relentlessly serving the government despite lacking job security and stable incomes. "The decision to constitute this committee

is a testament to the Chief Minister's commitment to ensuring justice for thousands of employees who have dedicated years of service under extremely difficult circumstances. We acknowledge and appreciate this step and hope for a speedy and favorable resolution," said President Wajahat Hussain Durrani. While lauding the initiative, the leaders stressed that giving representation to J&K EJAC in the committee would have further streamlined the process by incorporating the on-ground realities and concerns of the affected workforce. They asserted that EJAC possesses all relevant records and data concerning casual laborers and is fully prepared to assist the committee with authentic information, ensuring a fair and transparent approach to the regularization process. "We have always been at the forefront of advocating for the rights of daily wagers. Our leadership, backed

by years of experience and access to factual data, could have played a vital role in making this process more efficient. Nevertheless, we stand ready to extend full cooperation to the committee in pursuit of this noble cause," said Sajad Ahmad Parry, President of the Casual Daily Wagers Forum. The leaders urged the government to expedite the committee's recommendations to ensure that long-serving daily wagers receive their due rights at the earliest. They reaffirmed J&K EJAC's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the interests of temporary workers and pledged to work closely with the administration to ensure that the regularization process is executed transparently and equitably. The J&K EJAC leadership remains hopeful and optimistic that the Chief Minister's intervention will pave the way for historic and long-overdue reforms benefiting thousands of struggling daily wagers in Jammu and Kashmir.

## Kishtwar Police organises awareness program on new criminal laws



### Top News Report

KISHTWAR, Mar 20: On the directions of higher formations and to educate the public about the newly introduced criminal laws, J&K Police District Kishtwar organized an awareness program at Police Post Sarthal. The session was conducted under the supervision of SSP Kishtwar Javid Iqbal Mir. The program was chaired by Addl. SP Kishtwar Pawan Kumar Sharma, along with other officers. During the session, the general public was informed about key changes in the legal framework and their implications, ensuring that citizens are well aware of their rights and responsibilities under the new laws. The officers provided detailed insights into various legal provisions, aiming to enhance public

understanding and compliance with the law. Additionally, a crucial discussion was held on the growing menace of drug abuse. The officers highlighted the severe consequences of drug addiction on individuals, families, and society at large. The public was urged to stay vigilant and cooperate with the Police to combat drug-related issues and contribute towards a safer and healthier community. The awareness program was well received by the attendees, who appreciated the efforts of J&K Police District Kishtwar in spreading legal awareness and addressing social concerns. Kishtwar Police remains committed to fostering a law-abiding and drug-free society through proactive community engagement and awareness initiatives.

## Preserve wealth and manage inflation with ICICI Pru GIFT Select

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: In today's uncertain economic environment, financial planning to ensure an additional income stream has become important which can aid individuals to manage rising inflation, navigate market fluctuations, and achieve financial goals. To meet this need individuals are looking for investment options which provide both safety of capital invested and growth. To fulfil this need, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched a unique long-term savings product – ICICI Pru GIFT Select, a product designed to provide guaranteed income while preserving wealth. "Our goal is to help customers achieve their long-term financial aspirations with certainty," said Amit Palta, Chief Product and Distribution Offi-

cer, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance. The product offers flexibility, allowing customers to choose the duration of their guaranteed income while also receiving a lump sum on maturity in a tax-efficient manner. The increasing income feature, compounding at 5% annually, helps them manage inflation effectively. ICICI Prudential Life Insurance is also transforming life insurance distribution with digital innovations, empowering agents through the IPRU Edge mobile app. "Agents play a crucial role in helping customers make informed financial decisions. With IPRU Edge, we are equipping them with a digital office at their fingertips," Palta explained. The mobile app provides business leads, social media marketing content, and a paperless buying journey,

allowing agents to focus on growth. Between April and December 2024, the productivity of agents using IPRU Edge surged by 25%. Notably, 98% of eligible agents using the app were paid commissions on the same day. AI-powered solutions have enabled the Company to issue approx. 50% of the savings policies on the same day. ICICI Prudential Life's commitment to customers is evident in its 99.3% claim settlement ratio for the period April 2024 to December 2024, with an average claim settlement time of just 1.2 days for non-investigated claims. With its customer-centric approach and digital-first innovations, the Company continues to set new industry benchmarks, ensuring financial security for policyholders and seamless career growth for agents.

