

DENGUE WARNING SIGNS

Many people with dengue can be cared for at home with adequate rest and hydration. But, if you experience any warning signs, go immediately to the nearest medical center.

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

A drop in body temperature accompanied by any of the following symptoms:

- Severe and continuous headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Diarrhoea
- Present vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Diarrhoea
- Steady rise in pulse or weak, rapid or irregular pulse
- Redness on face or chest

If you have any of these symptoms, go to the nearest medical center IMMEDIATELY

JINDRAH IMAGES

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|| KATHUA ATTACKS ||

Combing Op underway after Gunfire between Hiding Terrorists, security forces



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

A seek and destroy operation to track down three terrorists, believed to be

hiding in a forested area in Panjthirthe-Barota in Kathua following an encounter last night, resumed Thursday

CONTINUED ON ►► PAGE 4

DGP, IGP visit Kathua; review combing operation

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Bhim Sen Tuti on Tuesday visited Kathua district and reviewed the ongoing operation.

DGP Prabhat, along with IGP Tuti and Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Shiv Kumar Sharma, arrived at the Panjthirthe site in Kathua where a combing operation is underway to track down three terrorists who escaped after a brief

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Waqf (Amendment) Bill to be taken up for consideration & passage in LS today

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1 (UND)

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 will be taken up for consideration and passage in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said.

He alleged that the opposition is doing "appeasement politics" on the Bill.

Speaking at a press conference here on Tuesday, Rijiju, said it has been decided to have eight

hours of discussion in the lower house on the Bill.

He added that during the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting, it has been agreed that the time of the discussion may be increased.

The Minister said the appropriate time for the Bill's introduction will be decided after consultations within the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) and discussion with the Speaker.

He added that the government is ready to

answer all the questions over the bill, and alleged that opposition parties are against the legislation due to their "appeasement politics".

The Opposition MPs however have dubbed the bill "unconstitutional" and vowed to resist its tabling in the Parliament. On January 27, a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) led by BJP MP Jagdambika Pal had cleared the Waqf Amendment Bill tabled in the Lok Sabha in August last year.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, seeks to introduce reforms such as digitization, enhanced audits, transparency, and legal mechanisms to reclaim illegally occupied properties.

The contentious Bill was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) in August 2024. The panel's 655-page report was submitted to both houses of Parliament earlier this month amid protests by opposition and Muslim groups.

Search operations underway in five areas of Poonch



JI NEWS SERVICE
MENDHAR, JAMMU, APR 1

Security forces on Tuesday launched search operations in five areas of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said.

The operations are part of enhanced security mea-

sures aimed at maintaining high vigilance in the border district, they said.

The search operations were conducted by joint teams of the Special Operations Group (SoG) of the police and units of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

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Amit Shah's J&K visit not linked to Anti-Militancy Operation in Kathua: CM

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APR 1

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Jammu and Kashmir was not linked to the anti-militancy operation in Kathua.

The programme was finalised before the operation, he added.

"Do not link the Union minister's visit to the Kathua (operation). His



programme was finalised before the Kathua encounter. It is a coincidence that

his visit comes around the time of the Kathua operation," the chief min-

ister told reporters after launching a free bus service for women at SKICC.

The home minister's visit does not have a security agenda only, he added.

"While the security (situation) will be reviewed, he (Shah) has planned a public meeting in Jammu as well ... Then, in Srinagar, he (Shah) will review the development work and inaugurate

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LG Sinha pays obeisance at Mata Vaishnodevi Shrine



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday paid

obeisance at the cave shrine of Mata Vaishnodevi.

The governor prayed for peace and

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Zojila Pass opened in Record Time after 32-Day Closure: Defence Ministry

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APR 1

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on Tuesday opened the Zojila Pass in record time after a closure of 32 days, the defence ministry said.

Zojila Pass is one of the most critical and challenging high-altitude passes in the world connecting Kashmir Valley to Ladakh.

"Border Roads Organisation has opened Zojila Pass in record time after a mere closure for 32 days, today on April 1, 2025,

with Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan DG, BRO flagging off the first convoy towards Ladakh," the ministry said in a statement.

This year, the pass faced an unusually short but intense closure period due to relentless snowfall caused by a Western Disturbance for 17 days, from February 27 to March 16, it said.

The sheer volume of accumulated snow posed a formidable challenge.

The BRO personnel worked under

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CM flags off free bus service for women across J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 1

In a landmark move towards gender-inclusive mobility, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today flagged off the Zero-Ticket Travel Initiative (free bus service) for women of Jammu and Kashmir from the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Center (SKICC). The initiative, fulfilling a key budget



announcement, ensures free travel for women in all Smart City e-buses and J&K Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) buses across the Union Territory. Before the official flag-off, the Chief Minister also inaugurated Zero-Ticket Travel for schoolgirls, underscoring the government's commitment to accessible and safe transportation for young students.

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LG Sinha attends Odisha Day 'Utkala Dibasa' celebration at Raj Bhawan



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha attended the Odisha Day 'Utkala Dibasa' celebration, today.

Officials, Students, Faculty members from various educational institutions and the people of Odisha living in J&K UT were the special invitees for the commemorative event hosted by Jammu Kashmir Raj Bhawan at Jammu.

While addressing the guests, the Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations and best wishes on the occasion of 'Utkala Dibasa'.

"Odisha's rich cultural heritage, ancient monuments, literature, visual, performing arts and rich tapestry of traditions are contributing to the vibrant, unique and diverse culture of our country. I pray for good health, well-being

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CS delineates sector-wise reforms to ensure EODB across J&K



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 01

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today emphasised the significance of reducing compliance burdens and enhancing Ease of Doing Business (EODB) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary, while reviewing the steps to be taken in this regard, exhorted upon the departments to streamline the processes and services making them readily available. This must be the primary task of all the departments to make the region more attractive to the investors and citizens alike, he added.

ACS, Jal Shakti Department; Principal Secretary, Home; Principal Secretary, PDD; Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Commissioner Secretary, I&C; Secretary, RDD; Director I&C, Jammu besides other concerned officers besides other concerned officers attended the meeting.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary urged the concerned to ensure digitisation of records, creation of a land bank, formulation of relevant bye laws for each of the authorities responsible for different purposes in a mission mode.

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Lt Gen Mishra takes over as new GOC of Jammu based White Knight Corps



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

Lieutenant General P K Mishra on Tuesday took over as new General-Officer-Commanding

of Jammu based White Knight Corps.

"Lt Gen PK Mishra, took over the Command of @Whiteknight IA from over as new General-Officer-Commanding Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva,"

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NHAI hikes toll charges by 4-5% across country

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1

Commuters on national highways and expressways will need to pay more for their road journeys, as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has increased toll charges by an average of 4 to 5 per cent on high-way sections across the country.

The revised toll charges for motorists on national highways across the country have come into effect from Tuesday, a senior highways ministry official said. NHAI notifies toll rate hikes for all the

national highways and expressways separately.

According to him, the change in toll fee is part of an annual exercise to revise the rates that are linked to the changes in the wholesale price index-based inflation. Every year, it is implemented from April 1.

There are around 855 user fee plazas on the national highway network on which user fee is levied as per National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008. Out of these, around 675 are public-funded fee

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GoC meets LG in Jammu



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Rising Star Corps, Lieutenant General Rajan Sharawat, called on Jammu

and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday and discussed the prevailing security scenario.

The Rising Star Corps oversees the

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'One Nation-One Election' is in National Interest: Billawaria

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 01

A seminar was organised in support of the 'One Nation-One Election' campaign at Udhampur of Jammu and Kashmir. Former Deputy Mayor Jammu & senior BJP leader Baldev Singh Billawaria was the keynote speaker, while District Development Council Chairman Lal Chand, District President Arun Gupta also addressed the seminar. Addressing the seminar, Billawaria said that such events are being organised across the country to meet the campaign of One Nation-One Election. He said that for many reasons, 'One Nation-One Election' is in the national interest, if you agree with One Nation-One Election then everyone should write a letter to the President of India to support the 'One Nation-One Election'. He said that everyone should form groups and list the benefits of One Nation-One Election campaign



among every section, only then it will become an issue of the country. Presenting figures while explaining the benefits of One Nation-One Election, Billawaria said that during the last 5 years, Rs. 6.5 lakh crore were spent in the Lok Sabha and all state elections. If the elections were held simultaneously, only Rs. 1.5 lakh crore would have been spent and Rs. 5 lakh crore would have been saved. He said that the entire budget of any one department of education or health of the country is spent in elections, so

today the country needs 'One Nation-One Election'. Billawaria urges good intellectuals who have skills in different areas to support 'One Nation-One Election' in the interest of the country. He said that earlier also Prime Minister Narendra Bhai Modi took very important decisions in the interest of the country which the public has supported very well. He said that I have full faith that the public will also support the proposal of Prime Minister Narendra Bhai Modi of 'One Nation-One Election'. Udhampur Dis-

trict Development Council Chairman Lal Chand along with his members gave his support to the resolution of 'One Nation-One Election'. He said that the resolution of 'One Nation-One Election' is the need of the hour, and also appealed to non-social organizations and enlightened people to write a letter of support to the President of India in this regard. District President Arun Gupta said that a campaign will be launched to connect the common people with the benefits of 'One Nation-One Election'. He said that for the prosperity of the country and to avoid unnecessary expenditure, we all should play an important role in this public awareness campaign. In this seminar members of Udhampur District Development Council, Municipal Committee Udhampur and other social organisations supported the proposal of 'One Nation-One Election', the seminar concluded with the National Anthem.

Deputy Chief Minister launches Free Bus Service for Women in Jammu

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 01

In a significant step towards enhancing women welfare coupled with improving public transportation, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Chowdhary, today launched a free bus service for women across the region.

The initiative included both the electric buses and Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) buses. This will ensure safe, accessible and cost-free travel for women, including working professionals, students and daily commuters.

The launch event, held in Jammu, was attended by the Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), along with senior officers from the concerned departments.

The Deputy Chief Minister flagged off the service, marking fulfilment of yet another key promise of the present government.

Speaking to media



emony, the Deputy Chief Minister interacted with the women passengers, reiterating the government's dedication towards resolving longstanding issues in the region. "This is a step towards ensuring women's safety, convenience and inclusion in public spaces. We are committed towards addressing all genuine concerns of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

To avail the free service, the women only need to show their Aadhaar cards to the bus conductor upon boarding any government-operated bus, including e-Buses. The JKRTC has streamlined the process by equipping the conductors with POS machines to register passengers efficiently by entering their Aadhaar details.

This pioneering initiative is expected to set a benchmark for women-centric policies in the region, fostering greater mobility and independence for women across Jammu and Kashmir.

persons at the event, protection of jobs and land, provision of free electricity and now this free bus service for women," he stated. He added that the initiative reflects the administration's efforts towards alleviating the travel burdens faced by women besides promoting their empowerment. During the flag-off ceremony,

the Deputy Chief Minister emphasized the government's commitment towards addressing the needs of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "Since formation of present government, we have worked tirelessly to deliver on our promises, including restoration of statehood,

Age relaxation should be given to enrolled children in first class

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

Strongly advocating the demand for age relaxation for enrolled children in first class, President of Parents Association Jammu, Amit Kapoor, along with a large number of parents, protested vigorously outside the Press Club Jammu.

The protesters gathered outside the Press Club this morning and after that they protested vigorously under the leadership of Amit Kapoor, raising slogans in support of their demands. A large number of women and parents of children also participated in the protest. The protesters were also demanding strict action to end the nexus of books and uniforms in private schools.

While addressing the protesters, Amit Kapoor said that under the new education policy, the government has issued an



order of three years age limit for nursery children last year. He said that the government had issued an order to give age relaxation for the first two years to the children who are enrolled, but some children are still enrolled and orders for age relaxation should be issued for them this year too so that one year is saved for the children and they can get admission in the first class.

Along with this, he also attacked the government for its failure to curb the nexus with the sellers of

books and uniforms of private schools. Many schools themselves sell books and uniforms. He further said that the ADC of Jammu is doing a commendable job by raiding various dhawans and other places, but she should also take concrete steps to stop the process of looting parents by private schools in the name of books and new uniforms every year so that parents can get some relief and the looting by private schools can be curbed. He said that last year they had raided some

places and tried to curb the nexus between private schools and book sellers, which was a commendable step. But after that they sat quietly while the nexus of books and uniforms continues. He said that some private schools change the uniforms every year for their vested interests, due to which parents have to face a lot of problems.

He demanded from the ADC that he should take this matter seriously and take strict steps to end the nexus of books and uniforms. At the same time, Amit Kapoor warned that if the government does not immediately issue an order for age relaxation for enrolling children in the first class, then he will intensify his movement against it and the government will be completely responsible for the situation arising out of it.

SWD steps up reopening of Ladies Vocational Centers

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 01

In a significant step towards women's empowerment and skill development, the Department of Social Welfare, Jammu Division has initiated the reopening of Ladies Vocational Centers (LVCs) that were temporarily closed during COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, Director Social Welfare Rupesh Kumar inaugurated a Ladies Vocational Center at Tehsil Akhnoor, achieving another milestone in this initiative. Tehsil Social Welfare Officer Dheeraj Lakhnotra and other staff members were also present.

The objective of these centers is to provide



women with vocational training in trades such as tailoring, embroidery, and knitting, enabling them to become self-reliant and generate income through their skills.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Rupesh Kumar stated, "The reopening of these centers is not just about skill

development, it is about instilling confidence and creating opportunities for women to become self-sufficient." Empowered women are the foundation of a progressive society."

Prior to the reopening of the Akhnoor center, LVCs in Districts Poonch and Reasi, had already resumed operations, with

enthusiastic participation from women eager to learn new skills and improve their economic status.

The Department of Social Welfare remains committed to expanding the reach of these centers, introducing modern techniques to align with current market demands.

DC reviews progress of BRO Roads in Poonch

JJ NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, MARCH 01

Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal today reviewed the progress of work on the road projects being executed by Border Roads Organization (BRO) in the Poonch District.

The meeting, attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Collector Land Acquisition Rajouri-Poonch, OC GREF 79RCC and other key officials, focused on the status of critical infrastructure works. Sub Divisional Magistrate Surankote, Tehsildar and Xen PWD (R&B),



joining the meeting virtually, provided key updates on various road works being executed in the subdivision.

The Deputy Commis-

sioner issued a firm directive to the SDM to expedite the removal of structures obstructing the alignment of the Rajouri Thanamandi Surankote Road (RTS) and

NHI44-A, underscoring the importance of preventing delays in the execution of these vital projects.

Additionally, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the Tehsildar Surankote to prepare the necessary revenue documentation and mandated the Xen PWD to undertake an assessment of the obstructing structures. Stressing the urgency of timely project delivery, the Deputy Commissioner urged all executing agencies to accelerate their efforts to ensure the prompt completion of these essential infrastructure initiatives.

"Gandaa Jaa Banjara" by J S Pardesi released

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

A Dogri Poetry Book of lyrics penned by J.S.Pardesi was released by Nami Dogri Sanstha at K.L.Sehgal Hall.

Dr Radha Rani Assistant Professor in Dogri read a comprehensive paper on the book. Joginder Singh Pardesi was Honoured on the occasion by NDS and conferred upon him the Sanstha Sammaan "Duggar Di Awaaz".

Om Vidyarthi IFS (Retd) and Sahitya Academy Awardee presided over, where as Shaminder Kumar former Director Radio Jalandhar was Chief Guest. Shalinder Singh Sahitya Academy awardee and SSP Railways were the Guests Of Honour, Manisha Sharma Assistant Director and Bachan Bhagat, both Assistant Directors Radio Jammu were Special Guests. Prithvi Raj Sharma famous Music Composer of Duggar was Special Invitee on the occasion.

Prof Anupama Sharma Patron NDS and famous singer of Jammu and Kashmir and



Advocate Dogra Harish Kaila President NDS also shared the dias.

Yash Pal Yash General Secretary NDS conducted the proceedings. Earlier at the outset Capt. Lalit Sharma IFS Conventor NDS in his opening address while speaking on the book said that the poetry of J.S. Pardesi has the tinge and reflections of the English poetry of William Wordsworth, as all the lyrics of Joginder Singh Pardesi are painted with nature.

Om Vidyarthi described the book a master piece in dogri poetry and a motivational writing for the young poets.

Shaminder Kumar said that a passionate approach in must to save dogri language and Duggar Culture

and mere formalities will not work. Shalinder Singh lauded the poetic contents of the book and described the poetry a significant milestone in dogri poetry coupled with rich dogri vocabulary.

Mrs. Madhvi Sharma a famous Radio Announcer who also expressed her views appreciated the personality of J. S. Pardesi and described him an able broadcaster, talented radio artist and a fine human being who remained helpful to every one.

Bachan Bhagat Assistant Director All India Radio Jammu described the author an exceptional personality in terms of his qualities of head and heart.

Manisha Sharma Assistant Director All India

Radio Jammu recalled as to how she was groomed and supported by J. S. Pardesi during initial years of his service.

Prithvi Sharma said that his poetry has inherent and inbuilt sweet and vibrant music which can easily be tapped by a music composer.

J.S.Pardesi after serving Army for about seven years joined All India Radio Jammu and with dent of his hard work and talent rose to the position of Programme Executive and earned a name among the people and radio staff. The compilation has one hundred and seven poetry gems bouquetted into a book. The deep love of the poet for his motherland is reflected in his poetry and the fragrance of Duggar emanates from his each poetic item.

Kulbhushan Singh Jamwal, Art Critic & Journalist and Other Prominent personalities of Duggar in large number attended the function. Dr Chanchal Sharma Shreeza Editor Hindi of the Academy and Organising Secretary NDS extended vote of thanks.

DC Kishtwar conducts verification of RDD works executed under District Capex

JJ NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, APRIL 01

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today conducted on the spot verification of the development works executed under the District Capex by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (RDD) here in Panchayat Zewar.

The inspection focused on assessing the quality of work and overall compliance with the prescribed



standards. During the verification, on-spot measure-

ments were carried out by the concerned Assistant Executive Engineer

(AEE), Assistant Engineer (AE), and Junior Engineer (JE) in the presence of the DC. The team thoroughly examined the executed projects to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective utilization of resources.

The DC was accompanied by the ACD Phulail Singh, Tehsildar Nirbhay Sharma, BDO Sanjeev Kotwal, AEE ReW Ajay Prabhath, AE ReW Ishtiyak Ahmed and other concerned staff of the RDD.

