TOP NEWS OF J&K



JAMMU, THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025

ENTERTAINMENT

16

Lisa Ray slams Air India for denying medical waiver for her ailing father



NATIONAL

Seems 'two anti-farmer parties' have joined hands

against farmers: Kharge

Daily Evening Newspaper **INTERNATIONAL**

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



e-paper: www.topnewsjk.in

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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 tour-

ismJammu 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 cognisance 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.

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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 ques-

tion 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 fasttrack 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, computerbased 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

Turn to page 9

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 Champions Trophy earlier this month in Dubai.

The Rohit Sharmaled India defeated New Zealand by four wickets in the final to grab their

third Champions Trophy

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 state-

"Winning back-to-back ICC titles is special and this reward recognises Team India's dedication and excellence on the global stage," said BCCI **Turn to page 9**

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 ery 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 Igbal Singh, "a key

Turn to page 9

persons and the recov-



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, khoya, dahi, ice cream, softy, butter, ghee, and cheese production. Additionally,

■Turn to page 9



UTHALA

to inform the sad demise of our beloved Smt. Bimla Devi W/o Late Sh. Tilak Rai Gupta R/o H.No. 23, Sector-12, Nanak Nagar, Jammu who left for her heavenly abode on Tuesday, 18-03-2025.

Rasam Uthala shall be performed on Friday, 21-03-2025 from 4 to 5 PM at Paanch Mandir, Sector-2, Channi Himmat, Jammu. **GRIEF STRICKEN**

Daughter-in-law & Son Smt. Jyoti & Anil Gupta Daughters & Sons-in-law

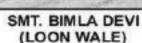
Late Smt. Sharda & Rajinder Pal Gupta

Smt. Sangeeta & Rajinder Gupta Smt. Komal (Pinky) & Som Raj Mahajan

Smt. Bharti & Vipan Mahajan Smt. Lalita & Sham Lal Gupta (Surveyor) (Bhabhi & Brother)

Smt. Reeta & Ramesh Gupta (Nephew)

Smt. Simmi & Suresh Gupta (Nephew) Miss Akriti Gupta - Grand Daughter Ph.No: 9149719689, 9419184877

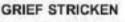


(GUPTA SOAP FACTORY)

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



Smt. Urmal Khajuria (Wife)

Son and Daughter-in-law

Daughters and Sons-in-law

Smt. Rakhee Khajuria and Sh. Ashok Sharma

Smt. Shilpi Khajuria and Sh. Rakesh Sharma

Mob. 9149713847



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

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:

Reeta and Ranjan Nehru

Sudesh and Ruby Saraf The families of Late Dr DN Saraf, Late Rupa Kaul,

Raj Dutari Koul, Late Roshantal Saraf, Late Roshantal Karihaloo

Grandchildren:

Dhiraj, Priyanka,

Contact: Ranjan Nehru 98810 64171, Amol Nehru 98500 85877

TENTH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

our beloved Smt Shakuntla Devi W/o Late Shi Chuni Lal Abrol, R/o Ward No. 13, House No. 14, Lambi Gali,

10TH DAY will be performed on Thursday, 20th March from 11 AM to 12 Noon at Shiv Shakti Temple, Near Government quarter, Janipur Housing Colony, Jammu.

13TH DAY KRIYA will be performed on Sunday, 23rd March at HNo. 141-A, Sector 3, Colonel Colony, Near Saraswati Mata Mandir, Bohri, Talab Tillo, Jammu.

UTHALA will be performed on Monday, 24th March 2025 from 3 PM to 4 PM at Shiv Shakti Temple Near Govt Quarter,

RAVI ABROL & SUSHAM ABROL (Son & Daughter in law) PAWAN ABROL & MAYURI ABROL (Son & Daughter in law)

PURUSHOTTAM SARAF (Son in law)

ADITYA, AARYE, ADITI, ATULYA, ARUN, VARUN, SAURABH, BHARTI, DEEKSHA, RIDDHIMA

Contact- 9419157025, 9958008846, 9797388215

TENTH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of Prof. (Retd) Dewan Chand Sharma S/o Late Sh. Mulkh Raj Sharma R/o H.No. 149-A, Gandhi

TENTH DAY will be performed at residence or

20-3-2025 (Thursday) at 11 am.

UTHALA will be performed on 21-03-2025 (Friday) at

Shiv Mandir, near Government Quarters, Gandhi Nagar Jammu from 4 pm to 5 pm. GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Reva Sharma - Wife

Daughter & Son in law Dr. Sameru Sharma (Principal GCET Jammu) & Er. Sanjay Sharma (OSD, PDD) Smt. Shafali Sharma (Lecturer) & Sh. Ashish Sharma (Transporter)

Brother & Sister in law Sh. Sain Das Sharma & Smt. Kanta Sharma

Sister & Brother in law Smt. Santosh & AVM GP Sharma

Sh. Mohinder Pal Sharma & Smt.Rajesh Sharma Shrt. B.D Sharma (Retired Principal) Er. Arun Sharma (Reti. Chief Engg.) & Smt. Samata Sharma

Dr. Som Dutt Sharma & Dr. Promitia Sharma Er. Vinod Sharma (Reld Xen) & Smt. Indu Sharma

Grand Children: Sidhant, Sameeha, Vrishay, Aayat Mobile no.: 9419724322, 7889543265, 9419191764, 9796702727

TENTH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Sh. Suresh Gupta S/o Lt. Sh. Kewal Krishan Gupta R/o H.No. 16, Gali Kumharan, Purani Mandi, Jammu who expired on 12/3/2025.

Tenth Day will be performed on 20/3/2025 (Thursday) at Mahajan Hall, Jammu at 11 am to

Kriya will be performed at our residence on 23/3/2025 (Sunday).

Uthala will be performed at Mahajan Hall on 24/3/2025 (Monday) 4 pm - 5 pm.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Swarna Devi (Mother)

Smt. Sujata Gupta (Wife)

Mr. Paras & Mr. Prajwal Gupta (Son)

Anita Gupta & Pawan Gupta - Sister & Brother-in-law Poonam Gupta & Kavi Gupta - Sister & Brother-in-law Sourabh & Sakshi Gupta - Brother & Sister-in-law

Lt. Smt. Krishna & Dwarka Nath - Bua & Fufa Ji Smt. Darshna & Pawan Chowdhary - Bua & Fufa Ji

Smt. Santosh & Lt. Sh. Subash Gupta - Chachi & Chachu Ji Smt. Shashi Balla & Lt. Sh. Surinder Gupta - Chachi & Chachu Ji

Mob.:9018783930, 9149491413

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 On12.03.2025.

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

We informed the sad and untimely demise of our beloved mother Rani Pandita W/o Late Kanaya Lal Pandita R/o Hardu Chanam Rafiabad Baramulla Kashmir A/p Lane No. 1 Swarn Colony Trilokpura, who left for heavenly abode

Tenth Day Kriya shall be performed on 27th March 2025 at Akhnoor Ghats and assembly

Smt. Shoki & Sh. Sunil Kumar Pandita - Daughter in Law & Son Smt. Sunita & Sh. Raj Kumar Pandita - Daughter & Son in Law Smt. Sushma & Sh. Vicky Bhat - Daughter & Son in Law

Bhawani, Gautam, Yashika, Vidhya, Prabhat & Pratik

7006134919. 9622176438

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform that our beloved Mrs. Sneh Lata Gupta W/o Sh. Ashok Kumar Gupta R/o Nanak Nagar, Sector 8, Jammu left for her

18th March 2025 (Tuesday). Kirya at our residence at 12 Noon on 21st March 2025

Rasam Pagri at Ram Mandir, Sector 8, Nanak Nagar

Jammu from 4 PM to 5 PM on 21st March 2025

Rakesh Kumar Gupta and Rasika Gupta -Son & Daughter-in-law Monika Gupta and Bharat B. Gupta -Daughter & Son-in-law Sarika Gupta and Srikanth Regula -Daughter & Son-in-law Shreya, Raavi, Anvi and Krish -Grand Children Ashwini Kumar Gupta and Neelam Gupta -Brother & Bhabhi Sanjeev Kumar Gupta and Pinky Gupta -Brother Bhabhi

Gupta Family Mobile: 9469211119, 8899580141

TENTH DAY/UTHALA With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad

demise of our beloved Sh. Babu Ram Gupta S/o Late Sh. Munshi Ram Gupta R/o Vikram Nagar Sarwal Near Govt Hospital Jammu who expired on Wednesday March 12, 2025,

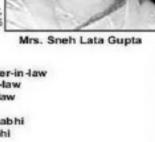
2025 from 10,00 to 11,00AM at Kotli Bhawan Rehari Colony Jammu.

March, 2025 from 4.00 to 5.00 PM at Shree Gital Mandir Simriti Bhawan Bakshi Nagar (Behind Karan Hotel)

Nidhi and Akhii Gupta (Daughter in law & Son) Shikha and Nikhii Gupta (Daughter in law & Son)

Nidhi & Ashwani Gupta

SHIV LAL & BROTHERS Bankey Bihari Market Jammu



demise of our beloved Shri Sudesh Kumar Abrol S/o Lt. Sh. Goverdhan Das Abrol R/o Ashok Nagar, Cana oad Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. TENTH DAY: - will be performed on 19 -03-2025 from 10:00 AM - 11: 00 AM at our Residence

UTHALA:-Will be performed on Saturday, 22-03-2025 rom 4.00 PM to 5.00 PM at Talli Sahaib Gurduwara Talab Tillo Jammu, Opp. Rama Lane.

Your presence and prayers will provide strength to he bereaved family in this time of remembrance. GRIEF-STRICKEN FAMILY: Smt. Anjali Abrol (Wife)

imt Sonali Abrol W/o Sahil Abrol (Sunny) (Daughter-in-Law & Son) Sidharth Abrol (Son)

Mrs. Meenu Dewan & Mr. Vipen Dewan (Daughter & Son-in-Law) Grandchildren: Panchul, Viva, Shhrom, Shinoy

Rawalpora Sanat Nagar Srinagar Kashmir. 10th Day Kriya will be performed at Akhnoor Gha on 21st March, 2025. The Assembly will be hel at our residence H.No. 3, Lane No. 20, Surya Vihar Patta Bohri, Jammu.