## Public of Panchayat Joura Kalan appeals CM for upgradation of 54-year-old Girls' School, Health Sub-Centre

### Top News Report

DODA, Mar 20: The residents of Panchayat Joura Kalan in Tehsil Kahara, District Doda, have raised their voices against years of neglect in the education and healthcare sectors. They have sought the personal intervention of the Chief Minister and Education Minister of Jammu & Kashmir UT to upgrade the 54-year-old Govt. Girls Middle School Joura Kalan to a High School. Despite its long-standing presence and a large number of girl students, the school has not been upgraded, unlike other institutions in neighboring villages that have been granted High or Higher Secondary School status. The Govt. Girls School Joura

Kalan was established 54 years ago to provide education to young girls in the area. However, in contrast to schools in Kencha, Joura Khurd, Tanta, Kahara, Nandana, and Dadi Kathava, which have all been upgraded to High or Higher Secondary Schools, the Joura Kalan school has only been granted Middle School status a few years ago. This lack of upgradation has placed an enormous burden on girl students, who are forced to travel 4-5 kilometers on foot to pursue higher education. Due to this, many students drop out after middle school, leading to an alarming rise in the dropout rate of girls in the region.

Local residents argued that the school meets the necessary criteria for upgradation. There are four middle schools nearby (Middle School Kunthal, Middle School Suranga, Middle School Budhi, and Middle School Shamdlian) that could act as feeder institutions to a High School in Joura Kalan, ensuring a strong student base. Despite these favorable conditions, the school has been continuously ignored by the authorities. Speaking on behalf of the local residents, Sarpanch of Panchayat Joura Kalan, Anil Kumar, expressed deep resentment over the step-motherly treatment meted out to their region by successive governments. He emphasized that the educa-

tion of young girls is suffering due to bureaucratic indifference, and the demand for upgradation is not just a request but a necessity for the empowerment of women in the area. "It is a matter of great disappointment that while other schools established around the same time have been upgraded, our daughters are still being denied equal opportunities for education. We urge the Chief Minister and the Education Minister to take immediate action to upgrade Govt. Girls Middle School Joura Kalan to a High School so that the poor girl students of this area do not have to abandon their studies due to lack of access," he stated. Apart from education, the resi-

dents have also voiced their concern over the poor healthcare facilities in Joura Kalan. The 45-year-old Health Sub-Centre in the area has not been upgraded to a Primary Health Centre (PHC) despite serving a large population. The lack of adequate healthcare infrastructure has forced people to travel long distances for basic medical treatment, causing hardships, particularly in emergencies. The residents are demanding the immediate upgradation of the Health Sub-Centre to a fully functional Primary Health Centre with proper medical staff, equipment, and facilities to cater to the healthcare needs of the people in this far-flung region. The people of Panchayat Joura

Kalan have made a fervent appeal to the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Education Minister Sakeena Masood Itoo to address their long-standing grievances. They urged the government to take swift action and upgrade the Govt. Girls Middle School Joura Kalan to a High School and the Health Sub-Centre to a PHC to bring relief to the neglected and underprivileged community. The locals have warned that if their demands are not met soon, they will be left with no choice but to stage protests and intensify their agitation to fight for their rights. They hope that this time, the government will heed their plea and fulfill their legitimate demands for the upliftment of education and healthcare facilities in the region.





## Around 70 Palestinians killed in Israeli strike: Gaza health authorities

**Israeli airstrikes on Gaza on Thursday resulted in the deaths of at least 70 Palestinians, as the conflict escalates. The renewed operations come after a ceasefire collapsed.**

GAZA, Mar 20 (Agencies): At least 70 Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded in Israeli airstrikes across Gaza on Thursday, after Israel resumed its bombing campaign on the enclave, a Gaza health official said.

Medics said Israeli strikes targeted several houses in northern and southern areas of the Gaza Strip. There was no immediate comment from Israel.

On Wednesday, the Israeli military said its forces had resumed ground operations in central and southern Gaza, after a ceasefire that had broadly held since January collapsed.

The renewed ground operations came a day after more than 400 Palestinians were killed in airstrikes in one of the deadliest episodes since the beginning of the conflict in October 2023.



Since Tuesday, airstrikes have killed 510 Palestinians, with more than half of them women and children, the health official told agency.

The Israeli military said its operations extended Israel's control over the Netzarim Corridor, which bisects Gaza, and were a "focused" manoeuvre aimed at creating a partial buffer zone between the north and the south of the enclave.

The Palestinian militant group Hamas said the ground operation and the incursion into the

Netzarim Corridor were a "new and dangerous violation" of the two-month-old ceasefire agreement. In a statement, the group reaffirmed its commitment to the deal and called on mediators to "assume their responsibilities".