Educate every citizen about Modi gov't schemes: Sat Sharma to party leaders

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

Emphasizing on the need to take full advantage of the public welfare schemes initiated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led Union government, Sat Sharma, President, J&K BJP asked the senior leaders of the party to educate every citizen about the Modi government schemes on a mission mode.

Sat Sharma, was interacting with Party's Secretary Tariq Keen, former Mayor JMC Rajinder Sharma, Spokesperson, Balbir Ram Rattan, Media Incharge Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, IT Incharge Ishant Gupta, and others at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Sat Sharma said that the Modi government is committed to the welfare of the poor, needy and the underprivileged sections of the society. This government is working on the 'Antyodaya' mission, which aims to provide all the basic facilities



and the right to live with dignity to the most neglected person of the society, he said.

"A glance at the numerous development projects and welfare schemes will itself convince even a common citizen that the Modi government has launched several welfare schemes aimed at benefiting the needy, focusing on financial inclusion, health-care, housing, agriculture, and social security", he said.

While enumerating some of some key benefits, he said that PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), PM Garib

Kalyan Yojana (PMKGY), Direct cash transfers, and free food grain distribution during and after the crises like COVID-19, Aadhaar-based DBT has led to the Financial Inclusion of the poor and needy sections of society. He added that PM Kissan Samman Nidhi, PM Awas Yojana (PMAY), Jal Jeevan mission, Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY), PM Mudra Yojana have provided relief to the needy section.

"Modi government has provided a people-friendly administration at their doorsteps with no scope of middlemen and corruption with total transparency", he said.

BJP is not only a political party to seek votes of the people during the election times but a mission to serve the nation and its people and it becomes the prime duty of every activist of the party to remain at the beck and call of people and extend best possible help to make them avail the benefits of welfare schemes.

Sat Sharma stressed upon the party leaders to also ask their colleagues to remain available for the people and serve as a bridge between them and the party.

Restrict meat and liquor sales in J&K during Navratri, respect Hindu traditions: Pawan

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

Pawan Sharma, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and former state secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, has demanded a complete ban on the sale of meat and liquor during Navratri in Jammu and Kashmir. This demand is likely aimed at promoting a more spiritual and devotional atmosphere during the festival, and showing respect for the Hindu community's traditions, beliefs and sentiments.

Sharma stressed the significance of respecting the traditions, beliefs, and sentiments of the Hindu community, advocating for the government to



consider implementing a comprehensive ban on meat and liquor in Jammu and Kashmir. This measure would play a crucial role in upholding the values and principles of the Hindu community, who consider the consumption of meat

and liquor as taboo during specific periods, notably during Navratri.

Sharma further stated that the Hindu community has long been an integral part of Jammu and Kashmir's social fabric, and their traditions and customs have played a vital role in shaping the region's cultural identity. By imposing a ban on meat and liquor, the government would be demonstrating its commitment to respecting and preserving the community's values and beliefs.

Furthermore, this ban would also contribute to maintaining social harmony and promoting a sense of unity among the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It would be a gesture of good-

will towards the Hindu community, acknowledging their significant contributions to the region's cultural and social landscape.

In light of the above, Sharma appealed that the government consider the sentiments of the Hindu community and initiate a comprehensive ban on meat and liquor in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sharma's demand is in line with the BJP's stance on promoting cultural and religious heritage. As a senior leader of the party, Sharma has been vocal about various issues affecting Jammu and Kashmir, including the regularization of daily wagers and the need for concrete actions to address their problems.

BJP OBC Morcha pays tribute to Shaheed Ram Chander Vidyarthi

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

BJP OBC Morcha paid floral Tribute to Shaheed Prajapati Ram Chander Vidyarthi, on his birth anniversary, who had laid his life for the Nation on 14 August 1942, at the age of 13 years and 4 months while hoisting the Indian Tri Colour Flag at the office of District Magistrate replacing Crown flag in a bid to intensify the freedom struggle against the British Govt as a part of the Quit India Movement struggle.

The Tribute Program was organized by Sunil Prajapati, State President BJP OBC Morcha at BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Munish Sharma, BJP Senior Leader, Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, BJP Media Incharge, Rajinder Chib, Pardeep Choudhary, Surinder Singh, Suresh Salgotra, Anil Balgotra, Ashok Salgotra, Rakesh Thakrey, Tirth Ram, Hukam Chand Dogra, Rakesh Mandal and Ajay Kashyap paid loral



tributes on the occasion.

Munish Sharma, BJP Senior Leader while paying tribute on this occasion said that Ram Chander Vidyarthi was born on 01 April 1929 to Shri Babulal Prajapati and Mata Motirani, in the village Nautan Hathiyagarh, situated in the Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. He had an ardent passion for the cause of the freedom movement as early as studying in seventh standard. Mahatma Gandhi had declared the Quit India Movement on 09 August 1942. A large number of people of District Deoria also participated in masses in the Quit India Movement. Ram Chander Vidyarthi who was in 7th class showed great resentment against British Rule and along with his friends reached the District Headquarter on 14 August 1942 and hoisted the Indian Tricolour Flag on the top of office of District Magistrate. When after a lot of warning from British authorities, he didn't respond, the British Army opened fire. In which Ram Chander Vidyarthi martyred for the sake of Nation to make the Quit India Movement a success. In the History, Ram Chan-

der Vidyarthi was the only who laid his life for the Nation at the very young age of 13 years.

Munish Sharma further stated that in the Memory of Ram Chander Vidyarthi a Pillar has been raised with a plate carved the name of Ram Chander Vidyarthi, near the Ram Lila Maidan of Deoria. The name of Ram Chander Vidyarthi is included in the list of the Martyrs of freedom fighters with very less age from Purvanchal. It is a matter of great pride of the Nation for his great sacrifice for the sake of the Nation in the Freedom struggle.

JKPSA urges age relaxation for class 1st admissions in 2025-26

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

To discuss age criteria for the admission of the students in class 1st for the academic session 2025-26 in both government and private schools a meeting was organized by Rashpal Singh (President District Kathua).

During the meeting it was highlighted by the members that the children who had been admitted at the age of 2+ in nursery class now have completed three years in the pre-primary level. They are in the age group of 5+ years and withholding admission of all such students in the same class by a year for not completing their age 6+ on or before March 31st



of the academic year will attribute a loss of their academic year.

They also showed their helplessness to convince all those parents who are pressurizing the school authorities to promote their children in the next higher class although their children are under age by four to six months.

President of the association Ajay Gupta briefed the members that NEP -2020 was implemented in JKUT from the academic session 2022-23. The matter for the implementation of NEP gradually and in the phased manner was demanded in JKUT. School Education Department gave relaxation of 06 months to the

students (i.e. students completing 06 years of age up to September 30) in the previous academic sessions 2023 & 2024-25.

Ajay Gupta appealed to the government to relax the age criteria for the admission of the students to the class 1st for the academic session 2025-26 as one time exception for the larger interest of the society on the similar pattern of age relaxation extended by some other states of India.

Those who attended the meeting included Satpal Mansotra (General Secretary JKPSA Jammu), Dr Madan Mohan Sharma (Organizer JKPSA Jammu), Er Naresh Kumar, Rajeev Jasorotia, Vivek Mehra, Jasvir Singh, Chain Singh etc.

Ch. Vikram inaugurates Lane, Drain Work at Pacca Talab, Bahu Fort

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

In a major step towards improving local infrastructure, MLA Bahu Ch. Vikram Randhawa inaugurated the much-awaited lane and drain construction work at Pacca Talab, Ward No. 47, Bahu Fort. The project, sanctioned at a cost of 38.93 lakh, aims to enhance road connectivity and drainage facilities, addressing long-standing civic concerns in the area.

The inauguration ceremony witnessed the presence of key officials and community representatives, including AEE Rajan Mengi, JE Pranav Shivgotra, former Councillor Sharda Devi, Rajeev Charak, Parshotam Lal, Vivek Patyal, Ankush Khajuria, Ajay Kumar, Hardeep Khokher, and other dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Ch. Vikram Randhawa reiterated his commitment to strengthening civic infrastructure and ensuring holistic development in Bahu.

"This project is a reflection of our dedication to improving basic amenities for the people. Well-



maintained lanes and proper drainage systems are essential for a clean and healthy environment. We will continue to work towards the development

of every ward under our jurisdiction," he said. Listening to Public Grievances

During his visit, MLA Ch. Vikram Randhawa

also interacted with the residents and listened to their grievances. Locals raised concerns regarding electricity supply and water shortages, highlighting the difficulties they have been facing.

Assuring the public of swift action, the MLA directed the concerned departments to address these issues on priority. He emphasized that his office is committed to resolving public grievances and improving essential services for the welfare of the people.

Residents of the area welcomed the initiative and expressed their gratitude for the much-needed improvements. The MLA assured that more developmental projects are in the pipeline to further uplift the region.

Authorities have urged residents to cooperate during the construction phase to ensure timely completion of the project.

Libraries serve as source of knowledge: Balbir Ram

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

Jammu and Kashmir BJP Spokesperson and former Vice Chairperson, Balbir Ram Rattan, said that libraries have long been regarded as the source of knowledge, culture, and inspiration.

He stated this while discussing the importance and need of a well maintained library with a group of party leaders at Nanaji Deshmukh Library.

Balbir Ram Rattan said that an institution that house an extensive collection of resources, including books, manuscripts, digital materials, provide an invaluable platform for individuals of all ages to read, learn, and grow. They serve as dynamic mines of knowledge, offering opportunities to explore, discover, and create.

"A library is more than just a building filled with books. It is a repository of history, culture, and wisdom accumulated over centuries. Libraries offer access to knowledge that spans diverse fields such as literature, science, technology, history, and art",



he said.

Balbir further said that the significance of libraries even extends beyond the accumulation of knowledge. They play a critical role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting literacy. Through curated collections, libraries present the rich and varied experiences of humanity, offering insights into the lives and contributions of great leaders, thinkers, and innovators from different eras and regions. The stories of great leaders, their

struggles, successes, and philosophies are preserved within library walls, offering invaluable lessons and inspiration to generations.

Prof. Kulbhushan Mohtra, Incharge, Nanaji Deshmukh Library, shared that the Nanaji Deshmukh Library has books on all subjects and lives of prominent Indian figures of different fields. He said that many scholars and researchers visit Nanaji Deshmukh Library to read books of subjects of their choice and research field.

Prof. Kulbhushan Mohtra said that libraries empower individuals by providing access to information regardless of socio-economic status. They offer a welcoming environment where people can engage in lifelong learning, conduct research, and develop new skills. With the advent of digital technology, libraries have also evolved to offer online resources, e-books, and virtual learning opportunities, thereby expanding their reach and relevance.

Fire breaks out in Handwara village, two houses damaged

J1 NEWS SERVICE
HANDWARA, APRIL 1

A fire broke out on Tuesday morning in the Hatchmarg village of North Kashmir's Handwara, causing damage to at least two residential houses.

According to local sources, the fire originated in the house of Jahangir Ahmad Badhana and quickly spread to an adjacent house.

Upon noticing the blaze, the Army personnel

from the nearby Haphruda camp of 2 RAJPUT promptly alerted the Fire and Emergency Services team at Chowkibal. Fire tenders, along with assistance from the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and local residents, managed to bring the fire under control, preventing any loss of life.

In a humanitarian gesture, the Army's Hafrud camp of 2 RAJPUT provided immediate relief to the



affected families, including food, ration supplies, blankets, and other essential items.

Authorities have initiated an investigation to determine the cause of the fire.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Amit Shah's J&K visit...

some projects," Abdullah said.

A combing operation is underway at the Panjtirthi site in Kathua to track down three terrorists who escaped after a brief encounter with security forces late on Monday, officials said.

Asked if Shah's visit was a sign of an improved relationship between the Union Territory government and the Centre, Chief Minister Abdullah said this was not the first time that the home minister was visiting Jammu and Kashmir.

"He (Shah) has come here before and he will continue to come. When I was the chief minister of the (erstwhile) state, home ministers used to come here then as well. P Chidambaram and (Sushil Kumar) Shinde also came, so it is not a big deal," he said.

"These visits should continue, our talks with him (Shah) are on. He has tried to help Jammu and Kashmir in the last few months. Last year, we asked for some more money and we got that money. This time also, we are hoping that the Centre will provide whatever help Jammu and Kashmir needs," Abdullah said.

DGP, IGP visit Kathua...

encounter with security forces on Monday night, the officials said.

He took a walk through the riverine and mountainous belt to back his men engaged in one of longest drawn operations.

The operation, led by the Special Operations Group (SOG), Army, and CRPF, has entered its tenth day. Last Thursday, two terrorists were killed, and four police personnel lost their lives in the encounter in the Saniyal area of the district.

Security forces are continuing their search to neutralise any remaining threats.

The officials said the three terrorists are believed to be from a group that had its first face-off with security forces in the Nursery area near the International Border on March 23. All of the terrorists had managed to escape.

Four days later, security forces engaged them in an encounter in a forest area of the Sanyal belt of Kathua when two terrorists were eliminated, and the rest managed to flee. During this exchange of fire, four policemen were also killed and three others injured.

With the hiding terrorists changing their locations in the jungle, the security forces have launched a multi-agency operation to track them down.

The search operation was intensified early on Monday morning with aerial surveillance and sniffer dogs being deployed, culminating into a fresh encounter in the night. A night cordon was laid to ensure that the three terrorists holed-up in the forests do not escape, sources said late on Monday.

CM flags off free...

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah highlighted that this initiative is more than just a welfare measure—it is a bold step towards women's empowerment and inclusive development.

"Starting today, women across Jammu and Kashmir will travel free of cost in all Smart City and SRTC buses. This isn't just about affordability; it's about accessibility, safety, and creating an environment where women feel empowered to travel freely. Our vision is to make J&K a model of inclusive growth where no woman is held back due to mobility constraints," he said.

The Chief Minister also referred to his Budget Speech, in which he had announced free ridership for women in government transport, including Smart City e-buses.

"During the budget, we made a special announcement for women that our RTC buses and Smart City e-buses would be free to use after 1st April. Today, we started the service with the hope that it will be easier for them to travel, whether it is for education, shopping, work or sightseeing," Omar Abdullah said.

"We hope that they will be able to travel all over Jammu and Kashmir in a safe environment," he remarked. The scheme, which was first announced on March 7 during the Chief Minister's Budget Speech, is part of a broader series of pro-women and pro-poor initiatives aimed at fostering social and economic empowerment.

Accompanying the Chief Minister at the launch event were Minister for Social Welfare Sakeena Itoo, Minister for Transport Satish Sharma, Advisor to CM Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Zadibal Tanveer Sadiq, along with senior government officials, including Commissioner Secretary Housing & Urban Development, Transport Commissioner J&K, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (who is also CEO Srinagar Smart City Limited), Deputy Commissioner Srinagar and Managing Director State Road Transport Corporation.

Zojila Pass opened...

extreme conditions, battling sub-zero temperatures, high-velocity winds, and avalanche-prone terrain, to clear the snow in a record 15 days, between March 17 and March 31, it said.

Every year, the formidable Pass experiences heavy snowfall, forcing its closure during the harsh winter months.

"This temporary closure impacts not only the move-

ment of troops and essential supplies but also disrupts the daily lives of the local population in Ladakh, which depends on this route for trade, medical support, and economic activities.

"Due to technological advancements, improved snow-clearance techniques, and the relentless efforts of BRO, this closure period has been drastically reduced from about six months a few decades ago to a few weeks now," the ministry said.

The reopening of Zojila Pass is a testament to the dedication of BRO, which has Project Beacon in Kashmir and Project Vijayak in Ladakh to ensure timely restoration of connectivity on this strategic pass, it said.

LG attends Odisha Day...

and prosperity of the people of this blessed land," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He paid tributes to the great luminaries from Odisha and spoke on the contributions of various communities of the state to the country's folk, literature, handicrafts, customs and traditions.

"Odisha boasts rich literary tradition, incredibly diverse cuisine, architectural heritage, handloom and handicrafts, sacred festivals like Rath Yatra and it has also contributed three distinct schools of dance to the rich culture of India.

The state is writing a new saga of progress. The people are contributing enthusiastically in this development journey. I am confident that Odisha will play a leading role in the journey towards developed India," the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG Sinha pays obeisance...

prosperity in the union territory, officials said. Around one lakh pilgrims have visited the shrine since the start of the Chaitra Navratri, according to officials from the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

In view of the heavy rush of pilgrims, tight security arrangements, including AI-enabled CCTV cameras and drones, have been deployed at the base camp of the bhawan and along the route to avert any untoward incidents.

GoC meets LG...

operational areas of Kathua, Samba and parts of Jammu districts, including the International Border belts in J-K.

During the meeting, the Lieutenant General also discussed various important aspects of security with the Lieutenant Governor, the officials said.

Lt Gen Sharawat was accompanied by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Tiger Division, Major General Mukesh Bhanwala.

The meeting holds significant importance in light of the ongoing 10-day operation in Kathua district, during which two terrorists were killed, four police personnel lost their lives and three others, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), sustained injuries.

Search operations...

The areas where these operations were conducted include hinterland and border areas such as Behramgalla-Chatran Sailan, Kala Jhoola, and Nakka Nar forest in Gursai Mastandara Jabri and Chajala-Seagi areas of Mankote.

Lt Gen Mishra...

PRO Defence Jammu posted on X. It further said, "the Corps Commander urged all ranks to uphold the highest standards of operational excellence and continue fostering peace and stability in the region.

NHAI hikes toll...

plazas and 180 are concessionaire-operated toll plazas.

The revised rates will affect the commuters of key routes across the country, including Delhi-Meerut Expressways, Eastern Peripheral Expressway, and Delhi-Jaipur Highway, among others.

Combing Op underway...

with multiple agencies engaged in the effort, officials said.

The area was placed under a cordon after the Monday night gunfire between police and terrorists.

The officials said the three terrorists are believed to be from a group that had its first face-off with security forces in the Nursery area near the International Border on March 23. All of the terrorists had managed to escape.

Four days later, security forces engaged them in an encounter in a forest area of the Sanyal belt of Kathua when two terrorists were eliminated, and the rest managed to flee. During this exchange of fire, four policemen were also killed and three others injured.

With the hiding terrorists changing their locations in the jungle, the security forces have launched a multi-agency operation to track them down.