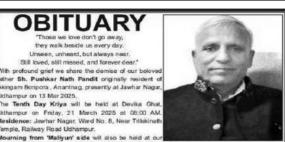
Sons & Daughters-in-law Sh. Amit Rayu & Meenakshi Mattoo Rayu Sh. Sumit Rayu & Anchal Dembi Rayu Brother & Bhabi

Sh. Chaman Lal Rayu & Veena Rayu

Sisters-in-law & Brothers-in-law

imt. Veena Mantoo Wo Lt. Jai Krishan Mantoo imt. Rajni Mattoo Wo Lt. Girdhari Lai Mattoo Jakash, Khanishka, Khyatika, Niyati & Sehaj - **Grand Children** M/s Shoba Medicate





Sh. Pushkar Nath Pandit

Amit, Rockey, Shinle, Sahil, Ayushi, Koma Sankat, Aryaman, Pradhyut, Meenakshi. Centact: 9999447581 (Sen), 9103039637 (Vino ji), 9055192877 (wife), 9149445451 (Daughter)

residence as Papa aways consident Koull as his elder son. WITH OUR DEEPEST LOVE. Smt. Bita Devi-Wife Mt. Omkar Nath Pandil-Son Mrs. Lucy Pandil-Daughter-in-law

10TH DAY KRIYA

imple, Railway Road Udhampur.

Mr. Suncel Hangion -Son-in-law

Urs. Yougita Hangloo - Daughter Urs. Anjali Pandita- Daughter-In-I

ra. Princey Pancita- Daughter-in-la-

Smt. Asha Raina W/o Sh. Autar Krishan Rain Erstwhile resident of Akura Mattan A/P Flat no 204, Plot No: A-17 Shalimar Garden(2), Nes Budh Bazaar Road adjacent to Hindu Raksh

Tenth Day Kriya will be held at Murad Naga Ganga Ghat on Sunday 23rd March 2025 followed by Assembly at our Shalimar Gardei GRIEF STRICKEN

Sh. Autar Krishan Raina (Husband) (Dewar & Dewrani) Smt. Jeeta and Sh. Inder Krishan Raina Son & Daughter in laws Smt. Sushma & Sh. Pawan Raina Smt. Preeti & Sh. Deepak Raina Smt. Neeru & Sh. Pankaj Raina

Daughter & Son in laws Smt. Minoo & Sh. Sunil Raina Smt. Anjoo & Dr. Vijay Pandita

Mayarik, Manvi, Chahat, Maira, Mohan, Arushi, Dyanu, Arihant, Yuvin & Riyan



(31-07-1953 to 15-03-2025)

SMT. VEENA GUPTA

9013582703, 7889462238, 7006866968, 9711003311, 6005773715, 9419127364,

TENTH DAY/KIRYA/UTHALA WITH PROFOUND GRIEF AND SORROW, WE INFORM THE SAD DEMISE OF SMT. VEENA GUPTA WIO LATE RAJ KUMAR GUPTA (RAJA

SHAH JI) R/O GHAROTA TEHSIL BHALEAL DISTRICT JAMMU WHO LEFT FOR HEAVENLY DISTRICT JAMMO WHO LET FOR HEAVENLY ABODE ON 10-03-2025 TENTH DAY: 19TH MARCH 2025 AT 11:00 AM. KRIYA: 22ND MARCH 2025 AT 12 NOON AT OUR RESIDENCE VILLAGE GHAROTA, UTHALA/RASAM PAGRI: 22ND MARCH 2025

UTHALA/RASAM PAGRI: 22ND MARCH AT SHAGUN PALACE FROM 4 TO 5 PM. GRIEF STRICKENS SON AND DAUGHTER IN LAW: VISHAL AND RUCHI GUPTA VIKAS AND ANIMA GUPTA (POOJA) ADVOCATE ROHIT AND SHIVALI GUPTA (LAW OFFICER DHS) GRAND CHILDREN: KAUSH NIHABIKA TAUSH SANNAT SHI

KAVISH, NIHARIKA, TAJISH, SANNAT, SHIVANSH, SHIVANYA M/S TEJ BHAWAN RICE MILLS, MISHRIWALA. M/S MAHAJAN TRADERS. NEHRU MARKET, JAMMU. M/S BADRI NATH RAJ KUMAR, GHAROTA. PH. 94191-91774, 8492925641, 9469210314

OBITUARY/TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Karmayogni Smt.** Shobawati Pandita W/o Lt. Sh. Jialal Pandita (Bhan) originally from Sagam Dist. Anartnag A/p Lane No. 24, Block -152, Flat No. 09, Jagti Nagrota who left heave

Tenth Day Kriya will be held at Devika Ghat Udhampur on 25-03-2025. Mourning Assembly will he held at Community Hall back side Block -152, Lane No. 24 at 11.30 am.

Ka mayogni Smt. Shobawati Pandir Grief Stricken Grief Stricken

Sh, Maharaj Krishan Pandita and Smt. Indu Pandita- Son & Daughter-in-Law
Sh, Bushan Lal Pandita & Smt. Girja Pandit- Son & Daughter-in-Law
Smt. Shama Pandita Wjo Lt. Sh. Brij Lal Pandita- Daughter & Son-in-Law
Smt. Raj Dulari Wjo Sh. Omikar Nath Koul- Daughter & Son-in-Law
Smt. Vijay Koul W/o Sh. Triloki Nath Koul- Daughter & Son-in-Law

Smt. Neha Pandita & Sh. Sandeep Kariholoo- Grand Daughter & Son-in-Law Grand Children: Vicky, Mohit, Shrawan Kumar, Bal Krishan, Reena, Anil, Amit, Sunita

Contact No.: 9796649762, 7006859846

OBITUARY & TENTH DAY KRIYA With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad and untimely demise of our beloved Sm Santosh Koul (Dida Ji) W/o Shri Soom Nath Koul of Goshbugh, Pattan, Baramulla, Kashmir, presently a H No. 464/A Sector 2nd Vinayak Nagar, Muth Jammu on 15/03/2025

Tenth Day will be performed on Monday the 24/03/2025 at Akhnoor Ghat and Assembly will be held at Muthi Ghat (near Directorate of School Education) Muthi Jammu at 11 AM.

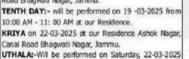
Deeply Loved and Missed by Sh Soom Nath Koul- Husband (9622317416) Sh Akshay Koul and Harpreet Koul (Son & Daughter in law) Puja and Sandeep Bhat (Daughter & Son in law)

Kanchan and Rohit Raina (Daughter & Son in law) Sisters in law & Brothers in law Smt & Sh Raj Nath Koul Smt & Sh Vinod Koul Grand Children:

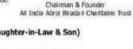
(Tanishqa, Reeva, Abhiraj)

TENTH DAY/KRIYA /UTHALA With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad

& ALL KOUL, BHAT AND RAINA PARIVAR Ph. (9149488674, 6006223766, 8493035502)



Lt Sh. Sudesh Kumar Abrol



SMT. VIJAY RAYU

Smt Santosh Koul

(Dida Ji)

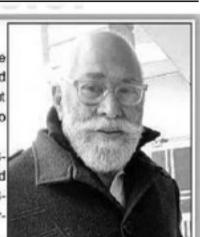


GRIEF STRICKEN

Son & Daughter-in-law Sh. Binoo Rayu & Meenakshi Rayu Daughter & Son-in-law Smt. Sunaina Rayu (Koul) & Sh. Kanwal Ji Koul

DISCLAIMER

"Top News of J&K" does not take responsibility for the contents of the advertisements (Display/ Classified) carried in this newspaper. The paper does not endorse the same. Readers are requested to verify the contents on their own before acting there upon."

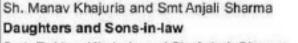






Master Lekh Raj Khajuria





TENTH DAY KRIYA

formerly a resident of Nishat and Habba Kadal, Known as Mummy to her progeny, she was Bengashee and Bhabhijee to the Karihaloo and

Manju and Anil Bakaya

Bhushan Karihaloo, Tej Karihaloo.

Amaranta, Amol, Kartik, Sneha, and Maegha. Great grandchildren: Ayan, Siona, Adhira, Prazlaan, Saira, and Amaira.



Smt. Shakuntla Devi

SMT. MOHANI

KARIHALOO SARAF

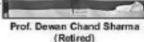
Janipur Housing Colony, Jammu. GRIEF STRICKEN:

RAM PRAKASH SURI (Son in law)

URVASHI (Grand Children)

Nagar, Jammu on 11-03-2025.

KRIYA will be performed at residence on 21-03-2025 (Friday) at 12 noon.



Bhabhi & Brothers Neelam & Durga Datt Jandial Ashu & Naresh Kumar Gupta

9419186901, 7780909193

NIDHI TEXTILES City Chowk Jammu



Sh. Suresh Gupta



TENTH DAY KRIYA

on 18/03/2025 at 03:35 pm.

will be held at our Residence at 11:00 am. DEEPLY REMEMBERED BY



heavenly abode on 9th March 2025. Tenth Day at our residence from 11 AM onwards on

DEEPLY LOVED AND MISSED BY: Sh. Ashok Kumar Gupta Husband (Retd. AE PDD)



10TH DAY will be performed on Friday March 21, UTHALA will be performed on Monday 24th

GRIEF STRICKEN:-Smt Sushma Gupta (Wife)

SEHAJ ENTERPRISES Transport Nagar Narwal Jammu DURGA DATT JANDIAL & SONS Ware House Jammu



RANI PANDITA







Sh. Babu Ram Gupta

Budget Session 2025, Question Hour in LA

Upgradation of 16.20 Km Sangrama-Sopore-Sagipora road under consideration: Dy CM

11.5 Km road from Kulangam to Zandri Mode blacktopped under C&Ts program

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, informed the House that a comprehensive Detailed Project Report for upgradation of 16.20 Km Sangrama-Sopore-Sagipora road has been framed for an amount of Rs. 1811.54 lakh which is under consideration for sanction under NABARD RIDE

The Minister was replying to a question raised by Mir Mohammad Fayaz in the Legislative Assembly today.

He informed that during 2024-25, 11.50 Km stretch road from Kulangam to Zandri Mode has been blacktopped under the Cities and Towns programme. He said that the road stretch from Kulangam to Kupwara is being managed by BEACON and is under upgradation to 2-lane with paved shoulder specifications. He further informed that the road stretch from Sangarma to Kulangam via Sopore, is being maintained by PWD, but the department has no plans for its upgradation. No DPR for 4-laning of the road has been prepared by the department, he added.

Mir Saifullah and Qaisar Jamsheed Lone raised the supplementaries to the question.

594 Lecturer posts in 27 disciplines referred to **JKPSC: Sakeena** Itoo

367 Lecturer posts in different disciplines vacant in Doda

Minister for School Education and Higher Education, Sakeena Itoo, today informed the House that 594 posts of 10+2 Lecturers in 27 disciplines have been referred to the J&K Public Service Commission recently for recruitment to cope up with the constraints of subject specific teachers in higher secondary schools across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister stated this in reply to a question raised by Mehraj Malik. She informed that 367 posts of lecturers in different disciplines are lying vacant in various Higher Secondary

Schools of Doda district. The Minister further informed that during the academic session 2024-25, 140 Cluster Resource Coordinators (CRCs) had been hired on a temporary basis in Doda district to teach specific subjects. She added that after the expiry of their term, fresh hiring process shall be initiated in consultation with Samagra Shiksha, subject to the availability of grants from the Min-

istry of Education, Gol. She added that for increase of Lecturers in Higher Secondary Schools of Doda district,

rationalization process has been initiated to identify the understaffed schools and ensure the availability of surplus staff for deployment in these schools

Stone Crushers established only after securing requisite NOCs: Dy CM

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that the stone crusher/Hot and Wet mix plants are established only after obtaining No Objection Certificate (NOCs) from the concerned departments.