Speaking to agency on Thursday, a Hamas official said mediators had stepped up their efforts with the two warring sides but added that "no breakthrough has yet been made."

The group has made no clear threats to retaliate. The war started after Hamas militants attacked Israeli communities on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 and taking more than 250 hostages, by Israeli tallies.

More than 49,000 Palestinians have been killed in the ensuing conflict, according to Gaza's health authorities, with the enclave reduced to rubble.

## Israeli PM Netanyahu accuses "leftist Deep State" of "weaponising" justice system against him



TEL AVIV, Mar 20 (Agencies): Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday accused the "leftist Deep State" of "weaponising" the justice system against him, The Times of Israel reported.

"In America and in Israel, when a strong right-wing leader wins an election, the leftist Deep State weaponises the justice system to thwart the people's will. They won't win in either place! We stand strong together," Netanyahu posted in English from his official account. Netanyahu wrote on his official prime minister account on X.

However, the Israeli PM deleted the tweet in less than an hour and posted the same message from his personal account.

Netanyahu's state-

ment came after he detained and questioned two suspects in relation to an ongoing investigation into whether thousands of dollars were funnelled from Qatar to one or more of Netanyahu's aides.

The Times of Israel quoting Hebrew Media reported that one of the suspects was released home under unspecified conditions on Thursday morning, while the second is under interrogation.

Earlier this week, the Axios news site quoted aides to the prime minister saying that Netanyahu decided to move ahead with his planned firing of Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar in early February, after leaving his trip to Washington inspired by the moves Trump took "against the deep state" and his appointment of loyalists to key posts, The Times

of Israel reported.

The government's plans to renew controversial legislation to increase political power over the judiciary along with their plans to fire Bar as well as Attorney General Gali-Baharav-Miara, added with the resumption of airstrikes in Gaza have sparked major anti-government protest in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, President Isaac Herzog expressed complete faith in the country's judiciary.

"Israel's strong and independent judicial system is an asset to our democracy, and the president of Israel is very proud of it," Herzog wrote on X.

Additionally, Opposition leader Yair Lapid's Yesh Atid party accused Netanyahu of having "completely lost it," in response to the post.

"He's gone off the rails" and is "spreading dangerous conspiracies, undermining the rule of law, and slandering Israel," the centrist party posted from its official X account. "He is in panic mode. He knows that his inner circle is mired in foreign interests and that the truth will be revealed. This is not leadership, this is a dangerous and embarrassing panic."

## Trump, Zelensky agree; US-Ukraine to continue working together to bring about end to war

WASHINGTON, Mar 20 (Agencies): US President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky agreed that Ukraine and the US will continue working together to bring about a real end to the war and that lasting peace under Trump's leadership can be achieved, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz.

In a statement, Rubio and Waltz said, "Today, President Donald J. Trump and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky had a fantastic phone conversation. President Zelensky thanked President Trump for a productive start for the work of the Ukrainian and American teams in Jeddah on March 11th. The meeting of the senior officials from both nations significantly helped in moving toward ending the war."

Zelensky thanked Trump for the support of the US, particularly the Javelin missiles that Trump was the first to provide, and his efforts towards peace. Trump briefed Zelensky about his conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The two leaders reviewed the situation in Kursk and agreed to share information closely with their defence staff as the battlefield situation evolved.

In a statement, Rubio and Waltz stated, "The leaders agreed Ukraine and America will continue working together to bring about a real end to the war, and that lasting peace

under President Trump's leadership can be achieved."

During the conversation, Zelensky asked for additional air defence systems to protect his civilians, especially the Patriot missile system. Trump agreed to work with Zelensky to find what was available, particularly in Europe, according to the statement.

In the statement, Trump and Waltz said, "The two leaders also agreed on a partial ceasefire against energy. Technical teams will meet in Saudi Arabia in the coming days to discuss broadening the ceasefire to the Black Sea on the way to a full ceasefire. They agreed this could be the first step toward the full end of the war and ensuring security. President Zelensky was grateful for the President's leadership in this effort and reiterated his willingness to adopt a full ceasefire."

Trump discussed Ukraine's electrical supply and nuclear power plants. Trump stated that the US could be very helpful in running those plants with its electricity and utility expertise. The statement said, "American ownership of those plants would be the best protection for that infrastructure and support for Ukrainian energy infrastructure."

Zelensky thanked Trump for continuing to push humanitarian concerns, including the exchange of POWs. He noted they had just had a successful exchange and thanked the President for his leadership.