The search operation was intensified early on Monday

morning with aerial surveillance and sniffer dogs being deployed, culminating into a fresh encounter in the night. A night cordon was laid to ensure that the three terrorists holed-up in the forests do not escape, sources said late on Monday.

The operation to track and eliminate the terrorists resumed Thursday with officials saying security has been reinforced in the area to strengthen the cordon and prevent the ultras from escaping "Search and destroy operations were launched at first light on Tuesday morning. Operations in progress", the Army's rising star corps said on its X handle.

"Acting on intelligence inputs, multiple surveillance-cum-ambushes were deployed in general area Panjtirthi Kathua by Indian Army, Police and CRPF. Suspicious movement was observed on the night of 31 March, leading to an exchange of fire," it added.

On Monday, the operation – by a team of officers from the Army, Police, NSG, CRPF, and BSF – was carried out in the forested belts of Rui, Juthana, Ghati, and Sanyal in the Rajbagh region, as well as parts of Billawar, officials said.

The night before, three suspicious persons dressed in black robes and carrying bags had entered the house of a villager, named Shanker, in Rui village and asked a lone elderly woman for water.

Before fleeing, they barged into her kitchen and took away 'rotis' and 'sabzi'. They also tried to give her two Rs 500 notes before escaping. She refused.

Security agencies say it is difficult for terrorists to survive without a network of overground workers (OGWs) who provide them with food, shelter, and guidance.

The forces have picked up six persons, including some women from one family, for questioning, as it is alleged they provided assistance to terrorists operating in the region, the officials said.

The detained individuals allegedly belong to the family of suspected overground worker (OGW) Mohammad Latief, who is already in jail under the Public Safety Act (PSA), for aiding terrorists in Malhar during an attack on an Army truck last year, in which six soldiers lost their lives. The slain terrorist Abu Tala is also believed to have stayed at Latief's house.

CS delineates sector-wise...

He also asked for creation of Master Plans focusing the systematic development of our urban Centres that is in sync with future needs and sustainable in nature.

Duloo enquired about the identified areas and the relevant government departments responsible for implementation of the same. He enjoined upon them to take up their task as a time-bound exercise with its implementation regularly monitored at the highest level.

Commissioner Secretary, I&C Department, Vikramjit Singh, informed that a bundle of 23 key priority areas had been identified to drive economic growth, improve regulatory efficiency and promote ease of doing business as per the guidelines. He revealed that these reforms focus on urban development, labor laws, environmental clearances and industrial facilitation. He also provided an in-depth analysis of these priorities and their implications to be obtained on ground.

Regarding flexible zoning framework, it was given out that the Housing and Urban Development and the Revenue Departments had to implement a flexible zoning system, allowing mixed-use of land for developments to enhance urban planning.

To streamline land use conversions, it was added that a comprehensive digital system will be developed for document submission and approval. It was also revealed that the Public Works and the Rural Development Departments (RDD) will revise minimum road width requirements for rural industries to improve the infrastructure accessibility.

The meeting was further informed that an integrated GIS database will be created for industrial land in the UT, linked with the India Industrial Land Bank (IILB). This will improve the land availability and bring in transparency in its judicious use and allotment for different purposes.

The meeting also discussed amendments to building regulations for reducing land loss in industrial and commercial plots, facilitating better utilization of space.

Other significant priority areas discussed in the meeting included gender-inclusive labour reforms that will remove prohibitions on women working in hazardous industries and permit night-time employment across sectors.

Similarly the reforms involved third-party certification for environmental compliance enhancing transparency in environmental regulations. Simplification and streamlined licensing process, fast-tracking of utility approvals like that of electricity and water connections, including groundwater usage is part of these reforms in the UT.

Other reform measures under EoDB constitutes reclassification of non-polluting industries, third-party fire inspections, state-level legal reforms similar to Jan Vishwas Act, third-party inspections for businesses along with Single Window System for all state-level services linked to the National Single Window System (NSWS), ensuring seamless approvals and easy services for the citizenry across all districts of the UT.

J&K 1947 PoJK Sharnarathi Intellectual Forum elects new team



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 01

The All J&K 1947 PoJK Sharnarathi Intellectual Forum convened a General Body Meeting under the leadership of its outgoing President, Advocate Amrik Singh, to elect a new executive body. The meeting was attended by distinguished members, intellectuals, and community representatives committed to the cause of PoJK Sharnarathi.

The house unanimously appointed Prof K. D. Singh as the Returning Officer. Following the dissolution of the previous executive

body, Prof Singh initiated the election process. Senior Forum member Naseeb Singh proposed Advocate Amrik Singh's name for the President's post, seconded by Surjeet Singh. The house unanimously re-elected Advocate Amrik Singh, authorizing him to constitute the new executive team.

Newly appointed Office-bearers; President-Advocate Amrik Singh, Senior Vice President-Paramjeet Singh (Ex-Corporator), Vice President-Naseeb Singh, General Secretary-Kuldeep Singh,

Joint Secretary-Dr. Surjeet Singh, Chief Advisor-Er. T K Sharma, Chief Spokesperson-Charanjeet Singh, Chief Cashier-Paramjeet Singh Shangari, Cashier-Kuldeep Singh (Kukku), In-Charge Core Committee-Prof. K D Singh, Media In-Charge-Surjeet Singh, Press In-Charge-Jagdish Chander Sharma, Youth Wing President-J P Singh, General Secretary (Youth Wing)-Gurdeep Singh, Secretary (Youth Wing)-Sukhpreet Singh, Protocol In-Charge-Ranjit Singh, Spokesperson-Ramesh Gandhi.

Additionally, 32 core committee members were elected to strengthen the Forum's operations.

President Amrik Singh expressed gratitude for the trust placed in him and reaffirmed his commitment to advancing the Forum's objectives. He emphasized unity and strategic action to secure justice, rehabilitation, and development opportunities for the PoJK Sharnarathi community. The Forum remains dedicated to addressing socio-political and economic challenges faced by displaced families.

MASTA extends congrats to Dr. Hamid Zargar on his appointment as Director Health Services, Jammu



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 01

The Medical and Allied Sciences Teachers Association (MASTA) extends its warmest congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Hamid Zargar on his well-deserved appointment as the Director Health Services, Jammu.

Your dedication, vast experience, and commitment to public health make you the perfect choice for this pivotal role. We are confident that under your visionary leadership, the healthcare system in Jammu will witness new heights of excellence and service to the community.

May your tenure be marked by innovative initiatives, strengthened healthcare infrastructure, and continued welfare of the people.

Police Cracks Down on Reckless Driving in Sopore

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SOPORE, APR 1

April 01: Police in Sopore have seized 10 two-wheelers in a crackdown on reckless driving and traffic violations. The vehicles were seized for various offenses including stunt riding, driving without a license, lack of vehicle documents, and riding without helmets.

The police action aims to ensure road safety and enforce traffic discipline in the area. The seized vehicles will be released through the Hon'ble Court only after valid documents are produced and applicable fines are paid.

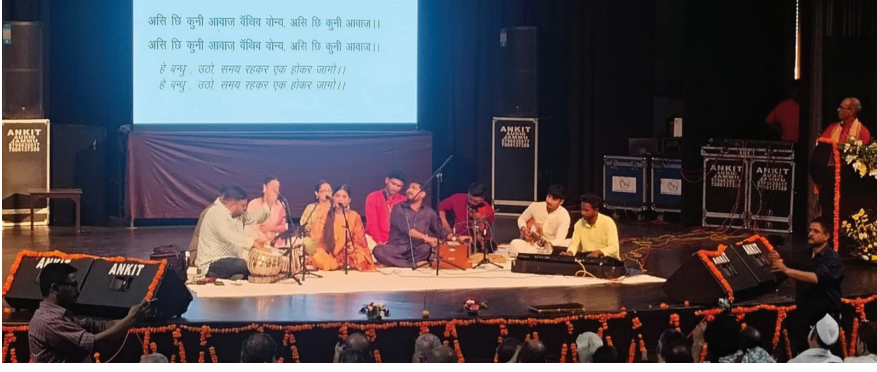
J&K Police urge all motorists to follow traffic rules and regulations and always wear helmets while riding two-wheelers. J&K police will continue to take strict action against traffic violators to prevent accidents and ensure a safe driving environment.

Navreh Mahotsav 2025 concludes at Abhinav Theatre; KPs celebrate heritage, resolve

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

The vibrant three-day "Navreh Mahotsav 2025," organized by Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra (SSK), concluded this evening with a grand closing ceremony held at the jam-packed Abhinav Theatre in Jammu. The event marked the culmination of festivities celebrating the Kashmiri Hindu New Year, honouring cultural heritage, and reinforcing the community's collective spirit. A large number of Hindus, particularly Kashmiri Pandits (KPs), along with prominent luminaries from the community and wider society, attended the finale.

The Mahotsav, which commenced on March 29th, spanned three core days dedicated to significant themes. The first day, March 29th, was observed as Tyaag Divas, commemorating the selfless sacrifice of the revered 15th-century scholar and physician,



Acharya Pandit Shreya Bhat. Numerous meetings and events were held across Jammu, Kashmir, and other parts of India like Gurugram, Dehradun, and Bangalore, reflecting on his contributions.

March 30th was observed as Navreh Sankalp Divas, a day dedicated to reaffirming the community's resolve (Sankalp) to return to their homeland. Collective and individual pledge ceremonies took place in homes, temples like Mata Baderkali Thawal, community halls like Sanskriti Bhawan Roop Nagar (organized by Vive-

kananda Kendra Nagdandi), and various locations globally. The third day, March 31st, was celebrated as Shaurya Divas, honouring the valour and legacy of the great 8th-century emperor, Samrat Lalitaditya. Throughout the Mahotsav, online essay and video competitions engaged the youth, focusing on the lives of Pandit Shreya Bhat and Samrat Lalitaditya, with active participation and discussions spreading across social media platforms.

The concluding ceremony today served as a fitting finale to the Mahotsav. The

event featured enriching cultural performances that showcased the rich traditions of the Kashmiri Pandit community. The atmosphere was one of celebration, reflection, and renewed hope.

Distinguished guests graced the occasion, adding significance to the closing ceremony. Shri Prafulla Ketkar Ji, Senior Journalist and Editor of Organiser Weekly, attended as the Chief Guest. Mahamandaleshwar Shri Rameshwar Das Ji from Ram Mandir, Purani Mandi, Jammu and Dr Arvind Karwani, Relief



and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) were present as the Special Guests.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Guest Shri Prafulla Ketkar Ji lauded the community's resilience and the efforts of Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra in preserving and promoting cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of remembering roots while looking towards the future.

He quoted history to emphasize how rich Kashmiri culture, tradition, and contributions to the world were, citing Samrat Lalitaditya, who expanded

his kingdom to an extent no less than that of the Mughal Empire. He urged the KPs to fight the narrative instead of fighting people, stating that a created narrative had turned oppressors into victims and victims into oppressors.

The Special Guest, Mahamandaleshwar Shri Rameshwar Das Ji, extended his blessings to the community, highlighting the spiritual significance of Navreh and commending the collective resolve shown during the Sankalp Divas, invoking hope and divine grace for the com-

munity's aspirations.

Also addressing the gathering, Dr. Arvind Karwani, Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants), praised the vibrant cultural display and the strong sense of community evident at the event. He acknowledged the vital role of organizations like SSK in fostering unity and cultural continuity among the displaced community.

The grand finale of the Navreh Mahotsav witnessed a jam-packed Abhinav Theatre, with prominent state dignitaries and a large gathering of Kashmiri

Pandits attending the concluding function. Dr. MK Bharat, Chairman of Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra, conducted the stage proceedings, while Kuldeep Sudeshi presented the vote of thanks.

Nine children who won the online video and essay writing competitions were also felicitated on the occasion. Kashmiri Pandit (KP) organizations that extended their full support during the three-day event were also felicitated by the Chief Guest and special guests.

Artists from Sanskar Bharati performed the soulful song 'Wathiv Wani', which was also officially released during the event.

The successful culmination of the Navreh Mahotsav 2025 shows the unwavering spirit of the Kashmiri Pandit community and its deep connection to its cultural and historical legacy, as fostered by organizations like Sanjeevani Sharda Kendra.

ABVP slams govt for 7% fare hike, demands concessions for students

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad Jammu Kashmir has expressed concern over the Jammu and Kashmir government's recent decisions, which have raised questions about governance and equality.

While the government's announcement of free travel for women in electric buses is a welcome move towards promoting gender equality, the 7%

fare hike may disproportionately affect students and the common people.

"We appreciate the government's efforts to empower women, but we cannot ignore the inconsistencies in their decisions," said Sannak Shrivats, State Secretary of ABVP Jammu Kashmir. Sannak also added, "The government should reconsider the 7% fare hike and explore alternative solutions that do not burden the common people. The government

should provide concessions to students in electric buses to promote education and equality. The government should ensure that their decisions are consistent and do not contradict each other.

"The fare hike will disproportionately affect students, who are already struggling to make ends meet. We urge the government to reconsider their decisions and provide concessions to students and other deserving sections

of society," added Sannak Shrivats.

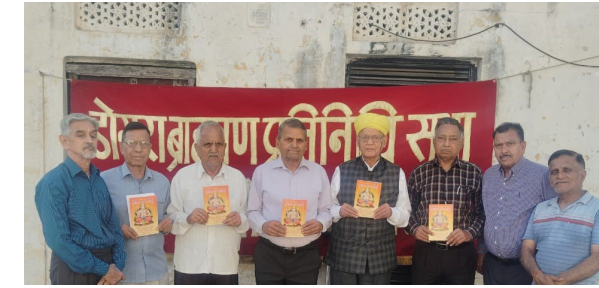
Moreover, it's surprising that the government doesn't offer a 50% concession to students in electric buses. This raises questions about the government's priorities and commitment to promoting education and equality. ABVP Jammu Kashmir hopes that the government will take their demands seriously and work towards creating a more equitable and just society.

Religious Festival Calendar Released by Dogra Brahman Pratinidhi Sabha

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

A calendar book informing about religious festivals and events during the year, published by Mandir Shri Geeta Bhawan, Railway Colony, Krishna Ganj Delhi, was released here today by Ved Parkash Sharma, president of Dogra Brahman Pratinidhi Sabha.

The book, written by prominent writers Gopal Sharma and Ram Parshad Sharma, was released during a function organized by the Dogra Brahman Pratinidhi Sabha in collaboration with other social and cultural organizations. Chairman of



the DBPS Advocate P.C. Sharma presided over the function while Former Deputy Commissioner B.S. Jamwal, NMC President Subash Shastri were the guests of honour. The publisher announced that about five thousand copies of the book will be distributed among people of Jammu so that they can

have a knowledge about the religious activities taking place around the year. Jammu travel packages.

Speaking on the occasion, Ved Parkash Sharma disclosed that writers of the book have an association with the Brahman Sabha. He hoped that management committee of the Mandir Shri Geeta Bhawan

shall continue to cooperate in future also.

DBPS Sabha vice-president, Virendar Mohan Magotra, Satyanand Sharma, Jagan Nath Sharma, Nanak Chand Sharma, M.L. Sharma, Ramesh Sharma, M.L. Padha, Gurdas Sharma, Brita Ram, Sujanya Sharma, S.S. Baru, Prem Balotra, Sunil Sharma, Rajesh Badgotra, Ritiz Khajuria, Devinder Sharma (Baboo), Sanjiv Kerni, K.L. Sharma, Satpal Sharma, Bubesh Thapa, Raman Sharma, Rajesh Sharma and representatives of the various social religious organizations were present on the occasion.

Dr. P S Pathania assumes charge as President of J&K Dharmarth Trust

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

Dr. Parshotam Singh Pathania today assumed charge as the President of the J&K Dharmarth Trust at the Trust's Central Office in Jammu. He was warmly welcomed by the Trust's Secretary Ashok Kumar Sharma (IPS Retd), Additional Secretary Varinder Singh Jamwal, and the dedicated staff members of the Trust.

After assuming office, the President chaired an introductory meeting with the Trust's staff, where he outlined his vision for the future of the organization.

During his address, Dr. Parshotam Singh Pathania emphasized the vital role of inclusivity and unity within the J&K Dharmarth Trust.



"Today is a significant day, and it is essential for us to involve all stakeholders in our journey. Our narrative must center around inclusiveness. We must work with a shared vision and commitment to elevate the Trust to new heights of service and excellence," he said.

Dr. Pathania highlighted that fostering an environment of unity, where every member and stakeholder feels valued,

would be fundamental to the Trust's success. By working together with a common purpose, he expressed his belief that the Trust could not only strengthen its existing initiatives but also embark on new avenues for growth and service to the community.

Dr. Pathania further reaffirmed his unwavering commitment to upholding the core values of the Trust, including its dedica-

tion to selfless service and the promotion of cultural and spiritual traditions. He emphasized that the Trust's contributions to the community would be enriched by maintaining a deep respect for the diverse social and cultural fabric of Jammu and Kashmir. He also acknowledged the importance of preserving the region's cultural heritage, pledging to ensure that the Trust plays an integral role in safeguarding the historical, religious, and cultural landmarks that define the identity of the region.

Before assuming office, Dr. Pathania also visited the revered Shree Raghunath Ji Temple, where he paid obeisance and sought blessings for the success of his tenure at the helm of the Trust.

Distribution of Blankets to Gujjar and Bakkarwals at Jhalamang, Rajouri

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, APRIL 1

In a humanitarian effort to support underprivileged communities, Indian Army at Samote distributed blankets to Gujjar and Bakkarwals in Jhalamang. The Gujjar and Bakkarwal communities known for their nomadic lifestyle often endure extreme cold conditions during transhumance. This welfare initiative aims to provide relief to the residents facing harsh weather conditions, ensuring their well-being and comfort. By extending a helping hand, the Indian Army seeks to ease their hard-



ships and reaffirm its commitment to their welfare. Such efforts strengthen the deep-rooted bond between the Indian Army and local communities, fostering trust, cooperation and mutual respect while encouraging social harmony and inclusivity.

The Indian Army remains committed to the welfare and upliftment of marginalised communities. By distributing blankets to Gujjar and Bakkarwal families, the Indian Army seeks to alleviate hardships and ensure their well-being. This initia-

tive not only provides much needed assistance but also reinforces trust and cooperation between the Indian Army and the local communities. A total number of 15 people availed the benefit of distribution of blankets. Sarpanchs, Panchs and prominent locals thanked and expressed their profound gratitude towards the Indian Army for distribution of blankets to the poor and needy at Jhalamang. This initiative of the Indian Army will go a long way in the overall development of the society and cementing of existing strong bond between The Indian Army and the Awam.