The Minister was replying to a question raised by Sheikh Khursheed Ahmad.

He said that to streamline the minor mineral based units, they have to secure consent from the Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Board and obtain NoC from the Deputy Commissioner of the concerned district regarding title verification of the land.

Regarding installation of a crusher partially functional at Bi-e-Maidan Kralgund Qaziabad Langate, the Deputy Chief Minister said that a chunk of land measuring 05 kanal under Survey No's 33 min. 35 min has been identified in Bilmaidan village, Rasripora Lariganapora, Tehsil Qaziabad, for establishment of Batching Plant, Bitumen Plant and Main Store on temporary basis for a period of 30 months. This will meet the requirements for completion of RKCTC road, a National Priority Project by MORTH, he added. He informed that Deputy Commissioner. Kupwara has intimated that the final call in the matter is yet to be taken as various documents are still under process.

The Deputy Chief Minister further said that no NOC is required from the Geology and Mining Department for installation of Stone Crusher Unit in terms of SO 60 of 2021 dated: 23.02.2021. However, he added that lease agreement, environmental clearance and NOC from various departments is under process and the functionality or non-functionality of stone crushers falls under the domain of the concerned district

administration. **Left out family** members being added in ration cards on regular basis: Food **Minister**

98.52 lakh AAY, PHH. NPHH beneficiaries covered under PM Ration Yojna in JK, 56.977 in Chenani Constituency

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, today said that the addition of eligible left out family members in ration cards is being done on regular basis in Jammu

and Kashmir. The Minister was replying to a question raised by Balwant Singh Mankotia.

The Minister said that, as many as, 98.52 lakh AAY, PHH and NPHH beneficiaries have been covered under the PM Ration Yojana in Jammu and Kashmir while 56,977 beneficiaries in Chenani Constituency. He said that the department is contemplating opening of new Fair Price Shops

as per framework in vogue, which is part of Jammu and Kashmir Targeted Public Distribution System.

The Minister said that since the elected government has assumed the office, it has been thought prudent to rope in elected members also to firm up requirements of new Fair Price Shops across Jammu and Kashmir, which necessitates relook of the existing framework. He said that bifurcation of ration cards has been stopped as necessitated for adhering to targets assigned for coverage of families under the Public Distribution System, particularly AAY households, by the Department of Food and Public Distribution, Gol, where the entitlement is at the scale of 35Kg per household

The Minister said that the process of bifurcating rations cards through issuance of fresh Ration Cards would lead to implications of arranging additional food grains for such new households. He said that this also has implications in increasing the burden for the department under other schemes being run by the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs and in other schemes of the Government, where Public Distribution System database is utilized and household is the unit of entitlement. However, addition of eligible left out family members is being done on regular basis in their household ration cards.

He said that the government has also included the children born after 2011 up to 2016 in respective household ration cards to further augment the food needs of such households. He informed the House that the criteria adopted for inclusion under Priority household (PHH) group

has been notified. The Minister further informed the House that 8.72 beneficiaries in AAY category, 58.10 in PHH category and 31.70 beneficiaries in NPHH category have been covered under PM Ration Yojna in J&K. Besides, AAY 2451 souls, PHH 31780 souls and NPHH 22746 souls have been covered under these categories in the Chenani Constituency.

Govt has no proposal for establishing **Institute of Hotel Management at Pahalgam: Education Minister**

Education and School Education, Sakeena Itoo, today informed the House that there is no proposal at present to establish Institute of Hotel Management at Pahalgam.

Minister for Higher

The Minister said this while replying to a question raised by Altaf Ahmad Wani. The Minister informed

that Hotel Management is not offered as a degree program in colleges, adding that it is a professional qualification that requires a distinct academic structure, different from the fouryear degree programme currently offered in colleges of the Higher Education Department.

Regarding establishment of Government Degree College at Aishmugam, the Minister informed the House that Government Degree College with the nomenclature of Pahalgam-Siligam/Aishmuqam was

sanctioned in February 2019 and same was established in a makeshift accommodation at Government Boys High School, Aishmuqam.

She added that the district administration had also identified a patch of land for the purpose at Village Akad opposite Akad park. She informed that, due to dispute between the residents of two villages of Siligam and Aishmugam over the location of the College, the matter resulted in a court case and the High Court has passed stay orders. The Minister further

informed that the academic session 2020-21 had also been started but that came to halt and the enrolled male students were shifted to GDC Boys Anantnag while female students were relocated to GDC for Women, Ananthag, She added that the department is vigorously following the case in the High Court and as soon as case is disposed off, the College shall be made functional within the shortest possible

WSS Shopian taken under Amrut 2.0 to be commissioned **by 2026: Javed**

5683.61 lakh spent on WSSs in Shopian constituency during past 2 years

Rana

Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmad Rana, today said that Rs 5683.61 lakh have been spent on various Water Supply Schemes in Shopian constituency during the past two

years. He was replying to a question raised by

Shabir Ahmad Kullay. Regarding the water supply in Shopian town, the Minister informed the House that the tendering process for Water Supply Scheme Shopian Town under Amrut 2.0 is currently under financial evaluation and will be awarded within this week. He said that the expected date of commissioning of the

scheme is March, 2026. Giving details, the Minister said that Rs 3455.43 lakh were released during 2023-24, of which, Rs 3351.78 lakh have been expended on various Water Supply Schemes. During the year 2024-25, Rs 2331.83 lakh have been expended out of the total amount of Rs 2430.70 lakh. He said that most of the WSSs are functional and the rest of the schemes are nearing completion.

No case of up-gradation of schools pending in Rajpora **Constituency: Education Minister**

Minister for School Education and Higher Education, Sakeena Itoo, today informed the House that there is no case of taking up upgradation of schools to different levels pending in the Rajpora Constituency.

The Minister stated this in a reply to a question raised by Ghulam Mohiud-din Mir.

During the reply, the Minister informed that the government is presently focusing on consolidation of existing rationalisation of staff for smooth functioning of schools in the region.

The Minister further informed that there is a set criteria being adopted for up-gradation of schools, adding that for promotion from Primary to Middle School, there should be a distance of 3 km from the nearest Middle School, besides 02 feeding Primary Schools and top class enrollment should not be less than 20. Likewise, for up-gradation from Middle to High School, there should be a distance of 5 km from the nearest High School and intake capacity for single section must be 20 while it should be 50 for double section, she

added. The Minister further informed that for upgradation from High to Higher Secondary School, there should be a distance of 7-10 km from the nearest Higher Secondary School and intake capacity for upgradation must be more than 50. She added that the proposal for upgradation of schools to their next higher level may be considered by the government strictly as per the feasibility report, existing norms and urgent requirement, wherever required.

Govt mulls to open new 1600 fair price shops across J&K: **Satish Sharma**

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, today said that the department is contemplating to open 1600

new Fair Price Shops across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was replying to a question raised by Vijay Kumar.

The Minister informed the House that the government is prudent to rope in elected members to firm up requirements of new Fair Price Shops in Jammu and Kashmir. He added that further steps will be taken after the required amendments are carried out under Jammu and Kashmir Targeted Public Distribution System.

Jamabandies of 6839 Revenue villages computerized in JK: Sakeena Itoo

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, today said that the digitization of Jamabandies of 6839 Revenue villages has been completed in Jammu and Kashmir, under the computerization of Land Records undertaken through Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme.

The Minister was replying on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, to a question raised by Ranbir Singh Pathania in the Legislative Assembly

The Minister said that various steps have been taken up for digitization of Jamabandis to make it error-free as per applicable rules and norms regarding the land records. She said that, among other steps, updation of latest Jamabandies, quality check of data entry of Jamabandies by inter Tehsil teams constituted by the DCs, vetting and certification of data by the concerned Tehsildar, digitization of revenue records

by the concerned Patwari/ Data Entry Operator/other Revenue Officials, quality check of digitized data by the concerned Girdawar/ Naib Tehsildar/ Tehsildar and freezing of digitized Jamabandies jointly by the office of Deputy Commissioners and Regional Director Survey and Land Records has been taken to make the records error-

The Minister said that web-based application has been developed for verification of digitized land records under URL "jkrevenue.nic. in/ revenue plus" which has four modules including verification of scanned documents, verification of digitized Jamabandies. QC of digitized Jamabandies and verification of Vectorized (digitized) maps

She said that all the field functionaries from (Patwari to Deputy Commissioner) have been given access to verify the record, in order to ensure that digitized Jamabandi verbatim copy of physical Jamabandi. She added that all the Deputy Commissioners have been authorized to address errors in the digitized Jamabandies like typographical errors and incomplete data entry.

The Minister further said that the digitized Jamabandies have not been finally frozen vet as the same is subject to the authenticity of the Jamabandies by the Deputy Commissioners, who have to read these Jamabandies in the concerned village and certify the correctness of the

PHC Sonamarg does not meet criteria for full scale upgradation as per IPHS-2022

norms: Health **Minister**

Facilities at PHC Sonamarg augmented during Shri Amarnath Yatra Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, today said that PHC Sonamarg does not meet the criteria for full-scale upgradation as per IPHS-2022 norms, however, its capacity was enhanced during the annual Shri Amarnath Yatra.

This was stated by Minister in response to a question raised by Mian Mehar Ali regarding upgradation of PHC Sonamarg.

The Minister highlighted that during the peak periods as well as during the Amarnath Yatra, the facilities at PHC Sonamarg are being augmented through temporary reinforcement of manpower and infrastructure to manage the surge in demand. She highlighted that PHC Sonamarg is a 10-bedded facility with minor OT, general ward, labour room, lab section and is an en-route healthcare facility to Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra catering to healthcare requirements of general masses.

She informed that Sonamarg is a major tourist destination and Baltal is the base camp for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, adding that a semi-permanent 100bedded hospital has also been developed at Baltal under CSR.

The Minister said that

the department has developed a robust mechanism in terms of deployment of additional manpower. facilitation of advanced machinery/equipment, drug consumables to ensure round-the-clock healthcare access to the tourists and local populace during the yatra period.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION GANDHI NAGAR JAMMU JAMMU

e-mail:xenpwddivgandhinagar@gmail.com SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Short e-NIT No. DGN/119 of 2024-25 Dated 18-03-2025

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir

e-tenders are invited for the work mentioned below for the **<u>Year 2025-26</u> o**n monthly basis for **01 Year** from approved and eligible firms which is registered as NGO or as registered with Registrar of Societies/Labour Department of <u>Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir</u> for each of the following works or **Govt. of India duly** renewed for the year 2024-25.