Trump asked Zelensky about



the children who had gone missing from Ukraine during the war, including the ones that had been abducted. Trump expressed willingness to work closely with both parties to help make sure those children were returned home. They agreed all parties must continue the effort to make a ceasefire work.

In a statement, Rubio and Waltz said, "The Presidents noted the positive work of their advisors and representatives, especially Secretary Rubio, National Security Advisor Waltz, Special Envoy Kellogg, and others. The Presidents instructed their teams to move ahead with the technical issues related to implementing and broadening the partial ceasefire. The Presidents instructed their advisors and representatives to carry out this work as quickly as possible. The Presidents emphasized that in further meetings, the teams

can agree on all necessary aspects of advancing toward lasting peace and security."

Earlier, Trump announced he had a "very good" one-hour phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, aimed at a possible ceasefire with Russia.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump stated, "Just completed a very good telephone call with President Zelensky of Ukraine. It lasted approximately one hour. Much of the discussion was based on the call made yesterday with President Putin in order to align both Russia and Ukraine in terms of their requests and needs. We are very much on track, and I will ask Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and National Security Advisor Michael Waltz, to give an accurate description of the points discussed. That Statement will be put out shortly."

## UAE mediation efforts succeed with new exchange of 350 captives between Russia and Ukraine

ABU DHABI, Mar 20 (Agencies): The United Arab Emirates has announced the success of mediation efforts in a new exchange of war captives between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Ukraine, which included 175 Ukrainian captives and 175 Russian captives - 350 captives in total - bringing the overall number exchanged through UAE mediation efforts to 3,233.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) expressed its appreciation to the Russian Federation and the Republic of Ukraine for their cooperation with the UAE's mediation endeavours. This reflects the appreciation



of both countries for the UAE's role in supporting all efforts to resolve the crisis between the two nations.

The Ministry emphasised that the success of this mediation, the thirteenth, reflects the distinguished ties between the UAE and the two countries.

Furthermore, the Ministry reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to the success of all efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine, and mitigating the humanitarian impacts as a result of the crisis, including on refugees and captives.

## Trump administration planning military buffer zones to hold illegal migrants at southern border: Report

**The Trump administration is planning to take control of the buffer zone along the southern border in New Mexico and to empower US troops to hold migrants illegally entering the country.**

WASHINGTON, Mar 20 (Agencies): The Donald Trump administration is planning to take control of the buffer zone along the southern border in New Mexico and to empower US troops to hold migrants illegally entering the country, The Washington Post reported quoting officials familiar with the matter.

As per the officials, these deliberations have been underway for weeks focusing on a section of the border in New Mexico.

This move would turn buffer zones into expansive satellite military installations. This move is a part of Trump's



border crackdown. As reported by The Washington Post, this effort would enable the most significant use yet of active-duty forces at the border under Trump. However, the militarisa-

tion of the buffer zone would certainly raise questions about whether employing the military in this way runs afoul of the Posse Comitatus Act, a federal law that prohibits active-duty troops from

most law enforcement missions. The military-controlled buffer zone could measure 60 feet deep and would stretch to west to California if the plan is approved, officials told The Washington Post.

Additionally, the officials revealed that the Pentagon officials have asked military officers to examine whether any legal complications could arise from having US troops temporarily hold those crossing illegally when CBP agents are not immediately available to arrest them, officials said.

"It's very, very careful on that wording," said one defence official

familiar with the discussion. "It's not 'detention' because once you go into detention, it has the connotations of being detained for arrest. This is holding for civilian law enforcement."

Trump's defence secretary, Pete Hegseth, has enthusiastically supported other efforts to employ the military at the southern border, a mission he views as essential to US national security. "We have defended other places and other spaces," Hegseth said in February during an initial trip to the border as Pentagon chief. "We will defend this line," The Washington Post reported.





## Women Personality Development including IT Training concludes at Thannamandi

Top News Report

RAJOURI, Mar 20: The Indian Army as part of 'Operation Sadbhavana', conducted Women Personality Development including Information Technology Training at Thannamandi, Rajouri district from 18 February 2025 to 19 March 2025.

This skill development initiative was aimed to improve communication skills, Information Technology skills and build confidence in achieving greater success in personal and professional lives of local women. A total of twenty-two women from local communities participated in the same.

Closing ceremony of Women Personality Development including Information Technology Training was carried out on 19 March 2025. Indian Army



has always been a pillar of support in guiding and empowering local youth by providing skill development opportunities.