Indian Army conducts Medical Patrol for Youth at Chassana, Reasi

JI NEWS SERVICE
REASI

In a continued effort to serve and support the local population in remote areas, the Indian Army conducted a medical patrol for the local population at Chassana. This initiative aimed to provide essential healthcare services to the residents of this geographically challenging region. A dedicated team of Indian Army medical personnel, including doctors and paramedics, reached out to the community, offer-



ing much-needed medical consultations, treatment and free distribution of medicines. The medical patrol focused on addressing prevalent health issues, raising awareness on hygiene and disease prevention and ensuring

access to primary healthcare services for the underserved population. Residents of Chassana and surrounding areas, who often face difficulties in accessing healthcare due to terrain and logistical constraints, benefitted

significantly from this initiative. The Indian Army remains committed to its mission of supporting local communities and strengthening the bond between the armed forces and the people. The outreach program was well received by the local population, who expressed their gratitude for the Indian Army's unwavering support and humanitarian efforts. The Indian Army continues to stand by the citizens, providing assistance beyond its call of duty in areas that need it the most.

Condolence meeting on untimely demise of Adv. Adil Rangrez organized

JI NEWS SERVICE
DODA, APRIL 1

The sudden and untimely passing of Advocate Adil Rangrez due to cardiac arrest has left a deep void in the legal and academic circles. A proud Alig and a valuable asset to the community, Adil Rangrez was known for his intellect, dedication, and contributions to society.



To honor his memory, the Chenab Valley AMU Students Association organized a condolence meeting, where several dignitaries and well-wishers, including Nasir Suharwardi, Shahab Ul Haque Butt, Jamshed Zargar, Ayaz Mughal, Tanveer Wani, Farooq Khan,

and others, came together to pay their respects.

The attendees remembered Adil Rangrez for his unwavering commitment to justice and education, acknowledging his immense contributions. They extended their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for strength and patience for his loved ones in this difficult time.

EDITORIAL

Strengthening the Legal Framework in Jammu and Kashmir

The Government of India has undertaken significant measures to ensure the seamless implementation of the three new criminal laws in Jammu and Kashmir. These efforts, aimed at modernizing the legal framework, underscore a commitment to justice, transparency, and efficiency in law enforcement and judicial processes. The comprehensive approach adopted, from training programs to technological integration, marks a decisive step towards strengthening the rule of law in the Union Territory.

A key aspect of this initiative is the establishment of a Steering Committee under the Chief Secretary and an Empowered Committee under the Director General of Police (DGP). These bodies are tasked with overseeing the implementation process, ensuring that all administrative and legal measures align with the intended objectives. Their role in monitoring and guiding the process is crucial to mitigating challenges that may arise during this transition.

Training remains a cornerstone of this initiative. The extensive training programs conducted at various police institutions and training centers reflect the government's emphasis on capacity-building. So far, an impressive 975 Gazetted Officers, 60,890 police personnel, and 254 Judicial Officers have received training, with additional personnel undergoing specialized training at the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), Gandhinagar. Furthermore, the use of the iGoT Karmayogi platform has facilitated large-scale digital learning, ensuring that officers remain well-versed with the nuances of the new laws.

Another commendable step is the translation of these new laws into Urdu, Dogri, and Kashmiri. This linguistic accessibility will bridge the gap between legal provisions and public understanding, fostering a more informed citizenry. Additionally, the Jammu and Kashmir Police, in collaboration with other government departments, has initiated awareness programs across all 282 blocks of the region. The second and fourth weeks of every month are dedicated to public outreach, reinforcing the participatory nature of legal reform.

Technological advancements have also played a pivotal role in streamlining legal procedures. The integration of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) with functionalities such as e-Sakshya (audio-video recording application), e-summons, and automated notifications exemplifies the move towards a more efficient and transparent criminal justice system. These digital enhancements are expected to expedite case processing and enhance accountability.

Ensuring the effectiveness of these new laws requires continuous oversight. The government has instituted a rigorous monitoring mechanism, with fortnightly reviews by the Chief Secretary and weekly assessments by the Principal Secretary (Home), the DGP, and senior police officials. These frequent evaluations reflect a proactive approach in addressing potential gaps and reinforcing compliance.

While these measures signal a progressive shift, challenges remain. Effective implementation hinges on sustained training, public awareness, and infrastructural support. The success of these reforms will ultimately be measured by their impact on crime reduction, judicial efficiency, and public confidence in law enforcement.

The government's proactive stance in Jammu and Kashmir sets a precedent for legal reforms across India. By combining administrative diligence, technological integration, and grassroots engagement, the region is poised for a more robust and effective criminal justice system. As these laws take full effect, it is imperative to maintain momentum, ensuring that legal reforms translate into tangible benefits for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

OMKAR DATTATRAY

On the motion of thanks for LG Manoj Sinaha's address to the assembly commotion unfolded when PDP legislator Waheed -ur-Rehman Para raised the issueless issue of restoring holiday for July 13, commemorating the so called martyrs in his view and as per the biased view of the traditional and regional parties such as NC,PDP ,PC,AIP and so on and so forth. The fact of the matter is that those bracketed as martyrs by the Kashmir based political parties are in true sense rioters and anti-social as well as anti-national elements who indulged in riots and created fear psychosis among the minorities and worked against the then Dogra rulers and so calling them martyrs is in fact to the fine and beautiful word and status martyr and thus cannot and should not be called martyrs as they do not qualify to be called martyrs by any stretch of imagination leave alone on the basis of myopic ,narrow and biased view. There was communal and sectarian uprising in 1931 in Srinagar Kashmir and the anti-social elements raised a revolt of banner against the then Dogra rulers forcing them to resort to unwanted firing killing several Kashmiris and thus they cannot and should not be given the status of martyrs which in fact amounts to disrespect to the very undiluted and pure word martyr. Para said the people killed on 3rd December 1931 were no communalists but

the revolutionaries who fought against the autocratic Dogra rulers. However the leader of opposition of the legislative assembly that is BJP's Sunil Sharma objected to the unjust demand of PDP,MLA Parra and countered his argument and called those killed in 1931 as traitors which infuriated the legislators of PDP,NC,AIP and others forcing the speaker Abdul Rahim Rather to order expunging of the controversial word traitor for the so called martyrs. There were heated exchanges between the NC,PDP legislators with the BJP MLA's and the action of speaker to expunge the word traitor from the proceedings of the legislative assembly resulted in the walkout of all 28 members of the BJP from the legislative assembly as protest against the decision of expunging word traitor as it was construed by speaker as being derogatory. The speaker is expected to be fair, just and neutral and he should not have ordered the expunction of the BJP MLA and the opposition leader in the assembly. The fact is that traitors, rioters, anti-social and anti-national elements and those who are involved in seditious activities against the country and the then ruler of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be given the status of martyrs and cannot be equated with martyrs and doing so by the NC,PDP,AIP, Congress and other parties is undesirable. These parties have been exploiting the gullible people of J&K especially the Kashmiris on the so called martyrs and martyrs

day -13 July. While the reality is that there is only one martyrs day in our nation and that is the 30th January 1948 the fateful day when Mahatma Gandhi was murdered by one fanatic namely Nathuram Godsea and so 30th January is every year observed as the martyrs day and there cannot be two martyrs days. There political parties espousing the demand of the restoration of holiday on 13th July are following a sectarian, regional and communal agenda but they cannot be successful in their bad intentions of fomenting sectarian, communal and anti national trouble simply for cheap publicity ,politicizing and gaining the sympathy of the gullible masses of the UT. It is so good that we have a strong pro nationalist opposition and so it will be difficult for the regional political parties and for the congress to pursue anti national ,sectarian and communal agenda. LoP Sunil Sharma deserves a pat on his back for calling so called martyrs as traitors and he should be commended for calling a spade a spade.NDA government headed by Narendra Modi has done well to have abrogated controversial and unnecessary article 370 of the constitution and thus equated J&K with other UT's and states of the country. Article 370 is a history and it has gone forever and no power on earth can restore the special status by virtue of article 370 back .All the political parties and their leaders especially the regional mainstream parties should accept and recognize this reality that

article 370 had been buried in the ground and so there is no need to follow the beaten track. There is moreover no need to for Gadhay Murday Ukhadna and the old cupboards should not be opened to seek article 370's restoration and hoodwink the people of J&K. Jammu and Kashmir government and political parties should move ahead and concentrate on delivering promises made with the electorate during elections. So the government should sit down and see seriously how can the promises made with the people of Jammu and Kashmir during the recent assembly polls be fulfilled. People have high expectations from the elected government of Omar Abdullah and he and his government should make concerted efforts in the direction of meeting the promises to the people. Thus no futile and non-issue should be raked and raised by the legislators and instead they should cooperate with the government in fulfilling the poll promises otherwise people will feel let down and deceived and they will have the impression that there is hardly any difference between the LG dispensation and the duly elected government. Leader of opposition Sunil Sharma has rightly said that article 370 is a closed chapter and history. So sooner the political parties appreciate and accept this reality is better for the people of J&K and for governance. There is a dichotomy in our politics and contradictions are galore and one man's martyr is another man's traitor. Simi-

larly one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist and there are no good and bad terrorists .Terrorism,extremism and fundamentalism cannot be justified in any form and on any ground and pretext whatsoever. There is hardly any need of hypocrisy over dead issues and political parties should desist from this. It is absurd ,ridiculous and humbug to raise sectarian ,communal ,dead issues and the hypocrisy of NC,PDP,PC,AIP etc has been exposed during the discussion on the reply on the motion of thanks on LG's address.BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh said it rightly that his party's stance is that July 13,1931 is a black day and a day of betrayal. He further said that BJP would continue to uphold the truth of history and counter any attempt to distort it. The political parties who follow and ad hare sectarian, regional and communal agenda are more dangerous to the nation's integrity and sovereignty than the terrorists and militants busy in seditious activities. Such political parties should be shown their place and the society should not allow them to exploit the masses on following the beaten track and emotional and communal agenda. In short there is need to differentiate between the martyrs and traitors and there is no need to claim that the traitors are martyrs as it is dangerous for the country and the people of our UT.

The author is a columnist,social,KP activist &Freelancer

Delhi budget: Big push for capital spending

UTTAM GUPTA

In her first budget as Chief Minister and Finance Minister of Delhi, Rekha Gupta has taken bold steps to increase capital expenditure, signalling a shift towards infrastructure-led growth

In the Budget for the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi for the financial year (FY) 2025-26 presented on March 24, 2025, Rekha Gupta the Chief Minister (she also holds the finance portfolio) has done 'heavy lifting' by substantially boosting capital expenditure even while making some smart moves to lower the burden of its poll pledges. At the outset, let us take a look at FY 2024-25.

For the FY 2024-25, Atishi the then finance minister under the AAP Government had budgeted for total expenditure (TE) of Rs 76,000 crore including revenue expenditure (RE) of Rs 61,000 crore and capital expenditure (CE) of Rs 15,000 crore. Against this, the revised estimate of TE has turned out to be Rs 6,500 crore less at Rs 69,500 crore. While the RE at Rs 55,500 crore is lower by Rs 5,500 crore, the capital expenditure too is down by Rs 1000 crore to Rs 14,000 crore.

The shortfall in actual expenditure over the budgeted level is a clear manifestation of poor economic management by the erstwhile AAP dispensation. On the capital side, the inability to spend even the budgeted amount shows the slow pace of project execution. Besides, the umpteen instances of irregularities and misappropriation of funds as brought out in the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) raises doubts about whether the amount spent went for the intended purpose.

The significant shortfall in spending on the revenue side also points towards serious lapses in governance.

For FY 2025-26, the incumbent Rekha Government has proposed TE of Rs 100,000 crore which is a massive Rs 30,500 crore higher than the revised estimate of Rs 69,500 crore for FY 2024-25. Out of this, the capital expenditure for FY 2025-26 at Rs 28,000 crore is double the actual for FY 2024-25 at Rs 14,000 crore. Even the RE for FY 2025-26 at Rs 72,000 crore is Rs 16,500 crore higher



than the actual for FY 2024-25 at Rs 55,500 crore – an increase of around 30 per cent.

An important criterion for testing whether a Budget is good is the proportion of the total spend it provides for capital expenditure on building assets like roads, bridges, flyovers, expressways, drainage systems, pipelines etc as this assures a regular income stream in the long-term besides providing jobs on a sustainable basis.

The capital expenditure for FY 2025-26 at Rs 28,000 crore works out to 28 per cent of the TE as against only 20 per cent for FY 2024-25. Correspondingly, the RE is down to 72 per cent during FY 2025-26 from 80 per cent during FY 2024-25.

Setting an ambitious target by itself won't be of any use unless this is accompanied by garnering the required resources to support the desired spending level. The Government has projected a total revenue of Rs 69,950 crore for the FY 2025-26. This includes tax revenue of Rs 68,700 crore (GST and VAT: Rs 49,000 crore, excise duty: Rs 7000 crore, stamp duty or registration fee: Rs 9000 crore and levies on motor vehicles: Rs

3700 crore), non-tax revenue of Rs 750 crore and other capital receipts of around Rs 500 crore.

The tax revenue for FY 2024-25 is Rs 59,200 crore (as per revised estimate), aiming at tax revenue of Rs 68,700 crore for FY 2025-26 which works out to 17 per cent more seems a bit unrealistic. Assuming this will materialise, still the estimated total revenue of Rs 69,950 crore for FY 2025-26 will fall short of even the RE resulting in a revenue deficit (RD) of Rs 2050 crore. Add to this the capital expenditure of Rs 28,000 crore, the Government could end up with a fiscal deficit (FD) of Rs 30,050 crore. But, the picture projected by Rekha Gupta is much less bleak than what these numbers would suggest.

This has been made possible by what she has termed as 'Union government's aid for capital projects'. A substantial provision of Rs 12,096 crore has been made under this head and included under 'non-tax receipts' of the Delhi budget.

This boosts the total revenue for FY 2025-26 to Rs 82,046 crore (69,950+12,096). Minus RE of Rs 72,000 crore, we get a 'revenue surplus' of Rs 10,046

crore (instead of RD of Rs 2050 crore). One wonders whether an amount received by the Delhi Government from the Centre could be justified as a 'legitimate' source of revenue earned by the former.

On the basis that this is tenable and the Delhi Government gets to a total revenue of Rs 82,046 crore, the TE being Rs 100,000 crore, it would still be left with a gap of Rs 17,954 crore.

Taking into account an 'opening balance' of Rs 2,965 crore at the start of FY 2025-26, the gap is reduced to Rs 14,989 crore or say Rs 15,000 crore. So, Delhi will still be saddled with an FD of Rs 15,000 crore for which it intends to take a loan from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF).

During the elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given several guarantees, the prominent ones being Rs 2,500 a month to women under Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY), Rs 21,000 to pregnant women, LPG cylinders at subsidised price of Rs 500 and free cylinder on Holi and Diwali, implementation of Ayushman Bharat scheme and additional cover of Rs 500,000 for senior citizens

and so on. Redeeming these promises 'in toto' would have led to a mind-boggling increase in the RE. But, a deft handling of this issue by Team Rekha has salvaged the situation.

For instance, implementing MSY as promised ie giving cash assistance of Rs 2500 per month to 'every' woman above the age of 18 years in Delhi (their number is 6700,000) would have cost the exchequer Rs 20,100 crore per annum. However, by restricting the assistance only to BPL families, it has reined in the outgo at just about one-fourth or Rs 5100 crore.

Besides having to deal with the political ramifications of not implementing its promises in toto, the Government will have a tough time managing its finances. To get a jump of around Rs 10,000 crore in Delhi's tax revenue over a high of Rs 59,000 crore achieved during FY 2024-25 will be daunting. Then, you have the highest ever fiscal deficit of Rs 15,000 crore and the cost it will entail by way of additional interest payments.

The Government can't also be oblivious of its other liabilities currently not reflected on its books. For instance, its department the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has a debt of over Rs 70,000 crore. Likewise, according to the CAG, Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) had incurred a cumulative loss of Rs 60,000 crore at the end of FY 2021-22.

These would have ballooned further during the following three FYs till the end of March 2025. The liability for servicing those debts of Rs 130,000 crore plus is vested entirely in the NCT Government.

The government will also have to reckon with regulatory assets (RAS) of power distribution companies or discoms worth Rs 27,000 crore.

RAS are created when the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commissions (DERC) accept that the tariffs don't cover discoms' purchase costs but don't raise rates. The resulting gap is booked by discoms as RA. Even as the government has vowed to protect consumers from tariff hikes, it will have to find money to pay for this massive liability. Team Rekha faces a "tough terrain" ahead.

(The author is a policy analyst. Views expressed are personal)

Legendary former captain Edwards appointed England head coach

AGENCIES
LONDON, APR 1 (UND)

The England & Wales Cricket Board has announced the appointment of Charlotte Edwards as Head Coach of the England Women's Team.

Speaking on the appointment, "I am so delighted to once again be part of the leadership of the England Women's cricket team, and I cannot wait to take this team forward and drive us to success," Edwards said.

"It means the world to me to have the three lions on my chest once again. Leading England as captain was my life for 10



years and I will forever be passionate about this team and our legacy.

We have such a talented group of players, and I am excited about working with them and improving them both as individuals

and as a team."

Since retiring from the sport in 2017, Edwards has coached around the world, across English domestic cricket and T20 leagues.

She has achieved suc-

cess with Southern Vipers in regional cricket, Southern Brave in The Hundred, Sydney Sixers in the Women's Big Bash League and most recently, Mumbai Indians in the Women's Premier League, an ICC report said.

As a player and former captain, Edwards represented her country over 300 times, winning two World Cups and lifting the Ashes five times across a 20-year career.

Her first challenge as Head Coach will be a T20I against West Indies at Canterbury on May 21. The announcement for the vacant captaincy role will be made in due course.

Ben Stokes to miss early rounds of Championship season

AGENCIES
LONDON, APR 1 (UND)

England Test captain Ben Stokes is not expected to play for Durham in the early rounds of the County Championship as he continues his recovery from hamstring surgery, says his county coach Ryan Campbell.