S. No	Name of the Work	Name of Divn	Cost (in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document (in ₹)	Earnest Money (in ₹)	Period of Contract	Amount of Work	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1/	Providing Services for Housekeeping / Cleaning - Sanitation of Lok Nirman Bhawan Rail Head Complex Jammu comprising of Basement, G+3 and Parking area (Complete Job)	PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar	9.11	600/-	18220/	01 Year	Rates to be quoted by the bidder on Monthly Basis	(1200 Hrs) on or after 26-03-2024	Firm which is registered as NGO or registered with Registrar of Societies / Labour Department of UT of 38K or Govt. of India duly renewed for the year 2024-25.

Position of AAA

Accorded by Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle South Jammu's order No. 185 of 2025 dated 18-03-2025.

Project Authority

:- Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle South Jammu.

Major Head of Account :- Under Non Plan

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website http://jktenders.gov.in as per below schedule:

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	18-03-2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 18-03-2025 to 25-03-2025, 1800 Hrs
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	22-03-2025 at 1300 Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu Jammu
4	Bid submission Start Date	18-03-2025
5	Bid Submission End Date	25-03-2025 upto 1800 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	26-03-2025 on or after 1200 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu Jammu
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu and upload the same i.e treasury challan/receipt, Earnest money/Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR

pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu. The CDR/FDR shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of L1 be submitted to the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu at the time of allotment.

DIP/J-11194/24

.. Sd .. (Er. Rahat Gupta) Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar

EDITORIAL

Censorship in **Social Media**

ocial media has revolutionized the way people communicate, share information, and express opinions. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and You-Tube 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

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

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 limits (MRLs) set by regulatory bodies. Promote collaboration by Promote collab

Saurabh

esticide 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

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 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. Shortterm effects can include nausea, dizziness, headaches and allergic reactions, while longterm 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 Com-

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

ing 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.

Dr. Satyawan Saurabh Poet, freelance journalist and columnist, Radio and TV panelist, 333, Fairy Garden, Kaushalya Bhawan, Barwa (Siwani) Bhiwani, Haryana – 127045, Mobile :9466526148,01255281381

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

By: Vijay Garg

any 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 dis-

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 conser-

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 columnist street kour **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

Principal also encouraged the students to change their eating habits and make exercise a routine in their

your life" he advised.

The event was graced by the presence of several faculty members, including Prof. Shikha Bhasin, Dr. Manisha Kumari, Dr. Harmeet 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 teachers 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.

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.

"Health and education

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 nonteaching 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, Ashfak, 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 Parray, 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

"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 onground realities and concerns of the affected workforce

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 Parray, 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 safe-guarding 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 Javaid Igbal 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

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 preserv-

ing 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. Al-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 noninvestigated claims. With its customercentric approach and digital-first innovations, the Company continues to set new industry benchmarks, ensuring financial security for policyholders and seamless career

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

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.

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 health-care needs of the people in this far flung region.

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.

growth for agents.

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.

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e-mail: topnewsjk@gmail.com, editortopnewsjk@gmail.com (All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Jammu City).

On International Day of Happiness, celebs from the telly world share what makes them truly happy

Positive mindset: Shivangi Verma

For me, happiness is all about embracing life with a positive mindset and finding joy in the simplest of moments. It's about surrounding myself with good people. Whether I'm spending time with family and friends or simply soaking in the beauty of nature, those are the moments that make me happy.

True bliss: Moon Banerrjee

I truly believe that happiness is a state of mind and it depends on what I am dealing with at that particular moment. Sometimes it's the simple things, and other times it's materialistic. But at all times, I think it's when my loved ones and I are in the best of health, both mentally and physically, without any conflicts.

Being peaceful: Aadesh Chaudhary



Happiness is all about peace of mind. It's found in the little moments whether it's spending time with my loved ones, working on a challenging role or simply enjoying a quiet evening with good music. Happiness means being content and grateful for what I have while striving to become a better version

of myself Name game: Saanand Verma

My name means happiness. I always pray

that every day should be Happiness Day and we all should live for happiness. I believe in spreading happiness. Whenever a fan clicks a selfie with me, I smile even more than them. If you are happy, the people around you will be happy.

Be grateful: Anupama Solanki

For me, happiness is all about being content and at peace with myself. It's the little things that bring me joy,

makes me the happiest. And, of course, I am a travelholic, so traveling to different places keeps me smiling all the time. Spending time with my daughter Tanvi also brings a smile to my face. Overall, I'm an extremely happy-golucky person, and I love to spread happiness around me. Smile from the heart:

Mitu

Happiness is lightness.

Happiness is doing what your heart tells you. Happiness comes with no expiry date. Happiness is a smile from the heart. What happiness means to me is doing what I please, when I please, where I please, and with whom I please. Being with my daughter Aryahi makes me happy. Writing stories with her and for her brings me immense joy.

Lisa Ray slams Air India for denying medical waiver for her ailing father



Actress Lisa Ray has slammed Air India for allegedly refusing to accept a medical waiver after she had to cancel her 92-year-old father's scheduled travel due to his deteriorating health. Taking to her social media platform, X (formerly Twitter), Lisa expressed her frustra-

tion with Air India for

Five independent filmmakers from the region to be a

from the attending doctor. The actor shared her

distress, writing, "Here we go again @airindia My father is 92, unwell and I have to cancel travel due to his ailing condition. Submitted doctor's letter and the

despite submitting all

necessary documents

waiver was denied? How is that possible? Where is the empathy from an airline that is claiming to care about passengers???"

In response, Lisa received a reply from Air India's official X account, prompting her to share a screenshot of the booking website.

screenshot The revealed that no medical waiver was available, along with a statement that her father had been hospitalised.

Lisa Ray, who has been open about her own health struggles, including her diagnosis of multiple myeloma in 2009, has become a vocal advocate for patient rights and healthcare awareness. Lisa began her career as a model in the early '90s before making her acting debut in the 2001 film 'Kasoor'.

Ex-Eminem employee charged with leaking rapper's unreleased music

A former employee of Grammy-winning rapper Eminem has been charged in connection with leaking the rapper's unreleased music online, according to a report in The Hollywood Reporter.

According to the report, US Attorney Julie Beck stated that Joseph Strange, who worked for the artist from 2007 to 2021, faces serious charges, including criminal infringement of copyright and interstate transportation of stolen goods.

The charges stem from an investigation that began in January. An employee at Eminem's studio in Ferndale, Michigan, discovered unreleased music by the rapper being sold on various websites.

The FBI was contacted after the employee recognized the music as being taken directly from a hard drive at the studio

The tracks, which the rapper was still working on, were listed for sale, according to The Hollywood Reporter, leading to an investigation by law enforcement.

The FBI's efforts to track down those who had purchased the leaked music eventually led them to Joseph Strange, who was identified as the seller of the tracks. "Protecting intellectual property from thieves is critical in safeguarding the exclusive rights of creators and protecting their original work from reproduc-



tion and distribution by individuals who seek to profit from the creative output of others," said U.S. Attorney Julie Beck, according to The Hollywood Reporter, in a statement regarding

If convicted of criminal infringement of a copy right, Strange could face up to five years in prison, along with a fine of up to USD 250,000.

Additionally, he could face up to 10 years in prison for the charge of interstate transportation of stolen goods.

Following the completion of the investigation, officials will decide whether to seek a felony indictment, as a criminal complaint cannot be tried for felony charges.

Special agents from the FBI Oakland County Resident Agency have been working on the case, with FBI Special Agent in Charge Cheyvoryea Gibson emphasizing the importance of protecting intellectual property, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

"This investigation underscores the FBI's commitment to safeguarding artists' intellectual property from exploitation by individuals seeking to profit illegally," Gibson said, adding, "Thanks to the cooperation of Mathers Music Studio, FBI agents were able to swiftly enforce federal laws and ensure Joseph Strange was held accountable for his actions." Eminem, who released new music last year, including the album The Death Of Slim Shady (Coup De Grace), continues to make waves in the music industry.

The album received a Grammy nomination for Best Rap Album at the 2025 ceremony, and his single 'Houdini' was nominated for both Best Rap Performance and Best Music Video.

part of Cinevesture International Film Festival "Independent films

have a very different cachet than success films." — Diane Lane

like spending quality

time with my family or

just some quiet moments

to reflect. I believe hap-

piness comes when

you're grateful for what

you have and when

you're able to make

others happy too. I am

the happiest doing what

I love, being on set, and

connecting with my fans.

Vakil Sharma

Family zone: Chitra

Happiness to me

means furry babies.

Seeing my dog play

jump, and be naughty

The journey of an indie filmmaker is invariably bumpy and film festivals are the obvious destination for their labour of love.

As the Cinevesture International Film Festival comes to the City Beautiful for its second edition, a fair number of films, especially by independent makers, have a strong Punjabi and Chandigarh connect.

If three films, namely Zubin Mehta's Bus No 7, Shashank Walia's Hanere De Panchi and Ankur Singla's Ghich Pich, with subjects rooted in Punjab's terra firma will be screened during the four-day festival. Honey Trehan's The Blade Runner is in the market.

Anmol Sidhu, who won the Audience Choice Award at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles in 2022 and also at CIFF last year, is currently working on his new film Kikran De Phul.

The film, which deals with the struggles of orchestra dancers of Punjab, is part of In the Works Lab.

Chandigarh da munda Ankur Singla's debut film Ghich Pich is based in the City Beautiful, where he spent his formative years and made impactful memories, which staved with him. Zubin Mehta's film Bus



No 7 is not just based in Chandigarh, but is one where most of the drama is happening in a school bus. Not strictly Punjabi, the languages of both films are a mix of Hindi and Punjabi.

Love for Punjabi

Ankur shares how the spirit of his film is quintessentially Punjabi. Irked by how Punjabi is often spoken in our Bollywood films, Ankur decided to keep the language as authentic as possible, as it is spoken in many Punjabi households in the city designed by Le Corbusier. But, of course, language is only a vehicle to convey your thoughts. Thus, Ghich Pich is essentially a story of three young friends and their turbulent relationship with their respective fathers.

As the story line touches upon the same-sex relationship, which incidentally also is the

theme of Shashank Walia's Hanere De Panchi, we wonder if the subject of homosexuality has become de rigueur? Shashank informs, "It's a landscape film, which talks about human relationships, caste, religion and sexuality, among

many other things." He adds how the film, which explores genuine care and concern. reinforces the collective power of love, not only imagines radical options but how these can be realised. Shot in villages near Tarn Taran, he reveals his film does not tread the beaten path. It is rather riddled with many stumbling blocks. Right from the casting process to arranging finance, everything is a challenge. Yet, surprisingly, the village community rose to support them.