Women Personality Development including Information Technology Training program was a holistic initiative designed

to empower women with all necessary infrastructure and training which would build a solid foundation in Information Technology skills.

By combining Personality Development and Information Technology skills, this work-

shop provides opportunity for women's to enhance their communication abilities, build confidence, develop a more positive as well as Information Technology training modules on computer programming, data analysis, digital literacy and cyber security.

This training provides a unique opportunity to network with like-minded individuals, build their professional portfolios and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to start their own businesses or pursue leadership roles in their chosen fields.

Each participant's progress is a testament to the dedication and perseverance of these youth.

As a token of recognition, certificates for participation and gifts were distributed to all participants on closing day.

## Army organises outreach program in Bheaderwah



Top News Report

DODA, Mar 20: The Indian Army conducted a successful Distribution Camp on Thursday in Bheja, Thanala, and Sharekhi, located in Bheaderwah, Doda, aimed at empowering and uplifting the local communities, particularly focusing on the differently-abled, women, and marginalized groups.

The event featured the distribution of vital resources, including hearing aids for individuals with hearing impairments, which will enable better com-

munication and integration into society. Wheelchairs were also given to those with mobility challenges, promoting greater independence and mobility for the elderly and disabled.

Additionally, sewing machines were provided to women, equipping them with skills to enhance their livelihoods and contribute to their families' economic well-being.

Solar lights were distributed to homes in impoverished areas, ensuring that families can enjoy reliable lighting, even during power outages.

This initiative reflects the Army's ongoing commitment to supporting rural and marginalized communities, fostering development, inclusivity, and self-sufficiency.

The Army's outreach efforts are helping to bridge gaps for the Gujjar and Bakkarwal communities, offering them equal opportunities for growth, health, and education.

Through such programs, the Indian Army continues to make a positive impact on the lives of those in the remotest parts of the country.

## Awareness Lecture organised on Health and Hygiene at Dharmari

Top News Report

REASI, Mar 20: In consonance with the Indian Army's ongoing efforts to ensure the good health of the local population residing in far-flung areas, the Indian Army organized an awareness lecture on Health and Hygiene.

This program aims to educate the local populace, specifically the youth, on the importance of health and hygiene, emphasizing how good practices prevent disease, pro-



mote well-being, and contribute to a healthy environment. A total of 22 people attended the event.

The initiative will not only ensure good health but also strengthen the connection with the Awam.

## Army distributes solar lights for Gujjar & Bakkarwal at Bheja

Top News Report

DODA, Mar 20: As part of its ongoing outreach and efforts to help the local population, the Indian Army located in Bheaderwah has taken the initiative to conduct a distribution of solar lights for the Gujjar and Bakkarwal communities.

This initiative is being organized by the unit at Bheja, Doda, Seoj, Triangle Ghat, Bheaderwah, and Marmat are located in the foothills of the middle Himalayas at an altitude of 1650 meters. The region is known as "Mini Kashmir" due to its pristine beauty and rich cultural heritage.

The region witnessed insurgency during the peak of militancy; however, the situation



has been peaceful and normal for more than a decade. Due to the presence of a large

number of educational institutions offering higher education and the high literacy rate of the

area, it is also referred to as the "Kerala of J&K."

The region has been accorded the status of an additional district, considering its vast area, prevailing peace, and separate identity.

Good communal harmony exists between both communities, who are nearly equal in ratio. The demographic profile of the region contains almost an equal ratio of Hindus and Muslims.

A popular demand for the provision of solar lights has come from educational institutions and the public of both communities in the remotest areas of Seoj, Triangle Ghat, Bheaderwah, and Marmat. A total of 40 solar lights were distributed to the civil population.

## Keshav Chopra inaugurates J&K T-10 Tennis Senior National Trials Cricket Match

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: The J&K T-10 Tennis Cricket Association successfully conducted the Senior National Trials at Parade Ground, Jammu. These trials were held to select top cricketers from the Union Territory, with the chosen players set to represent Jammu & Kashmir in the 2nd Senior National Champions Trophy, scheduled to take place in Ara, Bihar, from April 9th to 12th, 2025.

The opening ceremony was graced and inaugurated by Prominent Social Activist & Chairman of the Samvedna Society Keshav Chopra whose presence inspired the participants and added prestige to the event.