Stokes, 33, tore his left hamstring for a second time in five months in December and, having had surgery in the new year, has not played since.

He will not feature when the County Championship begins on Friday, nor will his Durham and England team-mate Brydon Carse, who is still recovering from the toe injury which ruled him

out of the Champions Trophy last month, the BBC reported.

"My expectation is that it'll be zero [early-season appearances] - anything

else is an added bonus," said Campbell.

"They're coming back from serious injuries. The facts are they need to get up and running by the time the Test matches start," he said.

Durham have six County Championship matches before England's first assignment of the summer - a one-off Test against Zimbabwe - begins on May 22. Stokes was initially ruled out of cricket for three months after surgery in January and a Durham appearance closer to the Zimbabwe Test has not been dismissed.

The all-rounder continued his recovery by training again at Durham on Monday. Ten days ago he posted a video on social media of him having a gentle bowl in the nets.

"He's here nearly every single day working his butt off," Campbell said.

"The guy had hamstring

surgery and was in the next day lifting weights, which I couldn't believe," he said.

"He's such a hard-working bloke. He'll do whatever it takes to be up and running for England," Campbell added.

Both as a player and leader, Stokes will be crucial to England's hopes over a huge year in Test cricket.

After Zimbabwe, England play India over five Tests and in the winter travel to Australia for the Ashes.

Stokes is also a candidate to replace Jos Buttler as England's white-ball captain. Buttler resigned after England's early exit at the Champions Trophy - a tournament Stokes missed because of his surgery.

Carse, meanwhile, established himself as a key member of England's pace attack over the winter with 27 wickets in five Tests after making his debut in

Pakistan.

An issue with nasty cuts and blisters on his left foot resurfaced during the Champions Trophy, however, meaning he had to be replaced in England's squad and was subsequently ruled out of the Indian Premier League.

"We've known about his foot problems for a year now," Campbell said.

"It's not new, but he needs to get it right if he's going to be playing a lot of Test cricket," he said.

"If we look at it, then I think Brydon Carse is probably the number one priority for England right now with what he's shown in Test cricket. He's born for that sort of stuff," Campbell said.

"There's 11 Tests over the summer and winter and I think he's going to be number one on England's list to make sure that he's ready to go for that," he added.

Vandana Katariya bids farewell to International Hockey

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1 (UND)

Indian women's hockey stalwart Vandana Katariya has officially announced her retirement from international hockey, bringing an end to an extraordinary career that spanned over 15 years.

With 320 international appearances and 158 goals to her name, Vandana leaves as the most capped player in the history of Indian women's hockey. But beyond the numbers, she leaves behind an inspiring legacy—a tale of resilience, quiet determination, and a relentless hunger to push Indian women's hockey to greater heights. The 32-year-old forward, who made her senior team debut in 2009, was an integral part of some of the most defining moments in the sport, including India's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo

2020 Olympics, where she became the first and only Indian woman to score a hat-trick at the Games.

Announcing her retirement, Vandana, who played her last match for India during the Bhubaneswar leg of the FIH Pro League 2024-25 in February, shared the mix of emotions she is experiencing.

"This decision wasn't easy, but I know it's the right time. Hockey has been my life for as long as I can remember, and wearing the Indian jersey was the greatest honour. But every journey has its course, and I leave with immense pride, gratitude, and love for the sport. Indian hockey is in great hands, and I will always be its biggest supporter," she said.

She extended her heart-



felt appreciation to everyone who played a role in her journey. "I want to thank my coaches, teammates, support staff, Hockey India, my family, and all the fans who have supported me over the years. Every cheer, every message, every word of encouragement meant the world to me."

Hailing from Roshnabad, Haridwar, Vandana's journey began like that of many young girls in India—on dusty fields, with a dream far bigger than her circumstances. Over the years, she went on to represent India in the sport's grandest arenas, including two Olympic Games (Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020), two FIH Hockey Women's World Cups (2018, 2022), three Commonwealth Games (2014, 2018, 2022), and three Asian Games (2014, 2018, 2022).

Her contributions were instrumental in India's rise in world hockey. She played a pivotal role in securing Gold medals at the Women's Asian Championships Trophy (2016, 2023) and the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup (2022), Silver medals at the Asian Games 2018, Women's Asian Champions Trophy Japan 2013, and Women's Asian Champions Trophy Donghae 2018, along with Bronze medals at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the 2014 and 2022 Asian Games, and the FIH

Hockey Pro League 2021-22.

Vandana was also a key member of India's Bronze medal-winning squad at the 2013 Junior World Cup, finishing as the team's top scorer and the tournament's third-highest goal scorer.

Apart from representing India in multiple global tournaments throughout her career, Vandana also featured in the inaugural edition of the Women's Hockey India League in 2025, playing for Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers.

Among her many achievements, Vandana's Tokyo Olympics heroics will always be remembered. Her hat-trick in a crucial 4-3 victory over South Africa helped India reach the quarterfinals and eventually finish fourth—India's best-ever performance at the Games.

Speaking about that defining moment, Vandana said, "I still get goosebumps thinking about Tokyo. The Olympics are special, and that match against South Africa was one of the most emotional games of my life. I just wanted to give everything for my team, for my country. The hat-trick was special, but more than that, it was about proving that we belonged on that stage."

For her immense contributions, Vandana was honoured with some of India's most prestigious

awards, including the Arjuna Award (2021) and the Padma Shri (2022).

She was also recognised with Hockey India Balbir Singh Sr. Award for Player of the Year (Women) in 2014, Hockey India Presidents Award for Outstanding Achievement in 2021, and Hockey India Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year 2021 and 2022 and multiple other accolades, cementing her status as one of India's finest forwards.

Hockey India President Dr. Dilip Tirkey paid tribute to Vandana's contribution, saying, "Vandana was not just a goal scorer; she was the heartbeat of the Indian attack, a tireless worker, and a leader by example. Her presence in the forward line provided India with an edge, especially in high-pressure situations and her contributions have been instrumental in the team's rise on the global stage. She has set a benchmark for future generations, and we at Hockey India are immensely proud of her achievements. We wish her the very best in her future endeavours."

Hockey India Secretary General Bhola Nath Singh also lauded her remarkable journey, stating, "Vandana's journey is nothing short of inspirational. From her early days to becoming a stalwart of Indian hockey, she has shown exceptional skill, resilience, and commitment. Her performances in crucial matches, especially at the Tokyo Olympics, will be remembered for years to come. As she takes her final bow, she leaves behind a legacy of resilience, excellence, and inspiration—one that will continue to guide the next generation of Indian hockey stars."

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ICC Men's T20 World Cup final in 2024, where they finished as runners-up to India in Barbados, following an impressive eight-match winning streak.

He also guided the 50-over team to the semi-finals of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India, an ICC report said. Overseeing the national squad in 36 One-Day Internationals and 31 T20

Internationals, Walter led the team to series victories against the Netherlands, Australia, Ireland, and Pakistan.

His final assignment was the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, where he took the Proteas to yet another semi-final, facing New Zealand in Lahore in March.

South Africa are yet to announce his replacement.

High-scoring encounter expected as RCB take on GT

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, APR 1 (UND)

A run-fest is on the cards as Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) face Gujarat Titans (GT) in the 14th match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Wednesday. With the pitch historically favouring batsmen, the average first-innings total at this venue stands at 168, but given recent trends, a target around 220-230 could be required for a competitive total.

RCB, buoyed by back-to-back victories in their opening fixtures, will be aiming to capitalise on home advantage. Gujarat Titans, having bounced back from an early defeat with a convincing win over Mumbai Indians, will look to sustain their momentum.

Virat Kohli remains the centre of attention for RCB, especially given his formidable record at this venue, where he has accumulated 3,040 runs in 89 matches at an average of



40.53. Kohli, along with Philip Salt and Rajat Patidar, forms a formidable batting lineup, which has already delivered in the tournament.

RCB's bowling unit, led by Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar, has looked sharp, with Hazlewood claiming five wickets in two games at an economy of just 5.37. Liam Livingstone and Krunal Pandya provide depth in the spin department.

For Gujarat Titans, Sai Sudharsan has emerged as the batting mainstay, having struck consecutive fifties to become the team's leading run-scorer this season. Skipper Shubman Gill, along with Jos Buttler,

will be expected to anchor the innings and deliver a substantial total.

GT's bowling attack, featuring Kagiso Rabada, Mohammed Siraj, and Prasad Krishna, has the firepower to challenge RCB's batting depth. Left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore has also impressed with his four wickets in the tournament so far.

With RCB having won both their encounters against Gujarat Titans in IPL 2024, they will enter the match as slight favourites. However, GT's potent batting order and balanced bowling attack make them a formidable opponent.

The match is scheduled to commence at 7:30 PM

IST.

Teams:

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Virat Kohli, Rajat Patidar (c), Swastik Chikara, Devdutt Padikal, Jitesh Sharma, Phillip Salt, Manoj Bhandage, Tim David, Krunal Pandya, Liam Livingstone, Romario Shepherd, Jacob Bethell, Swapnil Singh, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Josh Hazlewood, Nuwan Thushara, Lungi Ngidi, Yash Dayal, Rasikh Dar Salam, Suyash Sharma, Mohit Rathee, Abhinandan Singh.

Gujarat Titans: Shubman Gill (c), Sai Sudharsan, Glenn Phillips, Kumar Kushagra, Anuj Rawat, Jos Buttler, Rashid Khan, Rahul Tewatia, Shahrukh Khan, Nishant Sindhu, Ravirajnivasan Sai Kishore, Gerald Coetzee, Jayant Yadav, Arshad Khan, Karim Janat, Sherrane Rutherford, Mahipal Lomror, Washington Sundar, Manav Suthar, Gurnoor Brar, Ishant Sharma, Kagiso Rabada, Prasad Krishna, Kulwant Khejroliya, Mohammed Siraj.

RCB Director Mo Bobat backs Patidar's leadership

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, APR 1 (UND)

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Director of Cricket, Mo Bobat, expressed confidence in Rajat Patidar's leadership ahead of the team's first home fixture of the season against Gujarat Titans on April 2, highlighting his strong personality and ability to handle the pressures of captaincy.

Assessing Patidar's early days as captain, Bobat praised his leadership qualities. "The main thing you want from a captain is for them to remain true to their personality, and I think Rajat has done that really well. He is very calm inwardly and outwardly, rarely takes a backward step, and we've seen that in his batting, particularly against CSK. He seems to have managed the additional responsibilities of captaincy well."

Bobat added that the leadership challenge will intensify as the season progresses. "It's early days, and there's a lot of cricket to be played. When the schedule gets tougher, we'll need to support him,



but at the moment, he's been excellent."

Speaking about returning to their home ground, Bobat stated, "It's brilliant to be back here at Bengaluru. It feels a little bit weird having played two games and not having played a game here yet, so we are really excited to be here and play in front of our fans. The home advantage will be the atmosphere that the fans create, which I'm sure will be intimidating for the opposition, particularly when it's a bit noisy."

Commenting on the playing conditions, he added, "Everybody knows what to expect from a surface here in Bengaluru. It's

a good wicket, with pretty short boundaries, and the ball carries and flies, making for high-scoring games. We've recruited a team with a powerful batting lineup to exploit those conditions. Our bowling attack is also skilled in handling the challenges here, which has been a key focus in assembling our squad. The way we played in the first two games, we're building confidence in our batting and bowling."

Bobat acknowledged the demanding schedule RCB faces but stressed the team's focus on maintaining their energy levels.

"We planned to make a statement in the first couple of games because playing against two strong teams with proud home records is a challenge. Now, we want to motivate our squad to put on a show in front of our home fans."

"The bigger challenge for us is the amount of travel. We had a relatively laid-back start and a relaxed end, but the middle of our campaign is congested. From after this game, we play seven matches in 22 days, includ-

ing seven travel days. It's a hectic schedule, and my concern is keeping the players fresh while ensuring they continue playing at their best." Bobat also expressed confidence in RCB's pace bowling unit. "Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar bring extreme class and international pedigree. They know their strengths well, and the opposition will too, making them difficult bowlers to face. Yash Dayal complements them, and as a three-man pace attack, they offer variety and skill."

"We believe they are well suited to bowling in challenging conditions like Bengaluru. We're happy with their performances so far, and we also have strong backups like Rasikh Salam, who is particularly skilful in these conditions. Overall, we're very pleased with our bowling unit."

RCB will be aiming to secure a victory in their first home game and build on the momentum from their initial matches as they take on Gujarat Titans on Tuesday.

South Africa announce departure of men's white-ball head coach

AGENCIES
CAPE TOWN, APR 1 (UND)

Rob Walter has stepped down from his position as head coach of the South Africa men's white-ball side, citing personal reasons.

"Coaching the Proteas has been an incredible honour, and I am immensely proud of what we have achieved togeth-

er," said Walter.

"The players, support staff, and the South African community have been fantastic throughout this journey. While it's time for me to step away, I have no doubt that the team will continue to grow and reach even greater heights," he said. During his tenure, the Proteas made history by reaching their first-ever

ICC Men's T20 World Cup final in 2024, where they finished as runners-up to India in Barbados, following an impressive eight-match winning streak.

He also guided the 50-over team to the semi-finals of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India, an ICC report said. Overseeing the national squad in 36 One-Day Internationals and 31 T20

Internationals, Walter led the team to series victories against the Netherlands, Australia, Ireland, and Pakistan.

His final assignment was the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, where he took the Proteas to yet another semi-final, facing New Zealand in Lahore in March.

South Africa are yet to announce his replacement.

Dogra Front & Shiv Sena protest for meat shops closure during Navratri

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

The workers of Dogra Front & Shiv Sena under the leadership of president Mr Ashok Gupta took out a very massive protest rally in Jammu city demanding closure of meat shops during the nine days of Navratras.

During the auspicious days of Navratri, lakhs of devotees visit Mata Vaishno Devi temple & Bawe Wali Mata temple in the city. Several meat shops that are operating illegally sell meat in the open. This hurts the sentiments of devotees and people who are fasting.

There are even mutton shops which are near to the religious places and educational institutes and these should be shut down as per the rules of the Section 313 under Article 2000 as there cannot be any shops near to these places.

The shops should be shut down for the nine days as people who are fasting tends to get agitated by the view of the meat



Caracas being hanged on the outside of the shop.

He further stated that such a move is only fitting since Hindu "religious belief and sentiments are also affected when they come across meat shops.

Mr Gupta highlighted the significance of the upcoming Chaitra Navratri and Hindu New Year celebrations beginning March 30.

In his letter, he emphasised that the entire Sanatan Hindu community, devotees of Goddess Durga, observe these nine days with devotion, fasting, and reverence.

Additionally, Kant mentioned that April 6 marks the birth anniversary of Lord Ram, which is celebrated on the ninth day of the Shukla Paksha in the Chaitra month. This occa-

sion is also revered by the entire Sanatan community.

At last he said that from tomorrow onwards he would visit the areas with the meat shops to ensure their closure.

The party people who were present at the time of protest were Abhishek, Suresh, Prem, Devinder, Naresh, Raju, Kalu, Ganesh and various others were present.

Waqf Bill aims for fair management practices, not community targeting: Kavinder

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 1

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta, has extended his full support to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, recently approved by the Union Cabinet for introduction in the Parliament. He emphasized that the bill is a significant step toward ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the administration of Waqf properties across India. The legislation aims to optimize the utilization of these assets for charitable and religious purposes while safeguarding them from any misuse or encroachment.

In a press statement issued here today, Kavinder Gupta categorically stated that the proposed amendments do not target any specific community. Instead, the bill seeks to establish a robust mechanism to streamline the management of Waqf properties, which number over 8.7 lakh and span approximately 9.4



lakh acres nationwide. He stressed that the government's intent is to enhance governance structures, promote inclusivity, and strengthen the protection of these properties so that they continue to serve their intended purpose effectively.

"The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, reflects the Modi government's unwavering commitment to fostering transparency, inclusivity, and effective management in the administration of Waqf properties. By introducing structured reforms, streamlining administrative processes, and ensuring diverse representation, the government aims to protect these invaluable assets and utilize them for

the welfare of all communities," Kavinder asserted.

Highlighting the necessity of these amendments, the former Deputy CM pointed out that the existing system governing Waqf properties has long been marred by inefficiencies, lack of transparency, and allegations of mismanagement. The proposed amendments will address these concerns, ensuring that Waqf assets are managed more professionally and utilized for the benefit of society at large. He emphasized that the bill will also introduce measures to curb unauthorized occupation and illegal transactions, which have been a persistent challenge.

Kavinder appealed to all stakeholders, including members of the opposition, to extend their support to the bill in Parliament. He underlined that the amendments are being introduced in the larger national interest and are crucial for ensuring that Waqf properties fulfill their intended role in societal development. He reiterated that the govern-

ment's approach remains impartial and focused on fair governance, urging the opposition not to politicize the matter but instead contribute constructively to the legislative process.

"This bill is not about targeting any particular section of society; rather, it is about bringing much-needed reforms to a crucial sector that impacts the welfare of many. The government remains committed to ensuring that Waqf properties are managed in a manner that upholds their sanctity while benefiting the rightful beneficiaries," he added.

The senior BJP leader also highlighted the broader vision of the Modi government, which focuses on comprehensive reforms in various sectors to ensure good governance and national progress. He assured that the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, is a step in the right direction toward achieving these objectives and called upon all sections of society to support its passage and implementation for the greater good of the nation.

Grand Inauguration of 'Udaan 2025' held at CU Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

The grand inauguration of the annual cultural and academic festival 'Udaan 2025' was held today, April 1, 2025, at Central University of Jammu. This prestigious event is organized to promote creativity, cultural diversity, and academic excellence.

The inaugural ceremony commenced with the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, lighting the ceremonial lamp and making the first brush stroke on a large canvas. This symbolic act reflects the creative and innovation-driven vision of 'Udaan 2025'. Over the course of the festival, this canvas will be filled with art, colors, and ideas, representing this year's cen-



tral theme encouraging young talents and inspiring them towards innovation.

This annual festival provides a common platform for students, faculty members, and alumni to participate in cultural performances, exhibitions, workshops, and discussion sessions. The objective of 'Udaan 2025' is to offer students an opportunity to express their creativity and intellectual

abilities, allowing them to challenge the boundaries of thought and imagination.