Shashank says, "Often we joked as to how ours is not an independent film but an indi-pind film." Since mainstream Punjabi cinema continues to be in awe of singerturned-actors, refuses to experiment or innovate, the rich tradition of Punjab, he rues, often gets side-lined if not ignored outright. In the absence of government support, which they all,

including Honey Trehan, feel, is a must for a film industry to grow and evolve. Festivals, they insist, are the only saviour for indie makers. "The much-touted OTT platforms too are fast becoming television reimagined," observes, Shashank As his debut short film In the Month of Love was in competition at the 49th International Film Festival of Rotterdam, he agrees that festivals do boost your confidence and inspire you to work harder.

Inner voice For others like Ankur, festival selection is akin to recommendation. More than happy that a festival like CIFF is happening in Chandigarh, Shashank points out its long-term benefits and how it could trigger creation of an artistic space. Similar thoughts are expressed by Zubin, whose Bus No 7 was earlier selected for the online edition of Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) and the short Usher found its way to MAMI.

Of course, what excites him about the screening of Bus No 7 in Chandigarh is, "All the city people associated with the film, who have acted in it, will be able to see themselves on the big screen." Zubin believes that most Chandigarh folks will find the universal message of the movie relatable.

Ankur too promises that his Ghic Pich will offer a real glimpse of this beautiful city, whose real understanding came to him when he moved out of Chandigarh. In fact, it was during the making of the film that the meaning of the city and, more importantly, its architecture changed for him. If commercial cinema as Shashank says, "Continues to follow the dangerous trend of knowing what the audience wants," here are makers who do not make any tall claims, only trying to stay true to their inner voice.

Actress Sanjana Sanghi visits Golden Temple, recollects fond memories of Amritsar

Soaking in some spiritual energy and seeking blessings, actress Sanjana Sanghi, loved for her heartfelt performances in Dil Bechara, Dhak Dhak and Kadak Singh, recently visited the Golden Temple. She reminisced about her childhood trips from Delhi to Amritsar by train with her mother and brother.

"Amritsar is very close to my heart. The Golden Temple has a special place in our lives. I have been fortunate to celebrate my 18th and 21st birthday here. Rather, I have almost spent seven-eight birthdays in Amritsar. And, today, we are here to celebrate my parents' anniversary. Our trips might have become shorter due to professional commitments, but the divine essence remains the same," she expressed.

The young star also shared a rare insight into her spiritual practices; she revealed how she has been blessed to do sewa at gurd-



waras, whether in Delhi or Mumbai. "I have deep admiration for the concept of sewa and langars at the gurdwara.

The act of giving and being able to adopt that in my life has been transformational for me," she added.

Sanjana's deep reverence for Amritsar and its spiritual significance continues to shape her life, reminding her of the values of humility and gratitude. Of course, when in Amritsar, one can expect her to enjoy some world famous street delicacies that can be found in the nooks and corners of the walled city.

Sanghi, whose last film Kadak Singh with Pankaj Tripathi saw an OTT release, is currently working on a few projects. Sanghi was also honoured by the Gujarat Government for her contribution towards youth causes as a Youth Champion under the United Nations Development Programme.

Salman Khan-Rashmika Mandanna set the dance floor on fire in title track of Sikandar



The much-awaited action drama Sikandar. which starts Salman Khan and Rashmika Mandanna, is set to release this Eid, and the makers are keeping fans hooked by dropping posters, BTS clips, and songs from the film.

The latest release is the film's title track, Sikandar Naache. Salman took to Instagram to share a video along with a caption that read, "#SikandarNaache Out Now. #SajidNadiadwala's #Sikandar Directed by @a.r.murugadoss."

The track shows Salman and Rashmika dancing to the beats of the catchy song. The song is full of energy, with the Tiger Zinda Hai actor showcasing his signature dance moves. Rashmika adds charm and power to the performance with her graceful expressions.

The song has been choreographed by Ahmed Khan.

Modi government moving forward with ruthless approach against Naxalites: Amit Shah

The country is going to be Naxal-free by March 31 next year, the Union minister wrote on X.

NEW DELHI, Mar 20 (Agencies): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the security forces have achieved another big success in its march to make the country Naxal-free by killing 22 members of the CPI (Maoists) in Chhattisgarh.

Shah also said the Narendra Modi government is moving forward with a ruthless approach against the Naxalites, and adopting a zero tolerance policy against those extremists who are not surrendering despite all the facilities being offered.

"Today our soldiers have achieved another big success in the direction of a 'Naxal Mukt



Bharat Abhiyan'. Twenty-two Naxalites were

killed in two separate operations by our security forces at Bijapur and Kanker in Chhat-

The Modi government is moving forward with a ruthless approach against Naxalites and is adopting a zero toler-

ance policy against those Naxalites who are not surrendering despite all the facilities being offered to them, ranging from surrender to inclusion.

The country is going to be Naxal-free by March 31 next year," Shah wrote on X in Hindi. As many as 22 members of

the banned CPI (Maoists) were killed in two separate encounters in Chhattisgarh.

While 18 Naxals were killed in Bijapur district, four Maoists were gunned down in the Kanker area by a joint team of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the District Reserve Guard (DRG) of the state police.

Seems 'two anti-farmer parties' have joined hands against farmers: Kharge

NEW DELHI, Mar 20 (Agencies): Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday attacked the BJP and AAP over eviction of farmers from Shambhu and Khanauri protest sites, saying it appears that "two anti-farmer parties" have now joined hands against the country's food providers.

Kharge alleged that both the BJP and the AAP were "intoxicated" with the arrogance of power and are guilty for their actions against

"It appears that two anti-farmer parties have now joined hands against the country's food providers! First the Punjab government called the farmers for talks and then forcibly removed them from the protest site," the Congress president said in a post in Hindi on X.

The forcible detention of senior farmer leaders Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Shri Sarwan Singh Pandher by the Punjab Police cannot be condemned enough, he said.

"The country has not forgotten - Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh, when farmers were fired upon during BJP rule. How the son of a minister of the Modi government crushed the farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri. How a farmer from Rajasthan hanged himself in Kejriwal's rally in 2015 and he remained a silent

spectator," Kharge said. "Whether it is Modi Ji's promise of MSP to farmers or Aam Aadmi Party's swift implementation of the three black laws in Delhi, both these parties have betrayed our farmers of the country,"

The 62 crore farmers of the country will never forgive these "anti-farmer parties", Kharge said.

Following the eviction of protesting farmers from the Shambhu border, Haryana security personnel on Thursday morning started removing cemented barricades, which were erected to prevent the Punjab farmers from heading to Delhi.

At the Shambhu border, JCB and other machines have been deployed to remove the concrete blocks to clear the Shambhu-Ambala road, which remained closed for over a year.

Haryana security officials had fortified the state border with Punjab with cement blocks, iron nails and barbed wire to scuttle any attempt by the farmers from



Punjab to move towards the capital as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' pro-

Punjab Police also resumed its operation to dismantle the remaining temporary structures on the Punjab side of the Shambhu border on Thursday to clear the road.

Meanwhile, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha announced to hold dharnas outside the offices of deputy commissioners in protest against the Punjab Police crackdown.

Both the bodies, which spearheaded the farmers' stir at Shambhu and Khanauri border points, slammed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab for evicting the protesters and detaining farmer leaders on Wednesday.

Glorifying invaders act of treason, 'new India' won't accept it: UP CM Adityanath



BAHRAICH, Mar 20 (Agencies): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said glorifying invaders who attacked India's heritage and dishonoured its people was equivalent to treason, which the 'new India' will never accept.

Amid the ongoing controversy over demands to remove Mughal ruler Aurangzeb's tomb in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district, Adityanath warned against celebrating historical figures who sought to destroy Sanatan culture.

Addressing a public gathering in Bahraich, Adityanath said, "Glorifying invaders means strengthening the very roots of treason. New India will never accept those who insult our great ancestors and praise those who attacked our civilisation, violated our women, and struck at our faith." "When the entire world is acknowledging India's rich heritage, it is the duty of every citizen to uphold respect for

our great leaders, and not eulogise those who sought to erase our identity," he added.

Adityanath's remarks came as he spoke on the recently-concluded Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, which he called "the largest human congregation ever witnessed".

He also referred to Narendra Modi's recent speech in Parliament, in which the prime minister praised Uttar Pradesh for hosting the event for which "over 66 crore devotees" gathered at the confluence of Ganga. Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati.

"Nowhere else in the world has such a massive event taken place, and no other country can organise something of this scale. The Maha Kumbh was a testament to India's eternal Sanatan culture, which will inspire generations to come. Adityanath said.

22 Naxalites killed in 2 encounters in Chhattisgarh

BIJAPUR, Mar 20 (Agencies): In a fresh offensive against Naxals, at least 22 members of the banned CPI (Maoists) were killed in two encounters in Chhattisgarh, officials said on Thurs-

While 18 Naxals were killed in Bijapur district, four Maoists were gunned down in Kanker area by a joint team of the BSF and DRG personnel of the state police. Intermittent firing was still going on in Kanker as the reports last came in, the officials said.

A police jawan was also killed in the encounter at Bijapur, they said.

The gunfight broke out at around 7 am in a forest along the border of Bijapur and Dantewada districts when a joint team of security personnel was out an



anti-Naxalite operation in Gangaloor police station area in Bijapur, he said. Bodies of 18 Naxalites along with firearms and explosives were recovered from the spot, the senior police official

A jawan of the state police's District Reserve Guard unit was also killed in the gunfight, he said.

The operation was still under way, he

'When will women in Delhi receive Rs 2,500 monthly honorarium', **Atishi questions BJP**

NEW DELHI, Mar 20 (Agencies): Senior AAP leader Atishi on Thursday sought to know when will women in Delhi receive the Rs 2,500 monthly financial assistance under the Mahila Samriddhi Yojna as promised by the ruling BJP in the national capital.

Addressing a press conference, Atishi, who's the Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, wondered if the BJP government will provide Rs 2,500 to nearly 48 lakh women in the capital aged above 18 years, or restrict the benefit to less than 1 per cent of the figure by putting in various riders. Claiming that the BJP



government formed a committee 12 days ago, which is yet to do anything, the former Delhi chief minister asked when will registration for the scheme begin and money be credited to the accounts of the beneficiary women.

The BJP government has approved Rs 5,100 crore for providing Rs

said he was "shocked"

2,500 monthly assistance to women from poor families in Delhi.

A committee of ministers headed by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has been formed to oversee the implementation of the scheme, which was a key election promise of the saffron party ahead of the February 5 Delhi polls.

Rs 20 crore by cyber fraudsters; 3 held MUMBAI, Mar 20 (Agencies): An 85-year-

old woman from south Mumbai lost more than Rs 20 crore of her savings over two months to a 'digital arrest' fraud, police said on Thursday.

One of the fraudsters posed as a 'CBI officer' to extort money from the woman, they said, adding three persons have been arrested in connection with the crime which took place between December 26, 2024 and March 3 this year.

The accused persons had also forced the victim to stay at home for two months and to check her location daily by calling her every three hours, an official said.