In his address on the occasion Keshav Chopra said that these events provide a golden opportunity for aspiring cricketers to showcase their skills and earn a

place in this prestigious national tournament. It also marked a crucial step in promoting T-10 tennis cricket in Jammu & Kashmir, offering players a pathway to compete at the highest level. Keshav said that

sports not only makes youth physically and mentally fit but also helps in keeping them away from drug Menace that has become a big threat to the society today.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, President Amit Sahu stated that "This trial is a stepping stone for talented cricketers in J&K. We are dedicated to providing them with opportunities to compete at the highest level and make our region proud."

The J&K T-10 Tennis Cricket Association extends its best wishes to all selected players and looks forward to seeing them perform exceptionally in the National Champions Trophy.

Vice President of the Association Raghav Mehra, General Secretary Sunil Kumar, Joint Secretary R.V Thakur and others were also present during the match.

## Workshop on "Empowering Women to Speak Out Against Harassment" concludes in Kathua



Top News Report

KATHUA, Mar 20: The two-day workshop on "Empowering Women to Speak Out Against Harassment", organized by the Social Welfare Department Kathua in collaboration with Govt. Degree College for Women, Kathua, concluded on Thursday.

The workshop, held under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative, aimed at raising awareness and empow-

ering women to speak up against harassment.

The culmination day featured a lamp lighting ceremony followed by a welcome speech by Dr. Rachna, Associate Professor at GDC for Women, Kathua. The Chief Guest, Advocate Prakriti, delivered an insightful session on women's rights, legal protections, and policies related to harassment. The program also included a Saraswati Vandana and cultural

performances by students. A Poster Making Competition on the workshop's theme was conducted, with winners receiving 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes, while all participants were honored with certificates of appreciation.

The event concluded with the felicitation of the Chief Guest, the Principal of GDC for Women, and the Convener of IQAC for their contributions to the successful execution of the workshop.

The Social Welfare Department and GDC for Women, Kathua expressed gratitude to all participants, marking the event as a significant step towards empowering women and addressing harassment issues in society.

## Shahrul Ramadhan Big Iftar party fosters faith, generosity, community spirit in Srinagar

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 20: The Shahrul Ramadhan Big Iftar Party at Golden Tulip, Sonwar, Srinagar, was a heartfelt celebration of faith, generosity, and community spirit. Attended by esteemed dignitaries, scholars, and philanthropists, the event brought people together in an atmosphere of spiritual reflection and unity.

The evening was eloquently hosted by RJ Amir, who engaged the audience with his warmth and enthusiasm. BIG FM, which has been championing this noble cause for the needy and underprivileged for the past 18 years, played a pivotal role in organizing

the event, reinforcing its commitment to social welfare and community service.

The event commenced with soulful Naat Khwani, filling the air with devotion, followed by insightful talks on the virtues and significance of Ramadhan. Renowned scholars shared their wisdom, emphasizing the importance of compassion, self-discipline, and charity during this sacred month.

A significant highlight of the gathering was the presence of children from J&K Yateem Trust. Their participation added a special dimension to the event, as gifts and goodies were distributed, spreading joy and reinforcing the spirit of giving that defines Ramadhan.



The event was graced by distinguished guests, with Dr. Sheikh Mustafa Kamaal, Former Minister & Additional Secretary General of the National Conference, serving as the Chief Guest. Among the special guests were Israr Khan, Former DIG & Vice President of

National Conference Jammu Province, and Rahat Afridi, an Advocate at the Supreme Court of India. Their presence underscored the communal harmony and shared reverence for the values upheld during Ramadhan.

Eminent scholars and speak-

ers added depth to the evening's discourse. Mufti Ajaz ul Hassan Bandy, Grand Mufti and Founder of Aljamia Madrasa Sabeel ul Huda, delivered profound insights into Islamic teachings. Moulana Muhammad Tajamul Qadri, a Research Scholar at Karwani Islami International, further enriched the gathering with his knowledge.

Contributions from cultural advocates Irfan Nabi and Bilal Ahmad, Founders of Mizrab - Art, Culture & Languages, along with Adil Mustafaie, Founder of Mustafaie Naat Council, highlighted the intersection of faith and artistic expression.

The event would not have been possible without the generous

support of key contributors, including Wasim Ahmed Khan (Khyber Cement), Vinod Koul (Goodricke), Saurabh Chaudhary (Fortofino), Manzoor Shah (Competent Kashmir Automobiles), Bilal and Firdous Ahmed (Jal Bath Fittings), Mohd. Gulam (Golden Tulip), and Najmus Saqib Mir (La Delice). Their contributions exemplified the spirit of philanthropy that defines Ramadhan.