In his inaugural speech, Prof. Sanjeev Jain highlighted the continuous growth of 'Udaan' and its significance. He stated, "'Udaan' is not just an event; it is a celebration of innovation, education, and collaboration. This platform enables our students to showcase their talents and contribute

to the global discourse through creativity and knowledge."

The inauguration ceremony was attended by faculty members, students, and esteemed guests. On this occasion, a mesmerizing musical performance was presented by 'Raju Ji and Team' from the Bharatiya Lok Sangeet Sansthan, Janipur, adding a rich cultural essence to the event.

The first day of 'Udaan 2025' witnessed captivating performances in art, music, and dance, along with discussions on various educational and cultural topics. This event will serve as a crucial step in establishing Central University of Jammu as a leading center for creativity, education, and cultural exchange.

Omar Govt committed to address developmental gaps in J&K: Rattan Lal

JI NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, APRIL 1

Advocate Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), raised serious concerns over the prolonged neglect of far-flung and hilly areas of District Kathua, which have suffered over the past decade under previous administrations.

At the outset of the meeting, local NC leaders Tirath Ram District President Billawar (Org) apprised the senior functionaries of the challenges faced by residents in these remote regions, exacerbated by the apathy of earlier governments. He further highlighted acute shortages in essential services such as healthcare, education, and basic civic amenities. "Areas like Bani, Duggan, Lohai Malhar, Machhadi, and Lohai have been particularly overlooked, lacking adequate health centers, functional government schools, and essential infrastructure," he said.

Addressing the workers' meeting at Dengi Sambli Billawar of District Kathua

, Rattan Lal Gupta stated that previous governments had done nothing to address the grievances of people in these remote



areas. He noted that even the Prime Minister acknowledged this neglect during his Mann Ki Baat program when a young girl's viral social media post from Lohai brought attention to the deplorable condition of her government school. "Even after such a poignant appeal, the administration has failed to take corrective action," he remarked.

Emphasizing the proactive stance of the National Conference, Rattan Lal Gupta asserted, "Under the leadership of Omar Abdullah, the National Conference is dedicated to addressing these long-standing issues and ensuring the holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir's underserved regions. Our party remains committed to bridging the developmental gap and uplifting those who have been ignored for far too long."

Earlier in the meeting, Jia Lal Gupta, a social activist and retired Assistant Executive Engineer, along with dozens supporters,

joined the National Conference in the presence of senior party leaders. Welcoming the new members, Rattan Lal Gupta encouraged them to actively contribute to strengthening the party's foundation and working diligently for the betterment of the community.

Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, Provincial Secretary, urged party cadre to remain vigilant against anti-national elements attempting to create divisions within society. He called upon party workers and leaders to remain united in their efforts to bring about positive change and to continue advocating for the rights and welfare of the people.

Bimla Luthra, former MLA and senior NC leader, criticized previous governments for their inaction regarding women's welfare. She commended the Omar Abdullah-led administration for introducing initiatives aimed at empowering women, such as providing free travel in government buses.

Tejinder Pal Singh Aman, Provincial President of the Youth National Conference, underscored Omar Abdullah's dedication to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized the government's commitment to creating employment opportunities and fostering an environment conducive to the personal and professional growth of young people in the region. He reiterated the party's focus on skill development programs, job creation, and youth empowerment.

Pardeep Bali Provincial Secretary Jammu and Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone, NC leaders, reaffirmed that the National Conference remains steadfast in its mission to uplift the marginalized and ensure equitable development across all regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Among those who joined the party fold include: Varinder, Rashpal Singh, Sham Singh, Sudesh Kumar Sunil Sharma, Gian Chand, Gafoor Ali, Anil Singh, Uttam Chand, and Jarnail Singh.

Among those who were present included: Sapna Gill Block President Jammu East Women Wing, Jyoti Akbar Block Vice President and others.

Dogra Degree College hosts Motivational Lecture on Defence Careers

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

NCC Unit of Dogra Degree College, in collaboration with Army Recruiting Office (ARO) Amphalla, Jammu successfully organized a motivational lecture on 'Defence Forces (Officer Level)' on April 1st, 2025. The event took place at the College Auditorium and saw enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, and dignitaries.

The program began with the best wishes and blessings of Chairman DET, Th. Gulchain Singh Charak. Following this, Dr. Samar Dev Singh Charak, Secretary, DET, addressed the gathering, motivating students to consider careers in the armed forces and emphasizing the need for dedicated youth to serve the nation. His inspiring words set a positive tone for the event.

The event then commenced with the presentation of a sapling as a gesture of growth and commitment, followed by a warm welcome and



stage management by Ms. Heenam Bhagat, Faculty, DDC. The ceremonial lighting of the lamp marked the formal inauguration of the program. Dr. Bela Thakur, Principal of Dogra Degree College, delivered the welcome address, emphasizing the importance of the armed forces and the role of youth in National Defence.

The highlight of the event was a lecture delivered by Col. Abhay Sharma, Director Recruiting, ARO, who inspired the attendees with insights into career opportunities and the selection process for officer-level positions in the Indian Defence Forces. His presentation included

detailed information on eligibility criteria, training procedures, and the challenges and rewards of a career as a Defence Officer. He also encouraged students to build physical and mental resilience to succeed in the selection process.

The audience, comprising NCC Cadets and college students, actively participated in an interactive Q&A session where they sought guidance on various aspects of Defence careers. Col. Abhay Sharma addressed their queries with practical advice and shared motivational anecdotes from his own experiences.

The program concluded

with a vote of thanks by Mr. Gulshan Sharma, CTO/ANO, NCC, DDC, who expressed gratitude to the esteemed guest and all participants for making the event a success. The event wrapped up with the National Anthem and a group photograph to commemorate the occasion.

The guest lecture was part of the college's ongoing efforts to instill patriotism, discipline, and leadership qualities among students. The event received positive feedback from attendees, who described it as enlightening and highly motivational, fostering a spirit of service and commitment to the nation.

Sakeena Ito thanks CM for free ridership for women in Smart City e-Buses, JKRTC buses

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 01

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Ito, has expressed gratitude to Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, for commendable initiative of launching free ridership for women in Smart City e-Buses and JKRTC buses.

Recognizing this initiative as a significant step towards women empowerment and social welfare, the only women Minister



in Omar's Council of Ministers stated that the move would greatly benefit diverse women folk,

particularly college and university going students, working women as well as economically weaker sections. She lauded the Chief Minister's commitment towards ensuring safe, affordable and accessible public transportation for women, which aligns with the vision of fostering gender-inclusive growth in Jammu and Kashmir.

"This commendable initiative reflects our Government's dedication towards providing essential facilities to women. Free transportation will not only ease daily

commute but also encourage greater participation of women in education as well as working sector", Sakeena said. She emphasized that such progressive measures are crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

She further said that present Omar Abdullah led Government is committed to uplift the well-being of people of Jammu and Kashmir, adding that similar welfare measures will continue to be introduced for the benefit of common masses.

Refusal of turnover incentive claims by Finance Department a set back to existing working industrial units: FOIJ

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

An Urgent Meeting of Federation of Industries, Jammu was held under the Chairmanship of Sh. Lalit Mahajan, Chairman FOIJ in the presence of Co-Chairmen Sh. Virendra Jain, Sh. S.C. Dutta, Sh. Jatinder Aul, Sh. Ajit Bawa, Sh. Raman Jolly with the participation of large number of members of Federation to discuss the issue regarding the refusal of 1st Installment of 10% Turnover Incentive Reimbursement Bills by Finance Department for the Financial Year 2022-23 of Existing Working Industrial Units of Jammu & Kashmir. The Members expressed their agony over the attitude of the Govt. towards the Existing Industrial Units as the Govt. failed to release the payment of Budgetary allocation of Rs.

50 Crores as per the Industrial Policy 2021 in spite of the facts that assurances has been given by the Present Popular Govt. that 2 to 3% Turnover Incentive is being granted to working Industrial Units as per the Industrial Policy 2021.

It is pertinent to mention here that while Working Industrial Sector of J&K expecting the announcement of more incentives by the popular Govt. but the present Incentive of Turnover already announced/declared and promised, only 14 to 15% has been approximately given in respect of Claims filed for 2021-22 whereas during the current Financial Year of 2024-25, the 1st Installment of Turnover Incentives Bills pertaining to FY 2022-23 has been refused by the Finance Department due to reason best known to them resulting the lapse of Funds meant

for the Turnover Incentives for the Financial Year 2022-23 which we termed as Betrayal with the Existing working Units of Jammu & Kashmir majority of the same being run by the Sons of the Soil in spite of all the odds since long.

It is worthwhile to mention here that while finalizing the Budget Proposals for the Financial Year 2025-26, the Industries Department made a provision of mare Rs. 130 Crores which include Turnover Incentive Claims for the Financial Year 2022-23, 2023-24, and other subsidies like DG Set/Pollution Control Equipments and we fear the majority of the same shall be claimed by the New Units being set Up under the NCSS-2021 Scheme for the purchase of DG Set/Pollution Control Equipments which may be further reducing the Budgetary Allocation

for the Turnover Incentives Claims for the Financial Year 2022-23 and 2023-24 resulting in to clouser of Industrial working Units in near future.

Federation of Industries, Jammu request the Hon'ble Lt. Governor Sh. Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Chief Minister Jenab Omar Abdullah, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Sh. Surinder Kumar Choudhary to come into the rescue of the existing industrial sector of J&K by Revalidating the Funds allocated in Financial year 2024-25 for the release of Turnover Incentives Claims of the Financial year 2022-23 and also enhance the Budgetary allocation for the Industrial Incentives from Rs. 130 Crores to Approx. Rs. 500 Crores for the Settlement of Turnover Incentives and other Subsidies for the Industrial Sector of J&K.

Dr. Tahir Chaudhary charges Congress for carrying agenda of anti-India forces

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

Referring to serious concerns about the Indian National Congress and its policies and actions suggesting its alignment with the anti-India forces, Dr. Tahir Chaudhary charged the Congress party for pursuing and carrying forward the agenda of anti-India forces.

Dr. Tahir Chaudhary, Spokesperson, J&K BJP accompanied by Rajni Sethi, Spokesperson and Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge was addressing a press conference at BJP Headquarters, Jammu.



Ferociously attacking the Congress party for continuing with the narrative setup by the anti-India forces, Dr. Tahir Chaudhary stated that on the one hand it keeps claiming the credit of nation's freedom struggle and on the other hand it is pursuing the agendas in the nation, which are setup by the Pakistan and even

the nations like America, Germany, Italy etc.

Dr. Tahir Chaudhary lamented that while our 'Jawans' were busy fighting the terrorists, the Congress party was toying its agenda and staging the protests on other issues. Congress has moved on the ventilator and is unmoved by the issues of nation and society.

In Jammu & Kashmir, he mocked Congress for its desperation to join its name with the NC, and the utter neglect on the part of the latter.

Congress has shamelessly tried to mislead the people of Jammu & Kashmir and whole nation and also tried to defame the nation in other countries by organized propagandas and campaigns.

Congress must introspect itself, for its failures in running the national affairs, its corruption and scams, and pointed out that the maximum leaders of Congress party are facing trial for their corruption.

Sham Sharma inaugurates Pre-Mixed laying project in JMC ward-62

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APR 1

In a significant step towards infrastructure development, Sh. Sham Lal Sharma, MLA Jammu North and Former Minister, inaugurated the Pre-Mixed Laying Project on link roads in JMC Ward No. 62, Upper Roopnagar, and Laxmipuram, Chinore, under the Jammu North Assembly Constituency. The project, covering approximately 2 km of roads in each locality, has been sanctioned with a total budget of 70.71 lakhs. The initiative aims to enhance road quality, improve connectivity, and provide long-term benefits to residents by ensuring smoother and more durable road surfaces.



Addressing the gathering, Sham Lal Sharma reiterated his commitment to infrastructure development, emphasizing that quality road networks play a crucial role in urban growth and ease of transportation. He assured the public that his focus remains on strengthening civic amenities, ensuring better roads, drainage

systems, and improved water supply to cater to the growing needs of the people. He highlighted the government's proactive approach in executing developmental works and stated that additional projects will soon be initiated across the constituency.

Sham Lal Sharma also spoke about various ongoing and upcoming development projects in the constituency. He mentioned that the next financial year will witness a significant push towards modernizing civic infrastructure, including expedited work on road repairs, strengthening of drainage networks, and improved water supply

management. He assured that necessary funds would be allocated to ensure the completion of these projects in a timely manner.

Highlighting the pending demands of residents, he acknowledged concerns regarding lanes and drains, installation of street lights, flood channeling, and consistent water supply management. He assured that these issues have been taken up at the highest level and that the administration is committed to resolving them at the earliest. He also urged officials to expedite the repair and installation of street lights to enhance safety and security in residential areas.

dential areas.

With the upcoming summer season, Sham Lal Sharma directed concerned departments, including PHE, JMC, and the Flood Control Department, to ensure uninterrupted water supply and proper drainage and flood water management. He instructed officials to conduct regular inspections, address any deficiencies in water distribution, and take proactive measures to prevent water scarcity and improve flood water management. He reaffirmed his dedication to improving the quality of life for the people of Jammu North and called for collective efforts from officials and residents to support the development agenda.

The event witnessed the presence of several dignitaries, including Sh. Pankaj Padha (Mandal Pradhan, Muthi-Paloura), Smt. Rekha Manhas (Ex-Corporator, Ward 62), Sh. Suresh Khajuria (Ex-Mandal Pradhan, Muthi-Paloura), Sh. Prabhu Singh, Sh. Ambedkar Gupta and Sectoral Officers of JMC, Jal Shakti were present.

District Reasi Taekwondo Championships 2024-25 Concludes Successfully at SMVD Shrine Board Sports Complex, Katra

JJ NEWS SERVICE
KATRA, APR 1

The District Reasi Taekwondo Championships 2024-25, organized under the aegis of the J&K Taekwondo Association and J&K Sports Council, concluded successfully at the SMVD Shrine Board Sports Complex, Katra. The championship, held on March 29-30, 2025, witnessed participation from around 100 players representing various schools and clubs from District Reasi.

The championship was led by Shri Danish Sharma, Secretary of the Taekwondo Association of District Reasi. The event was graced by esteemed guests, with Ms. Laxmi Devi as the Chief Guest, Mr. Rishi Kotwal as the Special Guest, and Mr. Satpaul Sharma and Mr. Daksh Salgotra as Guests



of Honour.

The championship showcased exceptional performances by athletes across different categories. The results are as follows:

Senior Male Category:
1. Gorav Singh - Gold (Under 54kg), 2. Shivnandan Lalotra - Gold (Under 58kg), 3. Karan Magar - Silver (Under 58kg), 4. Ayush Bral - Gold (Under 63kg), 5. Rahul Kalotra - Gold (Under 68kg), 6. Rohan Kumar - Silver (Under 68kg), 7. Manat Sharma - Gold (Under

74kg), 8. Tarun Singh - Gold (Over 87kg), 9. Sumit Langhay - Silver (Over 87kg), Senior Female Category, 1. Muskaan Devi - Gold (Under 55kg), Sub-Junior Girls Category, 1. Kavya Verma - Gold (Under 23kg), Cadet Boys Category, 1. Sorav Kumar - Gold (Under 31kg), 2. Suryansh Rajput - Gold (Under 57kg), 3. Devansh Kumar - Gold (Under 33kg), Sub-Junior Boys Category, 1. Arnab Dev Singh - Gold (Under 21kg), 2. Dhaivik Kumar - Gold (Under

32kg), 3. Bhumanya Kangotra - Gold (Under 32kg), 4. Sahej - Silver (Under 32kg), 5. Aadhavan Sammotra - Gold (Over 50kg), Junior Boys Category, 1. Sandeep Kumar - Gold (Under 51kg), 2. Narinder Kumar - Gold (Under 55kg), 3. Mohd. Sameer - Silver (Under 55kg), 4. Aarush Kumar - Bronze (Under 55kg), 5. Nishant Bral - Gold (Under 63kg), 6. Ismail - Silver (Under 63kg).

The championship highlighted the growing talent in Taekwondo within District Reasi, encouraging young athletes to pursue excellence in the sport. The J&K Taekwondo Association and the Taekwondo Association of District Reasi extended their gratitude to all participants, coaches, officials, and supporters for making the event a grand success.

Enemies of peace shall not be spared: Pathania

JJ NEWS SERVICE
MAJALTA, APRIL 1

Addressing a well-attended Janta Darbar at Khoon, MLA Udhampur East, Mr. Ranbir Singh Pathania, reiterated a firm, resolute stance against terrorism, drug trafficking, and other anti-national activities. He emphasized that those perpetrating crimes and spreading terror on Indian soil, particularly in Jammu & Kashmir, will be brought to justice. He lauded the Government of India's zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism and the proactive approach of the Union Home Minister, ensuring that disruptors of public peace are dealt with firmly.

Mr. Pathania stressed that terrorism, drug abuse, and unlawful activities not only disturb the peace but also hinder developmental progress. He called upon law enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts in curbing these menaces and ensuring security in the region.

During the interaction, the public raised multiple grievances, particularly concerning the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). Mr. Pathania directed the concerned officials to expedite pending JJM projects and address bottlenecks such as inadequate pipe sizes, issues with High-Density Polyethylene (HDP) pipes, and the



availability of sustainable water sources. He emphasized that the dream of Har Ghar Jal must be realized at the grassroots level in Udhampur East.

He further took cognizance of the issue of exorbitant electricity bills and assured the public that corrective measures had been taken. He directed authorities, particularly Tehsildar Majalta, to ensure strict implementation of the Public services Guarantee Act for providing hassle-free and transparent services to the people.

Responding to grievances related to the education sector, Mr. Pathania urged the Education Department to ensure a rationalization of staff in schools, addressing teacher shortages and grievances efficiently. He also emphasized the urgent need for infrastructural improvements in sports facilities, advocating for the development

of new sports complexes and renovation of existing playgrounds to encourage youth participation in sports and fitness activities.

The MLA was widely appreciated for his role in addressing long-standing power supply issues in the region. A significant milestone was achieved with the upgradation and operationalization of the 33/11 kV Receiving Station at Dehma, doubling its capacity from 3.3 MV to 6 MV. This enhancement ensures a stable electricity supply, particularly critical for the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) machinery, as well as the increased usage of electrical appliances, motors, and irrigation systems by local agriculturists, horticulturists, and floriculturists.

He underscored the need for futuristic planning in power distribution to accommodate rising demand and ensure unin-

terrupted power supply to the region.