The cyber police have managed to freeze Rs 77 lakh belonging to the woman by identifving the bank accounts to which the money was transferred, he added.

'Digital arrest' is a new and growing form of cyber fraud in which fraudsters pose as law enforcement officials or personnel of government agencies, and intimidate victims through audio/video calls. They hold the victims hostage and put pressure on the victims to make payments.

As per the police complaint filed by the woman earlier this month, she had received a call from a man, who claimed to be a CBI

officer, and told her that based on her Aadhaar Card, a bank account had been opened which was used for money laundering.

85-year-old woman held 'hostage', extorted of

The man then told her that the case was being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and she should stay in her room, while threatening her with "digital arrest". He also threatened to arrest her children, the official said.

A domestic help at the woman's house observed her behaviour as she used come out of her room only for food and "shout at someone" in her room. The maid then informed the woman's daughter about it, he

The fraudsters asked the elderly woman to share with them her bank details under the pretext of verifying funds of her account which were connected to criminal activity, the official said.

They allegedly extorted Rs 20.26 crore from her over a period of two months, citing various reasons including clearing her name from the "case" and court fees, he said.

The fraudsters promised to refund the amount after completion of the "probe", the

While investigating the case, the cyber police found the money was transferred to various bank accounts, including one of Shayan Jamil Shaikh (20), resident of Malad area here, he said.

The police said Rs 4.99 lakh was transferred to Shaikh's account, which he had withdrawn and handed over to another fraud-

The cyber police recently tracked down Shaikh and after his arrest and interrogation, they also nabbed another accused Razique Azan Butt (20), resident of Mira Road in neighbouring Thane, the official said.

The police on Wednesday identified one more accused, Hritik Shekhar Thakur (25), resident of Andheri area, in whose account Rs 9 lakh was transferred, and arrested him late night, he said.

Thakur has admitted to the withdrawal of Rs 9 lakh from an SBI account, which was transferred by his aides after duping the woman, the official said.

The cyber police suspect Butt was part of an international racket of cyber fraudsters,

They have also identified two more accused to whom notices have been issued under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita section 35 (when police may arrest without warrant), the official said.

Woman tied to tree, slapped for 'stealing fish', Siddaramaiah orders probe

UDUPI, Mar 20 (Agencies): A woman was reportedly tied to a tree and assaulted for allegedly stealing fish in the Malpe port area of Karnataka's Udupi district. A video of the incident, which has been widely shared on social media, triggered strong reactions from political leaders, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Expressing outrage over the incident, Chief

Minister Siddaramaiah

to see the visuals and condemned the inhumane treatment of the woman. "Whatever the reason,

tying a woman's hands and feet in this manner and assaulting her is not only inhumane but also a serious crime. Such barbaric behaviour is unbecoming of a civilised place like Kar-

nataka," he wrote on X. The Chief Minister added that the govern-



ment would not tolerate vigilante justice and that he had instructed the police to conduct a thorough investigation and take necessary action.

Meanwhile, the BJP



launched a scathing attack on the ruling Congress government, alleging a complete breakdown of law and order in Karnataka. The party highlighted

ing an assault in Belagavi and the gang rape of two women in Hampi, to accuse the Congress of failing to ensure public safety. "Now in Udupi, a woman was tied to a pole and beaten because she allegedly stole fish. Yes, fish! This inefficient @INCKarnataka government is turning Karnataka into the Taliban!!" the BJP posted on X.

other recent crimes

against women, includ-

Blast outside construction company gate creates panic in Assam's Cachar



SILCHAR, Mar 20 (Agencies): A blast outside the gate of a construction company created panic in Cachar district of Assam, officials said on Thursday. The explosion took place at Tarinipur village in Katigorah police station area on Wednesday evening, they said.

"No person has been injured, and there is no report of any major damage. The blast took place outside the gate of a construction company. The loud sound created panic in the area," an official said.

A police team, including the Cachar SP, are at the spot and investigating into the incident, he said.

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 Cor-

ridor, 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 weaponizes 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 personnel 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

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.

Netanyahu's aides.

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, Zelenskky 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 Zelenskyy 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 Zelenskyy had a fantastic phone conversation. President Zelenskyy 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."

Zelenskyy 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 Zelenskyy 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, Zelenskyy asked for additional air defence systems to protect his civilians, especially the Patriot missile system. Trump agreed to work with Zelenskyy 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 Zelenskyy 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."

Zelenskyy 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

President for his leadership.

Trump asked Zelenskyy 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 Zelenskyy, aimed at a possible ceasefire with Russia.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump stated, "Just completed a very good telephone call with President Zelenskyy 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."

China detains two protestant church members for "cult" activities

BEIJING, Mar 20 (Agencies): China has arrested two members of a Protestant church in the eastern province of Anhui for refusing to join a state-supported organization, charging them with involvement in a "cult," as reported by agency.

The police in Fuyang city of Anhui province raided the Wheatseed Reform Church and detained two of its members under administrative detention for allegedly engaging in cult activities that pose a threat to society, according to the Weiquanwang rights website, agency reported

The two detained church members have hired lawyers and filed for an administrative review, but the Fuyang municipal government has not yet accepted or rejected the request, agency reported.

The incident was also reported by the US-based Christian rights group China Aid. According to the group, the two church members recently received 15-day administrative detention sentences for "using cult activities to endanger society."

Local Christians believe the action is likely related to the church's refusal to join the Communist Party's Three-Self Patriotic Association, which oversees

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.

approved Protestant organizations.

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping took office, the government has been conducting a nationwide crackdown on religious activities and venues associated with Muslims, Christians, and Tibetan Buddhists, which began in 2017. Protestant churches are permitted to operate if they are part of the government-backed Three-Self Patriotic Association. The "three selfs" refer to self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation, essentially emphasizing a rejection of foreign influence, while the term "patriotic" signifies loyalty to the Chinese government, RFA reported.

China has numerous unauthorized "house churches" throughout the country, which are often raided by authorities. Even some "Three-Self" churches have occasionally been targeted as well. Earlier, police and local authorities conducted a raid on the Xinyi Village Church in Huainan city, Anhui, detaining nine members, including Pastor Zhao Hongliang, RFA reported.

China's oppressive measures, particularly under Chinese President Xi Jinping, have been widely criticized for targeting various aspects of society, including freedom of expression, religious practices, and political dissent.

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 ensuring 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.

WASHINGTON, Mar 20 (Agencies): The Donald Trump administration is planning to take control of the buffer zone along the southern

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 sec-

retary, 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.

Dr. Jitendra, Bill Gates discuss Biotech collaboration, **Private Sector Role in India's innovation push**

Both discuss biotech startups, global health innovation in India

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: In a significant step towards strengthening technology driven collaboration, Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates, currently on India visit, called on Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh and held detailed discussions to expand private sector and StartUp participation in India's innovation push and biomanufacturing surge.

The meeting, assisted by delegations from both sides, covered advancement in gene therapy, vaccine innovation, biotechnology manufacturing, and India's evolving startup ecosystem.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has witnessed a surge in biotech innovations, supported by policies like Bio E3—biotechnology for economy, employment, and environment. He highlighted the growing role of private players and startups in driving India's bio-revolution, with structured mechanisms like the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)



fostering collaborations. Bill Gates praised India's biotech advancements, acknowledging its leadership in vaccine development, including partnerships that led to the HPV and COVID-19 vaccines. He also expressed interest in supporting India's efforts in tackling diseases like tuberculosis and malaria.

stating that India's research ecosystem presents immense opportunities for global health breakthroughs.

A key topic of discussion was India's biotechnology startup boom, with over 10,000 startups now operating in the sector. Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed out that 70% of these are focused on

medical and health biotech, with the rest contributing to agriculture, environment, and industrial biotechnology. He underlined the government's commitment to scaling up these innovations, with increased funding and policy measures aimed at enabling faster commercializa-

Gates and Dr. Jitendra also explored opportunities for direct investments in Indian biotech startups through Gift City, a financial hub designed to facilitate global investments. Gates noted that while the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation primarily operates in the philanthropic space, leveraging new financial structures could enable direct investments into promising Indian startups.

As India accelerates its biotechnology growth, Dr. Jitendra reaffirmed the government's focus on fostering public-private partnerships to ensure that the sector continues to thrive. With increased R&D funding and international collaborations, India is poised to become a alobal hub for biotechnology innovation.

NHM employees demand release of pending salary forthwith



Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: The National Health Mission (NHM) employees, under the banner of the All J&K NHM Employees Association, Jammu Division, organized a press conference at the Press Club Jammu on Thursday.

The conference was led by the Senior Vice President of the Association, Faizan A. Tramboo, along with Dr. S. S. Sambyal (President, NTEP Association, Jammu Division), Core Members, and representatives from various districts of the Jammu Division.

Addressing the media, Sr. Vice President Faizan A. Tramboo expressed serious concerns regarding the regularization issue of NHM employees.

He clarified that there is a misrepresentation in the ongoing legislative assembly regarding the prerogative of regularization, which is being incorrectly attributed to the Government of India (GOI).

However, as per GOI's official communication (Letter No. Z.18015/12/2025-NRHM-II (Pt-III) Dated: 24-09-2015), the issue of regularization is a State/UT subject. Despite the government being adequately briefed on this matter, the statement made by the Health Minister contradicts the facts.

The association welcomed the decision of the Chief Minister to constitute a high-level committee to examine the regularization policy for contractual employees, daily wagers, etc.

They expressed hope that this committee will also consider the longpending demand for the regularization of NHM employees, a matter that had already been submitted in 2017-18 by the then-constituted committee of the J&K Government to the Finance Department.

The association strongly condemned the delay in salary disbursement, which has caused significant distress and financial burden on employees.

The NHM employees are already working on meager salaries, and unnecessary delays are exacerbating their financial hardships, making it difficult to manage their livelihoods and meet their family expenses.

The association urged the government to release the pending salaries before Eid-ul-Fitr, warning that failure to do so would compel them to take stern action, for which the government will be held responsible.

The association reiterated its demand for a revision and rationalization of salaries for NHM employees, aligning them with the workload and responsibilities they undertake.

Since NHM employees do not receive any retirement benefits, the association highlighted that four NHM employees have already superannuated without any financial assistance.

Therefore, they demanded a one-time financial assistance as a retirement benefit from the NHM Corpus Fund, to which all NHM employees contribute.

This, they argued, should be provided until a proper policy for social security benefits is framed.

Additionally, the association thanked the MLAs for raising and highlighting the issues of NHM employees in the legislative assembly and for extending their support to the cause. Their efforts in bringing attention to these genuine concerns are highly appreciated.

The All J&K NHM Employees Association, Jammu Division, reaffirmed its commitment to fighting for the genuine rights of NHM employees and urged the government to take immediate action to address their longpending demands.

Among others, the press conference was attended by Dr Ashish Khajuria, Dr Rakesh Kotwal, Dr Tamana Dogra, Dr Mohd Ashraf, Dr Ramneek Singh, Madhur Bharti and others.