As the Adhan for Maghrib echoed, attendees came together to break their fast, united in gratitude and devotion. The evening concluded on a note of brotherhood and reflection, reinforcing Shahrul Ramadhan as a symbol of unity and generosity.



## SAIL organizes distribution camp to provide free joystick wheelchairs, motorized tricycles to 26 Divyangjans



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: In a significant step towards empowering Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, organized a distribution camp to provide Joystick Wheelchairs and Motorized Tricycles to 26 Divyangjans in Jammu.

The event took place at OB-24, Rail Head Commercial Complex, Panama Chowk, Jammu, and was con-

ducted by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), Mohali (Punjab) Unit, under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India.

A total of 26 beneficiaries were identified and registered between December 5, 2024, and January 5, 2025. During the camp, 22 Joystick Wheelchairs and 4 Motorized Tricycles were distributed, amounting to approxi-

mately Rs 17.64 lakh.

Several officials from SAIL and ALIMCO graced the occasion, including Bilal Ahmad Bhat – General Manager (Sales) & Branch Manager, SAIL, Abhayshwar Sahai – Deputy General Manager (HR), SAIL, Pankaj Goel – Senior Manager (Sales), SAIL, Ashok Kumar Sahu – Prosthetics & Orthotics Officer, ALIMCO, and Kanika Mehta – Junior Manager, ALIMCO.

The event underscored SAIL's commitment to social welfare and inclusivity, ensuring that Divyangjans receive mobility aids to enhance their independence and quality of life. Through such initiatives, SAIL continues to make a meaningful impact in the lives of differently-abled individuals, reaffirming its dedication to social empowerment.

## Mentioning Guru Ravidas in Budget speech by Haryana CM is symbol of reverence: Balbir

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini recently presented the state budget in the Haryana Assembly, expressing deep reverence for Guru Ravidas, which is a commendable step.

Balbir Ram Rattan, National General Secretary of Guru Ravidas Vishwa Mahapeeth, General Secretary of the British Ravidas Heritage Foundation (Indian Branch), and a member of Begampura Vishwa Mahasabha, welcomed the Chief Minister's statement.

He mentioned that in honour of Guru Ravidas, the Chief Minister reverently and lovingly quoted his famous couplet: "Aisa chahun raj main, jahan mile saban ko ann, Shhot bade sam basey, Raidas rahe prasann."

This couplet reflects Guru Ravidas ji's principles of equality and social harmony, advocating for equal rights and access to resources for all.

In his address, CM Saini emphasized that his government is committed to realizing this ideal, ensuring equality, social justice, and inclusive development in society.

Balbir stated that this gesture is not just a tribute to Guru Ravidas ji but also a reflection of the Chief Minister's deep reverence and respect for the entire Ravidasia community.

On behalf of various social organizations dedicated to spreading Guru Ravidas ji's teachings, Balbir expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister.

He noted that honouring Guru ji's teachings on the platform of a state assembly signifies that by drawing inspiration from great saints of the nation, society can move forward more effectively in strengthening equality, unity, and brotherhood.

This act by CM Nayab Singh Saini indicates that under his leadership, the Haryana government is committed to promoting social welfare schemes, uplifting the underprivileged sections of society, and building an inclusive society.

Balbir expressed hope that the Nayab Singh Saini government, inspired by Guru ji's life, will implement policies in education, employment, and social justice that will help uplift every section of society.

## NIILM University Confers the Title of "Emeritus Professor in Economics" upon Dr. R. K. Uppal

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: NIILM University, Haryana, has bestowed the prestigious title of "Emeritus Professor in Economics" upon Dr. R. K. Uppal in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field of economics, banking, and finance. This esteemed honor acknowledges Dr. Uppal's extensive academic and research endeavors that have significantly impacted the financial and economic landscape. Dr. R. K. Uppal, a distinguished academician and researcher, currently serves as the principal and professor at Guru Gobind Singh College of Management and Technology, Gidderbaha, Punjab. With a prolific career spanning over 35 years, Dr. Uppal has made remarkable contributions through his research on bank-



ing reforms, financial inclusion, and digital advancements in the financial sector. He has authored 85 books, two encyclopedias, and over 345 research papers published in UGC Care-listed, peer-reviewed, and Scopus-indexed journals. His thought leadership has earned him several national and international accolades, and his work continues to guide policy-makers, scholars, and industry professionals. As an Emeritus Professor in Economics, Dr. Uppal

is expected to provide invaluable insights and mentorship to scholars and students, further enhancing the university's academic excellence. The leadership and faculty of NIILM University congratulated Dr. Uppal on this distinguished title as a testament to Dr. Uppal's lifelong dedication to advancing knowledge and fostering academic growth, solidifying his legacy as a thought leader in economics and finance. Dr. Uppal thanked all the dignitaries of this university.