Among those present were prominent local leaders including Mohan Lal Sharma (Mandal Pradhan), Mohinder Sharma (Mandal Pradhan), Gopal Singh, Anil Sharma, Gurdev Singh, Kuldeep Singh, Romesh Gupta, Manoj Verma, Raman Khajuria, Suram Chand, Subhash Chander, Ved Sharma, Nimarta Bali, Pritam Basotra, Meena Rani, Nisha Devi, Shiv Ram, Surinder Singh, and Pawan Kumar.

The event also witnessed the participation of senior officials from various departments, including Tehsildar Majalta, Executive Engineer, Assistant Executive Engineers (AEEs), and officers from other line departments. A large number of locals attended the event, actively voicing their concerns and appreciating the initiatives undertaken.

Prominent attendees also included Romesh Chander Gupta, Surinder Singh, Manoj Verma, Nimarta Bali, Shiv Ram, Subhash Chander, Surinder Mankotia, and Ved Pal, among others.

Mr. Pathania assured the people that their concerns would be addressed in a time-bound manner and reaffirmed his commitment to the holistic development of Udhampur East.

Indian Army conducts celebration of Eid-Ul-Fitr at Thanamandi, Naili and Pir Topa, Poonch & Rajouri

JJ NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, APR 1

To maintain cordial relations with local citizens, the Indian Army conducted a celebration of Eid-Ul-Fitr and an interaction with locals at LKG, Thanamandi, Chapta, Naili, and Pir Topa villages. The event aimed to foster good relationships with religious leaders in the area and counter the terrorist ecosystem at the grassroots level. The aim was to interact with locals and spread the message of harmony during the auspicious month of Ramadan. Representative of The Indian Army addressed the local people and conveyed about the significance of peace & coexistence of various communities in the society. He conveyed



his good wishes to the villagers on behalf of the Indian Army and thanked the local people for their support towards the Security Forces. A total strength of 207 (29 locals at Thanamandi, 36 locals at Chapta, 12 locals at Naili and 65 locals at Pir Topa and 65 at

LKG) attended the event, Sweets and Chocolates were also distributed. The event was successful in reaching out to people, to read through the populace and created multiple footprints of ethnic perception management across all villages in a single time-

frame. This gesture and effort by Indian Army was highly appreciated by Awam. This endeavour by Indian Army to reach out to the population residing in remote areas, where civil administration has limited accessibility will go a long way in developing and strengthening trust between The Indian Army and Awam. The event also served as a platform to strengthen the bond between The Indian Army and the people of this region. It showcased The Indian Army's commitment towards service to the nation.

India, Chile to begin negotiations on new trade deal after talks between PM Modi, Chile President Gabriel Boric

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1 (UND)

India and Chile today agreed to launch negotiations on a mutually beneficial Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, following bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the visiting President of Chile Gabriel Boric.

PM Modi said in his address: "Today we have decided to begin negotiations on a mutually beneficial Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, and we have directed our teams to work on this."

"We have also decided to promote cooperation in the area of Critical Minerals. We will also work to establish resilient supply and value chains," the PM added.

The Chilean President said in a post on X:

"From New Delhi, together with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we announce the start of negotiations toward a free trade agreement with India, tremendous



news that formalizes our commitment to working together with such an important country in today's world.

"This is in addition to the agreements we have reached regarding cooperation in mining training and exploration, disaster management, and collaboration in the cultural and Antarctic spheres.

"We continue working for increased investment and employment, the diversification of our economy, and to further strengthen our ties with a friendly country like India."

The MEA spokesperson said in a post on X:

"India-Chile. United for progress."

"PM @narendramodi & President @GabrielBoric of Chile held wide ranging discussions at Hyderabad House today.

"Both leaders welcomed the launch of CEPA negotiations to further deepen India-Chile ties in trade, science & technology, critical minerals, health, agriculture, climate change and people to people ties.

"They also exchanged views on global issues of mutual interest."

President Gabriel Boric Font, who arrived at the head of a high-level delegation, is on a state visit from April 1-5.

President Boric is visiting India at the invitation of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi. Besides Ministers, his delegation includes Members of Parliament, senior officials, business associations, media and prominent Chileans involved in the India-Chile cultural connect.

This is President Boric's first visit to India in his official capacity. He will also visit Agra, Mumbai, and Bengaluru before returning to Chile on April 5, a statement said.

The two sides saw warming of their ties during the visit of Chile's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alberto Van Klaveren, in August last year. The Chilean FM had met with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and also with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, during which the two sides discussed launching negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The two nations have a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), signed in 2006, and are keen to expand their trade ties.

Rajya Sabha passes Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025: Aviation sector to get boost

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1 (UND)

The Upper House Rajya Sabha on Tuesday passed The Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025, with the Government said the new Civil Aviation legislation will result in lowering of leasing cost of planes thus in the air fares.

The Bill, passed in the Rajya Sabha by voice vote, seeks to give legal effect to international agreements in their application in India.

Replying to the discussion on the Bill, Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram-mohan Naidu said proper legislation will bring in more planes in India and the advantage of this will trickle down to passengers in the country.



Indian aviation players operate on leasing model as more than 80 percent of the planes are on lease and this legislation will also give incentives for the industry to set up leasing shops in the country and this will give huge cost advantage to domestic players.

This legislation will create a lot of security for both the lessors and the lessees and the overall avi-

ation market also because there has been a lot of confusion in this area. It has been a grey area for some time, the Minister said, adding several players were asking for proper legislation.

This is a very important Bill which the industry needs today. It is going to change the aviation landscape of the country, Naidu said while speaking in the House.

The Minister also informed that the Government was looking at developing an international airport in Bihar near Patna and is working with the state government to develop it. Apart from this he informed that all metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Chennai need another terminal and the Centre is working with respective state governments to get land and other facilities for the development of additional terminal to meet the demand. He also mentioned that several members have been demanding airport facilities in their areas and said that support has to come from their states in terms of land and once that is in place the Centre can look at the proposals.

Naxal-hit districts reduced to 6 from 12: Amit Shah

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1 (UND)

Amit Shah on Tuesday said that India has made significant progress toward eliminating Naxalism, reaching a new milestone by reducing the number of districts severely impacted by left-wing extremism from 12 to just 6.

In a post on X, the Home Minister said, "Taking a giant stride towards building a Naxal-free Bharat, today our nation achieved a new milestone by significantly reducing the number of districts most affected by left-wing extremism to just six from 12".

Shah said, "The Modi government is building a Sashakt, Surakshit and Samridh Bharat with a ruthless approach to Naxalism and relentless efforts



for all-pervasive development". "Bharat is determined to uproot Naxalism for good by 31st March 2026," he stated.

The total number of Naxal-affected districts in the country was 38. Among them, the most severely affected districts have decreased from 12 to 6. Additionally, the number of "Districts of Concern" has dropped from 9 to 6, while "Other

LWE-affected Districts" have been reduced from 17 to six, a Home Ministry statement said.

Among the total Naxal-affected districts, the number of most severely impacted districts has decreased from 12 to 6. These include four districts from Chhattisgarh (Bijapur, Kanker, Narayanpur, and Sukma), one from Jharkhand (West Singhbhum), and one from Maharashtra (Gadchiroli).

Similarly, among the 38 Naxal-affected districts, the number of "Districts of Concern," which require additional resources beyond the most severely impacted areas, has decreased from nine to six.

These 6 districts are Andhra Pradesh (Alluri Sitarama Raju), Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat), Odisha (Kalahandi, Kandhamal, and Malkangiri), and Telangana (Bhadradri-Kothagudem).

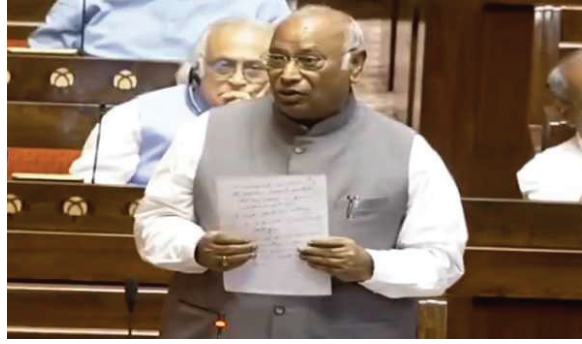
Due to persistent action against Naxalism, number of other LWE-affected districts has also decreased from 17 to six. These include districts from Chhattisgarh (Dantewada, Gariaband, and Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki), Jharkhand (Latehar), Odisha (Nuapada), and Telangana (Mulugu).

Rajya Sabha: Kharge calls for early decadal & caste census

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1 (UND)

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday called for an early decadal and caste census, saying that it is crucial for the economic and social well-being of the country.

Raising the matter during Zero Hour, he said that the present government was causing inordinate delay in conducting the census. Kharge stated that while there is a provision to conduct a census every 10 years, the gov-



ernment seems to have no intention of doing so.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, the LoP said, "Just like we have to undergo periodic medical examination to check our body, in

the same way caste census is the most important test of any nation."

The Congress President mentioned that conducting the census is a massive undertaking, and the gov-

ernment has not made sufficient allocations for it. He also stressed that a caste census should be carried out alongside the regular census.

BJP's Sujeet Kumar highlighted the urgent need to address the issue of autism, noting its rapid spread in society. He said that children affected by autism require special assistance and called for the government to make specific provisions for them.

Kumar urged for organising special camps to create awareness regarding this.

2 drivers killed, 5 injured as 2 goods trains collide in Jharkhand

AGENCIES
RANCHI, APR 1 (UND)

Two people were killed and five others injured in a collision between two goods trains in Jharkhand's Sahebganj in the early hours of Tuesday, police said.

The injured are being treated at the Community Health Centre Barhait.

The incident took place late on Monday night when a coal-loaded goods train



from Lalmatia in Godda was on its way to Parakka NTPC in West Bengal. The collision was so severe that

5 wagons of the goods train derailed. The engine of the goods train caught fire and the drivers of the empty

goods train, Ambuj Mahato and Kaleswar Mal, died on the spot.

The driver of the second goods train, GK Nath, was also badly burnt. The injured have been identified as Uday Mandal, Israul Sheikh, Jitendra Kumar, Ravi Ghosh and Shahid.

NTPC officials, railway officials and police from Barhait police station rushed to the spot. Railway officials have said that the matter will be investigated.

Nikhil Kamath's Gruhas leads Rs 12.5 Crore investment in Lehlah

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, APR 1 (UND)

LehLah, a creator-led content commerce startup, on Tuesday said it has raised Rs 12.5 crore in its seed funding round, led by Gruhas, a company co-founded by Nikhil Kamath and Abhijeet Pai.

The funds will be utilised for product development, increasing brand visibility, and expanding the team, LehLah said in a release. Commenting on the

funding, Nikhil Kamath said, "Shopping today isn't just about products—it's about trust, influence, and community. People don't want to be sold to; they want recommendations from those they relate to. The future of commerce may belong to platforms that empower individuals to monetize their influence while making discovery and purchasing seamless. Only time will truly tell."

Ashna Ruia, Founder, LehLah stated, "We are

excited to embark on this new chapter with the backing of Gruhas, who share our vision for transforming the creator economy. This support enables us to amplify our mission of empowering creators to build thriving businesses around their passions. As we continue to innovate and scale, we are inspired by the opportunity to redefine the intersection of creativity, commerce, and community, with key partners like Nikhil

Kamath by our side."

LehLah is a content commerce platform that empowers creators to monetise their influence by sharing affiliate links for curated product recommendations. It bridges the gap between creators and brand partners, turning authentic content into a powerful revenue stream. By offering a seamless shopping experience for followers, LehLah drives sales and boosts conversions for brands.

SC bars Ranveer Allahbadia from travelling abroad until probe ends in obscenity case

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, APR 1 (UND)

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to lift travel restrictions on You-Tuber Ranveer Allahbadia, also known as BeerBiceps, while an investigation continues in the obscenity case related to his podcast episode on India's Got Latent.

A bench comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice NK Singh ruled that Allahbadia's request to travel abroad would only be considered after the probe concluded.

Solicitor General of India, Tushar Mehta, representing the Maharashtra government, informed the Court that the investigation would take two more weeks.

The Court noted that Allahbadia had given an undertaking to ensure decency in his podcast and avoid discussing any sub judice matters. How-



ever, since he might be required for further questioning, the Court declined to release his passport at this stage.

"The petitioner has assured that his show will maintain decency and will not discuss issues pending in different legal forums.

The Solicitor General has stated that the ongoing investigations are likely to be completed in two weeks. Since the petitioner may be needed during this period, his request for passport release and foreign travel will be considered later," the Court stated.

Allahbadia had approached the Supreme Court after facing multiple criminal cases across India over controversial remarks made on India's

Got Latent.

Earlier, on March 3, the Court had allowed him to resume his podcast on the condition that he maintained public decency.

His lawyer, Advocate Abhinav Chandrachud, argued that the travel ban was affecting his livelihood, as he needed to interview personalities for his show. However, the Court refused to intervene at this stage, stating that allowing him to travel could delay the investigation.

"If we allow you to travel, the investigation may also get deferred," the bench remarked.

The Supreme Court had previously condemned the statements made in the controversial episode, call-

ing them "perverted" and "offensive to society, parents, and women." While the Court had initially barred Allahbadia from hosting any shows, it later permitted him to resume his podcast with a warning to maintain decency.

The Court also indicated that it might consider broader regulations to prevent similar instances of obscene content being broadcast in the future.

Allahbadia recently appeared before the National Commission for Women on March 6 and also joined the investigation in Guwahati, where one of the cases against him is registered.

Meanwhile, fellow You-Tuber Ashish Chanchlani has also approached the Supreme Court seeking to quash an FIR filed against him in Assam or transfer the case to Mumbai.

The Supreme Court will hear the matter again on April 21.

17 killed in fire at firecracker factory in Gujarat

AGENCIES
PALANPUR (GUJARAT), APR 1 (UND)

At least 17 people were killed and several others injured in a fire at a firecracker factory in Gujarat's Banaskantha district on

Tuesday, police said.

According to police, a massive fire broke out in a firecracker factory near Deesa GIDC this morning due to some reason. During this time, 17 people died due to burns. The identities of the deceased are yet to be

ascertained.

Meanwhile, the fire brigade official said that as soon as the information about the fire in the firecracker factory was received this morning, fire brigade personnel along with six fire tenders reached the spot.

The fire was brought under control after about an hour of hard work by the fire brigade personnel. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

The police have reached the spot and started taking necessary action.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 Explained

ON AUGUST 8, 2024, two bills, the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, and the Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill, 2024, were introduced in the Lok Sabha with an aim to streamline the Waqf Board's work and ensure the efficient management of Waqf properties.

The objective of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, is to amend the Waqf Act, 1995, to redress the issues and challenges in regulating and managing Waqf properties. The Amendment Bill seeks to improve the administration and management of Waqf properties in India. It aims to:

- Overcome the shortcomings of the previous act and enhance the efficiency of Waqf boards by introducing changes such as renaming the Act
- Updating the definitions of Waqf
- Improving the registration process
- Increasing the role of technology in managing Waqf records.

The following FAQs provide an understanding of the Waqf Amendment 2024 Bill.

1) What are the administrative bodies responsible for Waqf management in India and what are their roles?

The administration of Waqf properties in India is presently governed by the Waqf Act, 1995, which is enacted and regulated by the Central Government. The key administrative bodies involved in Waqf management include:

- ❖ The Waqf Act of 1995, enforced by the Central Government, currently regulates Waqf properties. The main administrative bodies are:
 - ❖ Central Waqf Council (CWC) - Advises the government and State Waqf Boards on policy but does not directly control Waqf properties.
 - ❖ State Waqf Boards (SWBs) - Manage and protect Waqf properties in each state.
 - ❖ Waqf Tribunals - Exclusive judicial bodies that handle disputes related to Waqf properties.

This system ensures better management and faster resolution of issues. Over the years, legal changes have made Waqf administration more transparent, efficient, and accountable.

2) What are the issues concerned with Waqf Board?

1. Irrevocability of Waqf Properties

- The principle "once a Waqf, always a Waqf" has led to disputes, such as claims over islands in Bet Dwarka, which have been deemed perplexing by courts as well.

2. Legal Disputes & Poor Management: The Waqf Act, 1995, and its 2013 amendment have not been effective. Some problems include:

- Illegal occupation of Waqf land
- Mismanagement and ownership disputes
- Delays in property registration and surveys
- Large-scale litigation cases and complaints to the Ministry

3. No Judicial Oversight

- Decisions by Waqf Tribunals cannot be challenged in higher courts.
- This reduces transparency and accountability in Waqf management.

4. Incomplete Survey of Waqf Properties

- The Survey Commissioner's work has been poor, leading to delays.
- In states like Gujarat and Uttarakhand, surveys have not yet begun.
- In Uttar Pradesh, a survey ordered in 2014 is still pending.
- Lack of expertise and poor coordination with the Revenue Department have slowed the registration process.

5. Misuse of Waqf Laws

- Some State Waqf Boards have misused their powers, leading to community tensions.
- Section 40 of the Waqf Act has been widely misused to declare private properties as Waqf properties, causing legal battles and unrest.
- As per information out of 30 States/UTs, data was given only by 8 States where 515 properties have been declared as Waqf under Section 40.

6. Constitutional Validity of the Waqf Act

- The Waqf Act applies only to one religion, while no similar law exists for others.
- A PIL (Public Interest Litigation) has been filed in the Delhi High Court, questioning whether the Waqf Act is constitutional. The Delhi High Court has asked the Central Government to respond to this issue.

3) What steps and stakeholder consultations were undertaken by the Ministry before introducing the bill?

The Ministry of Minority Affairs consulted various stakeholders which interalia includes; report of the Sachar Committee, concern raised by public representatives, Media and general public regarding mismanagement, misuse of powers of Waqf act and underutilization of Waqf Properties by the Waqf institutions. The Ministry also consulted with State Waqf Boards.

The Ministry initiated the process of review of provisions of Waqf Act, 1995 and had consultations with stakeholders. Two meetings were conducted- one in Lucknow on 24.07.23 and another one at New Delhi on 20.07.23 wherein most of the following issues were discussed in detail. The consensus was emerged to make suitable amendment in the Act to solve the problems of the affected stakeholders.