National College of Education celebrates World Oral Health Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: NSS unit of NCE celebrated "World Oral Health day" in collaboration with ICDS at Domana.

The theme of this year was "A happy mouth is a happy mind "focusing on the connection between oral health and mental

The volunteers performed a skit that highlighted consequences of neglecting oral hygiene.

The emphasis was laid on the

significance of maintaining good oral health and also draws the intention of the people towards the various issues resulting from poor oral care.

The volunteers encourage the audience to adopt better oral health practices, stressing the importance of brushing teeth with correct technique, eating nutritious food.

The audience responded positively and also shared their personal experience related to oral health.



The entire prograame highlighted significance of oral health in a way that was both engaging and informative.

Programme officer Yashumati Jamwal appreciated support of Ritu Devi and contribution of the volunteers Sagarika Sharma, Seema Thakur, Mansi Sharma, Janvi Atri, Vijay Laxmi, Shivanki Choudhary, Shilpa Rajput and others.

PDF President Hakeem Yaseen mourns former MLA Gurez Faqeer Khan's tragic demise, calls for probe

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Mar 20: Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, President of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and former minister, has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic demise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former MLA Gurez, Faqeer Mohammad Khan.

Calling him a former colleague in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly. Yaseen said that such leaders, who dedicate their lives to public service, are rare.

He described Khan as a seasoned politician who always prioritized the welfare of his people and worked tirelessly for the development of Gurez.

Expressing heartfelt

condolences, Yaseen extended his sympathies to Khan's family and supporters, praving for strength to bear this irreparable loss. He said Jammu and Kashmir's political landscape has lost an experienced leader whose contributions will be remembered.

Senior PDF leader Yaseen emphasized that leaders like Khan leave behind a legacy of service and commitment that should inspire future generations.

He urged society to acknowledge and honor the sacrifices made by those in public life, ensuring their contributions are remembered with respect and gratitude.

Yaseen also stressed that the reasons behind this tragic incident should be thoroughly investigated by the police to bring clarity to the circumstances surrounding Khan's demise.

'The Kindness Exchange'- JMC champions Reuse, Reduce and Recycle holds donation drive at the RRR Centre Paloura

Top News Report

JAMMU, Mar 20: The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), in collaboration with B.Ed. College, Canal Road, Jammu, organized a massive donation drive at the RRR Centre in Ward No. 59, Paloura, Jammu. Students, teachers, and citi-

zens enthusiastically contributed used clothes, toys, books, shoes and other essential items, exhibiting the spirit of community service and sustainability. Dr. Devansh Yadav, Commis-

sioner JMC graced the event and also donated used clothes & household items. Addressing the gathering, he

emphasized the dual purpose of the initiative - 'The Kindness Exchange' "It is not just about charity, it's

about environmental stewardship and collective responsibilitv", he said. The Commissioner also said shoes and books at the RRR

water bodies or ending up in landfills. Dr. Yadav underscored the initiative as a collective endeavour, urging citizens from all walks of life to donate unused items including clothes, toys,

that every household has

items that can find a new life

with those in need. By donat-

ing these, we can prevent them

from clogging drains, polluting

"Through 'The Kindness

Exchange, JMC aims not only to reduce waste but also to ensure these resources reach those in need, giving them a second life," he asserted

He urged citizens, especially youth, students and NGOs to donate unused items at their nearest centres and transform waste into welfare.

He requested citizens to contact the 'My Jammu' toll-free helpline at 18001807207 for any assistance.

Ashok Singh Manhas, former

Corporator, Paloura (Ward No. 59), praised 'The Kindness Exchange' initiative of JMC.

Manhas said that these centres offer a simple and accessible platform for donating old and used items, ensuring they are reused by those in need.

Emphasizing collective responsibility, he urged people to spread awareness about the initiative and encourage donations instead of discarding such items into drains, water bodies or open spaces.

Present during the donation drive included Principal, Govt. College of Education, Canal Road, Jammu Prof. Jyoti Parihar, Health Officer, JMC, Dr. Vinod Sharma, Dr. Priyanka, VAS, JMC, Sanjay Vyas, Project Head, Swaaha, J&K HUDD IEC Project, students, volunteers, shopkeepers and other citizens of the area.

FromPage No:1

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

training instructors. Out of the 840 vacancies already referred, 476 have been filled, and the selection process for the remaining 364 is going on. Additionally, 116 non-gazetted vacancies have been sent for financial clearance." Abdullah said.

The chief minister also reaffirmed that the government's focus is on expediting recruitment, ensuring fairness, and increasing employment opportunities across Jammu and Kashmir.

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

president Roger Binny in a

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

Jammu and Kashmir.

"The department continues to promote skill development through specialised training programs designed to enhance self-employment capacities. Regular job fairs are also conducted to bridge the gap between job seekers and employers, encouraging private sector employment," he said.

Punjab Police busts drugshawala racket with **5 arrests: Seizes** narcotics. cash. weapons

facilitator of hawala transactions linked to Dubai-based drug cartels", the officer said.

Singh has confessed to channelling Rs 50 crore over the last three months to support cross-border drugs smuggling, the DGP said.

"An FIR has been registered under the NDPS Act, Arms Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita," he said. Seven kg opium, three pistols (30 bore) with six magazines, Rs 23.10

lakh in drug money, and a currency counting machine were among the seizures made by the police, the

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

under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), an incentive of Rs 20 lakh is provided to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for establishing milk value addition startups, along with Rs 2 lakh as working capital and Rs 3 lakh as a 50 per cent subsidy for transportation vehicles.

Currently, JKMPCL processes 2.5 lakh litres of milk per day and has proposed to increase its capacity to 5 lakh litres per day over the next five years with support from the National Programme for Dairy Development. Further, under HADP's Cluster Development Project, milk processing capacity in Jammu and Kashmir is expected to increase by an additional 5 lakh litres per day through new large-scale processing units in Pulwama and Jammu. Despite Pulwama's leading role

in milk production and processing, the government stated that there is no proposal at present to establish a dedicated industrial estate in Kakapora block for milk processing. However, youth in the area can benefit from schemes such as the HADP's Milk Value Addition Startups, which provides Rs 25 lakh in assistance to SHGs, and the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme, which offers 50 per cent financial assistance of up to Rs 15 lakh for milk processing facilities.

The government also clarified that no proposals exist for setting up new veterinary or sheep husbandry extension centres in Trich, Dougam, and other villages in Pampore, but veterinary services are being provided through mobile veterinary units, accessible via a toll-free helpline.

Pakistani intruder apprehended along IB in Kathua

Security personnel detected suspicious movement of a person attempting to cross the border in the Hiranagar sector on Wednesday night, the sources said.

The forces fired a few warning rounds before taking the suspect into custody, they said.

The intruder has been identified as Qadir Baksh, a resident of Gafurabad, Tehsil Chiniot, Pakistan.

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 workshop 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 Bhaderwah



Top News Report

DODA, Mar 20: The Indian Army conducted a successful Distribution Camp on Thursday in Bheja, Thanala, and Sharekhi, located in Bhaderwah, 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.

the elderly and disabled.

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

nomic 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 Bhaderwah 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, Bhaderwah, 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, Bhaderwah, 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 I&K T-10 Tennis Cricke Association successfully conducted the Senior National Trials at Parade Ground, Jammu. These trials were held to select top cricketing talent 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 par-



ticipants and added prestige to the event.

In his address on the accession Keshay

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 Banday, 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 intersec-

tion 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.

'Middle class' happiness to bonding with 'elder brother' SRK: KKR's Venkatesh opens on IPL 2025

KKR will kickstart their title defence journey in IPL 2025 with a highly-anticipated clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), the 'OG Derby' which kickstarted the tournament back in 2008 during its inaugural edition.

KOLKATA, Mar 20 (Agencies): Ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) season, Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) vice-captain Venkatesh lyer opened up on playing at the "temple" and team's home stadium of Eden Gardens, the prize tag pressure and his "elder brother" bond with team owner and Bollywood legend Shah Rukh Khan.

KKR will kickstart their title defence journey in IPL 2025 with a highly-anticipated clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), the 'OG Derby', which kickstarted the tournament back in 2008 during its inaugural edition.

lyer will be one of the players in the spotlight as the deputy to skipper Ajinkya Rahane was bought back by KKR for a whopping Rs 23.75 crores. Over the years, he has delivered several notable performances for the Knights ever since his debut in

Venkatesh, on 'Backstage with Boria season six', told Boria Majumdar that the prize tag of Rs 23.75 crores does have pressure, but once the match starts, none



of it matters, and his job remains the same, whether his price tag is Rs20 lakh or Rs20

"The IPL 2025 auc-

tion was a life-changing moment for me. The middle-class guy in me was very happy with the money! I would not lie. However, as the bidding war between KKR and RCB escalated, it brought a mix of emotions. One way to look at it is to feel happy that I have done something good in my career for teams to invest in me. Another way, which I think is the right one, is to realise that this comes with a lot of responsibility. If I say there is no pressure, I would be lying. Of course, there is pressure. And there has to be pressure. But once

the match starts, none of it matters. Whether I am a Rs20 lakh player or a Rs20 crore player, my job remains the same"

Speaking about play-

ing at the team's home

arena of Eden Gar-

dens, Venkatesh said,

"To step onto the field at

Eden Gardens, which

is like a temple for me,

and see thousands of

fans cheering for you

and your team--there's

no greater feeling for

a cricketer. It feels like

70-80,000 people are

behind you, supporting

you with every action

you take. That energy

brings out the best in

Venkatesh had a fan-

tastic IPL season in

2021, making his debut

for KKR. In 10 matches,

he made 370 runs at an

average of 41.11 and

a strike rate of 128.47,

with four fifties. He also

took three wickets with

his useful medium pace.

you.'

On Shah Rukh Khan, Venkatesh said that the superstar actor makes one feel that he is "always there for you".

"More than a franchise owner, he gives off an elder brother vibe. He makes you feel like he is always there for you. A franchise owner does not have to be so friendly and humble, especially someone like him, a global superstar. But he is so down to earth. When you meet him, you feel like you want to do something special for him. You feel like, 'No, I want to do something for this man. I want to do something special for Shah Rukh bhai," he

brought Venkatesh to the senior team as he made his debut in November 2021 as star all-rounder Hardik Pandya struggled through injuries and needed someone to back him up. In nine T20Is and seven innings, he made 133 runs at an average of 33.25, with a strike rate of over 162 and best score of 35*, and picked up five wickets. In two ODIs, he scored 24 runs in two innings, with best score of 22. He has not played a game for India

A fine IPL season

since February 2022. In 51 matches for KKR, he has made 1,326 runs at an average of 31.57 and a strike rate of over 137, with a century and 11 fifties in 49 innings to his name. His best score is 104. He has also taken three wickets.