## Shiv Sena terms Amarnath Yatra registration fee as 'Jizya' Appeals CM to intervene and set an incomparable example

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit has demanded to make the annual Shri Amarnath Yatra registration free, starting on July 3 and to provide free bus service to the devotees from Jammu to Baltal and Pahalgam.

In a press conference held today at the party's state central office, state head Manish Sahni strongly condemned the Amarnath Shrine Board for collecting registration fee and said that he has been opposing this collection for the last several years but the Shrine Board is not ready to

give up its stubborn attitude.

On one hand, efforts are claimed to promote religious and cultural tourism, on the other hand, additional burden is being put on the pockets of the devotees coming on Shri Amarnath Yatra by collecting registration fee from them.

Sahni said that the registration fee charged for the religious pilgrimage of Hindus brings back memories of the Jizya tax of the Mughal period.

Sahni has demanded Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to intervene and make the registration free.

Sahni said that before the reor-



ganization of Jammu and Kashmir (i.e. before 2019), the registration fee used to be only Rs 50, which

has been increased to Rs 150/250 online and offline during the reign of the Lieutenant Governor.

Sahni has demanded the BJP MLAs to raise their voice on this in the House. Along with this, Omar Abdullah has been demanded to provide free bus service from Jammu to Pahalgam and Baltal for the pilgrims coming on the pilgrimage.

Sahni said that the above facilities provided by the Chief Minister of a Muslim-dominated state on the Hindu pilgrimage will present an incomparable example of mutual brotherhood and communal beauty. On this occasion Gen Secretary Vikas Bakshi and city president Rohan Malwal were present.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) State

Chief Manish Sahni has expressed happiness over the successful return of Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams from space and wished her a speedy recovery and return to India.

Sahni said that the safe return of Sunita Williams after 9 months and 14 days is a happy moment for India and the whole world and a major achievement in the field of space science.

Sahni said that she has won the hearts of the whole world by smilingly greeting her fans on her return to earth. Sahni wishes Sunita Williams a speedy recovery and return to India.

## Dimple leads protest against land allotment to outsiders in J&K, demands restoration of Dogra State



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: Sunil Dimple, President of Mission Statehood, led a massive protest at Rehari Chungi, BC Road, against the alleged allotment of land in Jammu & Kashmir to non-residents for business purposes.

Dimple warned that such actions pose a grave threat to the demography of Jammu & Kashmir and reiterated his demand for the restoration of the erstwhile princely Dogra state.

Addressing the gathering, Dimple alleged that following the abrogation of Article 370, it was revealed in the Assembly that outsiders have been allotted land in Jammu & Kashmir over the past two years, with many more in line for similar allocations.

He claimed that lakhs of kanal of land have already been handed over to non-resident investors and that 200 more investors from states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Gujarat are set to receive land soon.

Dimple further accused the Jammu Development Authority (JDA) and the Housing Department of selling flats to non-residents, stating that this would drastically alter the demographic and cultural fabric of Jammu & Kashmir.

Dimple called on former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to disclose the terms and conditions under which land is being allotted to non-residents for residential and business purposes. He asserted that 100% of jobs in industries established on this land must be given to local youth, and land should only be provided on a 100-year lease instead of outright allotment.


Accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of looting Jammu & Kashmir like the East India Company, Dimple stated that the party has no intention of restoring J&K's statehood or Dogra identity. He claimed that after the abrogation of Article 370, youth in J&K have been left unemployed, impoverished, and struggling to survive. Dimple put forth a

series of demands for immediate action including restoration of Jammu & Kashmir's statehood without delay, waiver of electricity bills and provision of 200 free electricity units to all residents, free 12 LPG cylinders and double ration allocation for the people, and resumption of the Darbar Move from April 1, 2025.

Dimple demanded that Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and CM Omar Abdullah immediately reinstate the Darbar Move, a historical practice that saw the biannual shifting of the government between Jammu and Srinagar.

He accused the Prime Minister and Home Minister of failing to make any commitments regarding the restoration of Jammu & Kashmir's statehood.

Several senior leaders and activists, including Sunny, Narender Choudhry, Raja, Ram Kumar, Mohinder Kumar, Raju, Sudesh Kumar, and Bishan Das, participated in the protest, voicing their support for the demands and urging authorities to address the grievances of the people.



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