During the title-winning season of 2024, Venkatesh played a key hand with his 370 runs in 13 innings at an average of 46.25 and a strike rate of 158.79, with four halfcenturies. His best score was 70. He was the third-highest run-getter for KKR and scored a half-century in playoffs and the final against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH).

Riyan Parag to lead RR in first three IPL 2025 games, Samson to play as specialist batter



JAIPUR, Mar 20 (Agencies): Young allrounder Riyan Parag will be stepping up as captain for Rajasthan Royals (RR) for their first three Indian Premier League (IPL) matches, with regular skipper Sanju Samson playing as a specialist captain till he gets completely fit from his finger injury, the Franchise's official website reported.

RR, the inaugural champions in 2008 chasing the title glory once again, released a press release announcing the move, which will affect RR's first game against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) at Uppal Stadium in Hyderabad and two matches against defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in Guwahati on March 30.

"Rajasthan Royals have announced that Riyan Parag will lead the team for the first three matches of IPL 2025. The young all-rounder will take charge in the opening fixture against Sunrisers Hyderabad on March 23, followed by home encounters against defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders on March 26 and five-time champions Chennai Super Kings on March 30,"

said the press note. Sanju Samson, an integral part of the Royals set-up, will remain a key contributor with the bat till he gets cleared for wicket-keeping and fielding. He will return as captain once fully fit, added the statement.

RR also took to their official X handle, with Samson himself announcing the move, saying in a video, "I am not actually completely fit for three more games. There are a lot of leaders in the group. Over the years, there are some great people who have taken care of this

environment nicely. For

the next three games, I think Riyan will be leading the team. He is well capable of doing it and I expect everyone to support him and to be with him."

During the fifth T20I against England in February, DhruvJurel kept wickets in place of Samson after a Jofra Archer delivery hit Samson's finger while bat-

Rajasthan Royals' decision to hand Riyan the captaincy underscores the franchise's confidence in his leadership, a skill he has demonstrated through his tenure as Assam's domestic captain. Having been a crucial member of the Royals setup over the years, his understanding of the team's dynamic makes him well-equipped to step into this role for the initial phase of the tournament.

Parag was Rajasthan's top-run-getter last season and overall third-highest. In a breakout season, Parag piled up 573 runs at an average of 52.09 and struck at 149.21, with four half-centuries and best score of 84*. His move to number three from lower-middle-order paid off big time.

With an experienced core, dynamic young talents, and a well-structured leadership transition, Rajasthan Royals remain committed to a strong start in IPL 2025.

10 teams all set to fight for title as IPL returns for 18th season with new team combinations, exciting new players and veteran stars his leadership, Royals have

NEW DELHI, Mar 20 (Agencies): A fresh season, some new leaders, many youngsters hoping to make an impact and some desperate veterans looking to break the title jinx — many such sub-plots will capture the imagination of the fans as 10 teams fight for the ultimate prize in franchise cricket over the next two months.

With the Indian Premier League (IPL) beginning on Saturday, cricket fever is set to take over the country. The mega auction in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in November ensured that the 18th edition of the IPL will see many new partnerships and rivalries, making it a thrilling prospect.

While five teams — Gujarat Titans, Chennai Super Kings, Mumbai Indians, Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad — have retained their skippers from the previous season, the other five have picked new leaders.

With every team starting afresh with new lineups, The Tribune takes a look at the team dynamics of the 10 contenders.

Punjab Kings

Punjab Kings' new skipper Shreyas Iver will be reuniting with coach Ricky Ponting, with whom he led Delhi Capitals to the 2020 IPL final. Iyer captained Kolkata Knight Riders to the title last season. Punjab Kings hogged the limelight at the auction by spending over Rs 100 crore, hoping to end their title drought. The revamping of PBKS will help the skipper to have plenty of all-rounder options. Glenn Maxwell, Azmatullah Omarzai, Marco Jansen, Marcus Stoinis and Aaron Hardie will be their best options in the middle order. Batters Prabhsimran Singh and Shashank Singh were the only two players retained for this season. In the bowling department, pacer Arshdeep Singh will be carrying most of the burden. He finished with 19 wickets last season. Kiwi pacer Lockie Ferguson is one of their new recruits. They also have experienced spinner Yuzvendra Chahal in the lineup.

Kolkata Knight Riders

Defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders will play under the captaincy to Ajinkya Rahane. A leader with vast experience, Rahane previously played for KKR in 2022 and is among the select few to have featured in the IPL since its inception in 2008. Venkatesh lyer has been named the vice-captain. West Indian all-rounders Sunil Narine and Andre Russell will come into the tournament not in the best of form. Narine has gone wicketless in six of his last 10 T20s. But spinner Varun Chakaravarthy will be the one to carry high hopes after his stint with the Indian team. Explosive batter Rinku Singh will be another player to watch out for having proved his credentials in the last few editions.

Royal Challengers Benga-

Rajat Patidar will be the captain of Royal Challengers Bengaluru, replacing Faf du Plessis. Patidar, who made his IPL debut in 2021, has been a consistent performer for RCB, accumulating 799 runs at a strike rate of 158.85 across 27 matches. Patidar's biggest challenge will be stepping into the big boots of former captains such as du Plessis and Virat Kohli. He will have the guidance of Kohli, who will also have to lead the batting unit. The team boasts of experienced pacers Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, along with Liam Livingstone, Jacob

Bethell, Krunal Pandva, Phil Salt and Jitesh Sharma. In the last edition, the side lost seven of their first eight matches, but recorded a great turnaround by winning six games to secure a playoff

Chennai Super Kings

Ruturaj Gaikwad will be leading Chennai Super Kings for the second consecutive vear. But MS Dhoni's presence will make the former captain the default leader. Last year, CSK finished fifth on the points table with seven wins and as many losses. Ravichandran Ashwin, Sam Curran and Vijay Shankar will be making a return to the franchise, while Devon Conway, who had missed the last season with injury, was also brought back. The team has gone with a mix of experience and youth. This year, the side is also bolstered by the presence of Afghan spinner Noor Ahmad and Indian batter Rahul Tripathi. TNPL star Gurjapneet Singh, who had missed the second phase of the Ranji Trophy with injury, will be a bowling option along with Curran and Khaleel Ahmed. Matheesha Pathirana is once again likely

to be at the centre stage with his yorkers and slower deliv-

Delhi Capitals Delhi Capitals will be led by

Axar Patel. A key member of the franchise since 2019, he was retained ahead of the mega auction. In the previous season, Rishabh Pant led the side on his return from injury, guiding them to a sixth-place finish. Patel, who had a successful Champions Trophy, will have a lot to carry on his shoulders. The skipper will also have the support of KL Rahul, who remained India's wicketkeeper in the Champions Trophy and is likely to play the same role with his new outfit. Another major boost is the presence of spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who needs no introduction when it comes to providing breakthroughs. In the fast-bowling department, they have the likes of Mitchell Starc, T Natarajan, veteran Mohit Sharma and Mukesh Kumar. Patel will also have good support from his deputy Faf du Plessis, who has 4,571 runs from 145 IPL matches at a strike rate of 136.37.

Gujarat Titans

Shubman Gill will continue as the captain of Gujarat Titans after taking over the role in 2024. Having had a strong 2024 season with the bat, Gill will be eyeing a better finish than last year's eighth place. After a major rebuild, the former winners have Kagiso Rabada, Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna as their pace battery. However, the major attraction for the side will be Jos Buttler who is likely to open with captain Gill. Buttler had scored 863 runs in IPL 2022, but his ton in the last edition against KKR was among the most legendary innings. The least 'tech-savvy' coach of the IPL, Ashish Nehra will also have ample batting options as Sai Sudharsan, their highest runscorer last season, is also back in the squad.

Rajasthan Royals will be led by Sanju Samson for the fourth consecutive season. Samson, who had a finger surgery last month, is awaiting fitness clearance from the BCCI medical team. There is no confirmation yet on whether that might impact

his availability for RR's first

match on March 23. Under

Rajasthan Royals

up finish in 2022 — their first final since their title triumph in the inaugural 2008 season. A bowler-heavy side, RR have the services of Tushar Deshpande, Jofra Archer, Wanindu Hasaranga and Maheesh Theekshana. Shimron Hetmyer, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Nitish Rana, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel and the skipper himself will make the core of the batting unit. They also signed 13-year-old batter Vaibhav Suryavanshi — the youngest player to earn an IPL deal. Mumbai Indians

made two playoff appear-

ances, including a runners-

Hardik Pandya will continue leading Mumbai Indians. Having guided Gujarat Titans to an IPL title in 2022 and a runners-up finish in 2023, Pandya endured a challenging 2024 season as MI finished at the bottom of the table. Having faced the fans' backlash for replacing Rohit Sharma, the team will have to overcome a new challenge this time due to the unavailability of Jasprit Bumrah. The side had won only four games in the last edition. However, Pandya won back the fans' support by helping India to the T20 World Cup and Champions Trophy triumphs. The presence of India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav and Sharma make them a feared batting unit. The former champions have brought back Trent Boult and Deepak Chahar. They also picked up the experienced and reliable Mitchell Santner. Youngster Bevon Jacobs can be Mumbai's find of the year.

Lucknow Super Giants Rishabh Pant has been named their new captain. He replaces KL Rahul, who led the franchise in its first three seasons before joining Delhi Capitals. Even before the start of the tournament, the outfit received a jolt as pacer Mayank Yadav was reported to be injured. However, he recently shared a story showing himself bowling in the nets at the NCA. It is expected that he might be available after the mid-season. However, LSG mentor Zaheer Khan previously clarified that Mayank would only play in the IPL if he is 150 per cent fit, not just 100 per cent. Australia T20 captain Mitchell Marsh will bolster the team as he is cleared to play in the IPL, despite missing the Champions Trophy with a back injury. Nicholas Pooran will be one of the key players. Last year, the side failed to make the playoff for the first time in three years.

Sunrisers Hyderabad Australia's World Cup-winning skipper Pat Cummins will continue to lead Sunrisers Hyderabad, aiming to go one step further after guiding them to the IPL 2024 final their first in six years. SRH had a strong campaign last season, securing five wins in their first seven matches before finishing second on the points table. And, the credit goes on the opening pair of Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head — the duo that smashed almost every bowling line-up of the tournament. The side had gone past the 250-mark thrice and set a new record for the highest total in IPL history by scoring 287/3. The team also has Heinrich Klaasen and Nitish Kumar along with Ishan Kishan. The bowling department will be led by Mohammed Shami. He took 28 wickets in the powerplay at an average of 21.25 and an economy of 7.08 across the 2022 and 2023 IPL seasons.



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 (Punjab 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 Carporate Corporate Ministry tice and (MoSJE of India.

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

Jammu.

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

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 differentlyabled 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 Ravidasia 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-



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. This distinguished title is 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 dignities 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 nonresidents 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 Chowdhry, 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.