- Widening The Base of CWC (Central Waqf Council) and SWB (State Waqf Board) Composition
- Role And Responsibilities of Mutawallis
- Re-Structuring of Tribunals
- Improve The Process of Registration
- Declaration Of Titles
- Survey Of Waqf Properties
- Mutation Of Waqf Properties
- Filing Of Accounts by Mutawallis
- Reforms In Filing Annual Accounts
- Review Of Provisions Related to Evacuee Properties/ Limitation Act
- Scientific Management of Waqf Properties

Further, the Ministry has also analysed the international practices on Waqf management across other countries such as Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey and found that the Waqf Properties are generally regulated by the Laws and Institutions set up by the Government.

4) What was the process of the introduction of Waqf Amendment Bill 2024?

- The Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 has been introduced with the primary objective of addressing shortcomings in the management and governance of Waqf properties on August 8, 2024.
- On August 9, 2024, both Houses of Parliament referred the Bill to a Joint Committee of 21 Lok Sabha and 10 Rajya Sabha members to examine and report on it.
- Keeping in view the importance of the Bill and its wide ranging implications, the Committee had decided to call memoranda to obtain the views from public in general and experts/stakeholders and other concerned organisations in particular on the provisions of the aforesaid Bill.
- The Joint Parliamentary Committee held thirty-six sittings wherein, they heard the views/suggestions of the representatives of various Ministries/Departments such as: Ministries of Minority Affairs, Law and Justice, Railways (Railway Board), Housing and Urban Affairs, Road Transport and Highways, Culture (Archaeological Survey of India), State Governments, State Waqf Boards and experts/stakeholders.
- The first sitting took place on August 22, 2024 and the key organizations/ stakeholders consulted during the sittings were:

- All India Sunni Jamiyatul Ulama, Mumbai;
- Indian Muslims of Civil Rights (IMCR), New Delhi
- Muttaheda Majlis-e- Ulema, J&K (Mirwaiz Umar Farooq)
- Zakat Foundation of India
- Anjuman E Shiteali Dawoodi Bohra Community
- Chanakya National Law University, Patna
- All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaaz, Delhi
- All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Delhi
- All India Sufi Sajjadanashin Council (AISC), Ajmer
- Muslim Rashtriya Manch, Delhi
- Muslim Women Intellectual Group - Dr. Shalini Ali, National Convener
- Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, Delhi
- Shia Muslim Dharamguru and Intellectual Group
- Darul Uloom Deoband
- The Committee received 97,27,772 memoranda in total, through both physical and digital mode.
- To thoroughly review the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024, the Committee conducted detailed study visits across multiple cities in India. These visits helped members engage with stakeholders, assess ground realities, and gather region-specific insights on Waqf property management. The details of the study visits in 10 cities are as under:
 - Sept 26 - Oct 1, 2024: Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru
 - Nov 9 - 11, 2024: Guwahati, Bhubaneswar
 - Jan 18 - 21, 2025: Patna, Kolkata, Lucknow
- The Committee consulted 25 State Waqf Boards (7 in Delhi, 18 during visits) to discuss administrative challenges and legal hurdles.
- Thereafter, the Joint Committee completed Clause by Clause consideration of all Clauses of the Bill at their 37th sitting held on 27th January, 2025. The amendments moved by the Members were put to vote and adopted by majority votes.
- The Adoption draft report and authorized the Chairperson to present the report on their behalf. The 38th sitting was held on 29th January, 2025.
- The Joint Committee submitted its report to the Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha on 31.01.2025 and laid in both the Houses of the Parliament on 13th February, 2025.

5) What are some of the key reforms of the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024?

The proposed amendments under this Bill, 2024 are aimed at transforming Waqf administration in India by ensuring better governance, transparency, and accountability. It seeks to create a streamlined, technology-driven, and legally robust framework for the management of Waqf properties, while also fostering socio-economic development for the intended beneficiaries.

I. Unified Waqf Management: Key issues affecting Waqf properties include:

- Incomplete survey of Waqf properties.
- Significant backlog of litigations in Tribunal and Waqf Boards.
- Improper account, auditing and monitoring of Mutawallis.
- The mutation of all Waqf properties has not been done properly.

II. Empowerment of Central Waqf Council & State Waqf Boards:

- Inclusion of diverse groups like non-Muslim, other Muslim communities, other backward classes among Muslim communities and Women etc in the decision making, to enhance representation and efficiency.

III. Efficiency of State Waqf Boards:

- A digital portal and database will automate Waqf registration, survey, mutation, audits, leasing, and litigation, ensuring scientific, efficient, and transparent governance.

IV. Development of Auqaf:

- Portal-based lifecycle management will streamline administration.
- Section 65 mandates Waqf Boards to submit reports on management and income improvements within six months, ensuring timely action.
- Section 32(4) allows Waqf Boards to develop Waqf lands into educational institutions, shopping centers, markets, or housing by taking over properties from Mutawallis when necessary.

6) What are the key differences between the Waqf Bill 1995 and Waqf Amendment Bill 2024?

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 introduces several changes to the Waqf Act, 1995, aiming for improved governance, transparency, and inclusivity in Waqf management. Below are the key differences:

Category	Waqf Act, 1995	Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024
Name of the Act	The Waqf Act, 1995	Renamed Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act, 1995
Formation of Waqf	Allowed by declaration, user, or endowment (Waqf-al-aulad)	Removes Waqf by user; only declaration or endowment allowed. Donors must be practicing Muslims for 5+ years. Cannot deny female inheritance.
Government Property as Waqf	No clear provision	Government properties identified as Waqf cease to be Waqf. Disputes resolved by the Collector, who reports to the state.
Power to Determine Waqf	Waqf Board had authority	Provision removed.
Survey of Waqf	Conducted by Survey Commissioners and Additional Commissioners	Collectors empowered to conduct surveys as per state revenue laws.
Central Waqf Council	All members had to be Muslims, including two women	Includes two non-Muslims; MPs, former judges, and eminent persons need not be Muslims. The following members must be Muslims: Representatives of Muslim organisations, Scholars in Islamic law, Chairpersons of Waqf Boards. Of the Muslim members, two members must be women.
State Waqf Boards	Up to two elected Muslim MPs/MLAs/Bar Council members; at least two women	State government nominates members, including two non-Muslims, one each from Shia, Sunni, Backward-class Muslims, Bohra, and Agakhani. At least two Muslim women required.
Tribunal Composition	Led by a judge, included Additional District Magistrate & Muslim law expert	Muslim law expert removed; includes District Court judge (chairman) and a joint secretary (state government).
Appeal on Tribunal Orders	High Court intervention only under special circumstances	Appeals allowed to High Court within 90 days.

Powers of Central Government	State governments could audit Waqf accounts anytime	Central Government empowered to make rules on Waqf registration, accounts, and audits (CAG/designated officer).
Separate Waqf Boards for Sects	Separate boards for Shia & Sunni (if Shia Waqf >15%)	Also allows Bohra & Agakhani Waqf boards.

7) What are the key reforms recommended by the Joint Committee?

The amendments to the Waqf Act, 1995 as recommended by the Joint Committee on Waqf Amendment Bill, 2024 (JCWAB), introduce progressive reforms, including:

Key Reforms in Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024

- Separation of Trusts from Waqf: Muslim-created trusts under any law will no longer be considered Waqf, ensuring full control over trusts.
- Technology & Central Portal: A centralized portal will automate Waqf property management, including registration, audits, contributions, and litigation, ensuring efficiency and transparency. This also efficiently utilizes technology for the automation of Waqf management.
- Eligibility for Waqf Dedication: Only practicing Muslims (for at least five years) can dedicate their own property to Waqf, restoring the pre-2013 provision.
- Protection of 'Waqf by User' Properties: Already registered properties remain Waqf unless disputed or identified as government land.
- Women's Rights in Family Waqf: Women must receive their rightful inheritance before Waqf dedication, with special provisions for widows, divorced women, and orphans.
- Transparent Waqf Management: Mutawallis must register property details on the central portal within six months to enhance accountability.
- Government Land & Waqf Disputes: An officer above the rank of Collector will investigate government properties claimed as Waqf, preventing unwarranted claims.
- Strengthening Waqf Tribunals: A structured selection process and fixed tenure ensure stability and efficiency in dispute resolution.
- Non-Muslim Representation: Two non-Muslim members will be included in both Central and State Waqf Boards to ensure inclusivity.
- Reduced Annual Contributions: Waqf institutions' mandatory contribution to Waqf Boards is reduced from 7% to 5%, allowing more funds for charity.
- Application of the Limitation Act: The Limitation Act, 1963, will now apply to Waqf property claims, reducing prolonged litigation.
- Annual Audit Reforms: Waqf institutions earning over 1 lakh annually must undergo audits by State Government-appointed auditors.
- Ending Arbitrary Property Claims: The Bill removes Section 40, preventing Waqf Boards from arbitrarily declaring properties as Waqf, avoiding misuse like declaring entire villages as Waqf.

These cases underscored the arbitrary and unregulated power exercised by Waqf Boards. To address this, Section 40 of the Waqf Act is being omitted, ensuring fair and just administration of Waqf properties.

8) What are some instances of Non-Muslim properties declared as Waqf?

As of September 2024, data from 25 States/UTs Waqf Boards shows that 5,973 government properties have been declared as Waqf. Some examples include:

- As per MoHUA (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) in September 2024, 108 properties are under control of Land and Development Office, 130 properties under control of Delhi Development Authority and 123 properties in the public domain were declared as Waqf properties and brought into litigation.
- Karnataka (1975 & 2020): 40 Waqf properties were notified, including farm-lands, public spaces, government lands, graveyards, lakes, and temples.
- The Punjab Waqf Board has claimed land belonging to the Education Department in Patiala.

Examples of other Non-Muslim properties declared as Waqf:

- Tamil Nadu: A farmer in Thiruchenturai village was unable to sell his land due to the Waqf Board's claim over the entire village. This unexpected requirement prevented him from selling his land to repay a loan for his daughter's wedding.
- Govindpur Village, Bihar: In August 2024, The Bihar Sunni Waqf Board's claim over an entire village in August 2024 affected seven families, leading to a case in the Patna High Court. The case is sub-judice.
- Kerala: In September 2024, around 600 Christian families in Ernakulam district are contesting the Waqf Board's claim over their ancestral land. They have appealed to the Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- Karnataka: In 2024, Farmers protested after the Waqf Board designated 15,000 acres in Vijayapura as Waqf land. Disputes also arose in Ballari, Chitradurga, Yadgir, and Dharwad. The government, however, assured that no evictions would take place.
- Uttar Pradesh: Complaints have been raised against alleged corruption and mismanagement by the State Waqf Board.

9) How is the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024 expected to benefit the Poor?

Waqf plays a crucial role in serving religious, charitable, and social welfare needs, especially for the underprivileged. However, its impact has often been reduced due to mismanagement, encroachment, and lack of transparency. Some key benefits of Waqf for the Poor:

Digitization for Transparency and Accountability

- A centralized digital portal will track Waqf properties, ensuring better identification, monitoring, and management.
- Auditing and accounting measures will prevent financial mismanagement and ensure funds are used only for welfare purposes.

Increased Revenue for Welfare and Development

- Preventing misuse and illegal occupation of Waqf lands will boost revenue for Waqf Boards, allowing them to expand welfare programs.
- Funds will be allocated to healthcare, education, housing, and livelihood support, directly benefiting the economically weaker sections.
- Regular audits and inspections will promote financial discipline and strengthen public confidence in Waqf management.

10) How does the inclusion of non-Muslim members in the Waqf Board and Central Waqf Council contribute to Waqf management, and what is the extent of their role and influence in decision-making?

- Non-Muslim Stakeholders: Donors, litigants, lessees, and tenants are involved in Waqf management, making their representation in Waqf Boards and the Central Waqf Council (CWC) are essential for fairness.
- Regulation of Secular Activities: Section 96 empowers the Central Government to regulate governance, social, economic, and welfare aspects of Waqf institutions, reaffirmed by court rulings.
- Oversight Role of Central Waqf Council: The CWC supervises State Waqf Boards, ensuring compliance without direct control over Waqf properties. This highlights that Waqf management extends beyond religious aspects to economic and financial regulation.
- Non-Muslim Representation:
 - State Waqf Boards: 2 out of 11 members (excluding ex-officio) can be non-Muslims.
 - Central Waqf Council: 2 out of 22 members (excluding ex-officio) can be non-Muslims.
- While decisions are made by majority vote, non-Muslim members can contribute administrative and technical expertise, improving the efficiency and governance of Waqf institutions.

SC/ST/OBC delegation meets Tribal Affairs Minister; Submits memorandum of demands

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, APRIL 01

All India Confederation of SC/ST/OBC organisations, Jammu & Kashmir Unit, today called on Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana and submitted a memorandum of demands.

The memorandum delineated a series of critical demands aimed at addressing the grievances faced by the tribal population in Jammu and Kashmir.

It demanded restoration of reservation in promotions as per the CAT and High Court judgment dated 06.03.2025 that has cleared the way for reservation in promotions.

The delegation called for strict implementation of the SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, restoration of SC Roster Point as per SRO-294, restoration of 5 year age relaxation for SC/ST candidates, filling of backlog vacancies for SC/



ST/OBCS.

Additionally, the memorandum emphasised maintenance of Reservation Roster Register to ensure correct implementation of reservation policies. The memorandum, while highlighting the plight of landless underprivileged communities, also demanded prevention of State land allocation to outsiders.

Another pressing issue raised was conduct of a caste-based census to

ensure proportionate allocation of reservations and resources. The delegation raised the issue of a SC member post in J&K PSC lying vacant since December 2022 and demanded fulfilling the same to safeguard the interests of the tribal population.

The memorandum also raised timely disbursement of SC/ST/OBC scholarships, restoration of the Old Pension Scheme for Employees among other

things.

Javed Rana gave a patient hearing to the delegation and assured them that the government is abreast of their genuine demands and their concerns would be taken up for appropriate action. He said that various policies and programs have already been implemented aimed at fostering inclusive growth for marginalized sections of society.

Tony, Gharu jointly inaugurate first-ever blacktopped road from Jhora Farm to Jugnoo Post

JI NEWS SERVICE
SUCHETGARH, APRIL 1

In a historic development for the border villages of Suchetgarh, Senior Congress leader and DDC Suchetgarh Taranjit Singh Tony, along with MLA RS Pura Prof. Gharu Ram, jointly inaugurated the blacktopping of the road leading from Jhora Farm via Peer Baba Kupa Fly up to Jugnoo Post. The road, constructed for the first time since Independence, has been completed at an estimated cost of Rs 2.72 crore.

Speaking on the occasion, Tony emphasized the significance of this road for the local population and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel. "Since I assumed the role of DDC, I prioritized this long-pending demand to ensure better connectivity in border areas. The final stretch of this road has been completed under NABARD, reaching the Zero Line, fulfilling a critical need for the security forces and residents alike," he said.

Tony highlighted that the road's construction was initially requested by then BSF DIG Surjeet Singh Shekho (Retd), who had



pointed out the hardships faced by soldiers due to the lack of a proper road. "The people of Chakroi and Jhora hold great reverence for Peer Baba, and the road's completion now ensures smoother access for the devotees and security personnel stationed here," he added.

Tony also expressed gratitude to the Deputy Chief Minister and Commissioner Secretary PWD, Bhupinder Kumar, for their special sanction of another major road project. "The road from Octroi Post Suchetgarh to Gharana Wetland has been approved at a staggering cost of Rs 6.5 crore. This will significantly enhance

connectivity and promote eco-tourism in the region," he announced.

Tony also said that those who have given their land for Gharana Wetland will be compensated by providing jobs in the wildlife sanctuary so that they can take care of their livelihoods. He emphasized that when the Gharana Wetland was not there, it was these people who took care of the species coming from across the globe.

Reaffirming his commitment to rural development, Tony assured that efforts will continue to ensure comprehensive infrastructure growth, especially in Zero Line areas, to improve the quality

of life for border residents and security personnel.

At last, Tony and MLA RS Pura Prof. Gharu Ram have both vowed to make Suchetgarh a Model Constituency.

MLA RS Pura, Prof. Gharu Ram Bhagat lauded the efforts of Tony and other stakeholders for taking up this crucial project. "Infrastructure development in border areas is a necessity, not a luxury. Better roads mean better accessibility, safety, and economic upliftment for the people living in these remote regions," he stated. He further added, "When it comes to development, everybody is equal for me."

Jammu's Om Parkash Daloutra honored with President's Police Medal on CBI Foundation Day

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 1

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) celebrated its Foundation Day with a significant focus on advancements in law enforcement and anti-corruption efforts. A proud moment for Jammu, Om Parkash Daloutra, HC CBI ACB Jammu, was conferred with the prestigious President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service. His unwavering commitment, exceptional investigative skills, and dedication to upholding justice have earned him this esteemed recognition. He was awarded for his exemplary performance in conducting fast and efficient investigations, ensuring timely justice in crucial cases.

Om Parkash Daloutra has been an integral part of the CBI's mission to combat corruption and ensure accountability. His diligence and professionalism have set a high bench-



mark in law enforcement, making a lasting impact in the fight against crime and corruption in the region. The event, held at Bharat Mandapam, was

Roadmap for CBI'. The ceremony also marked the recognition of several other officers for their outstanding service. CBI Director Praveen Sood hailed 2024 as a transformative year for law enforcement, with the introduction of BHARAT-POL enhancing seamless communication between agencies nationwide. Additionally, new legal frameworks have accelerated investigations, leading to the registration of 502 anti-corruption cases this year, marking a significant stride in the fight against corruption.

The event also paid tribute to CBI's founder, late Dharamnath Prasad Kohli, acknowledging his pioneering efforts in establishing the agency as a premier investigating and prosecuting body in the country. The CBI remains committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and efficiency in its pursuit of justice.

graced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who delivered a lecture on the theme 'Viksit Bharat @ 2047 - A

mark in law enforcement, making a lasting impact in the fight against crime and corruption in the region. The event, held at Bharat Mandapam, was

DC Rajouri directs for swift, quality redressal of Public Grievances

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, APRIL 01

Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma today chaired a meeting here in the Conference Hall to review the status of grievances and citizen registrations on the JK Samadhan portal. The meeting focused on ensuring timely redressal of public grievances and enhancing transparency in services delivery.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the ADC-wise status of grievance registrations and disposals. He directed the officers to expedite both the registration and resolution of grievances, emphasizing the need for quality disposal to ensure citizen satisfaction. Pending grievances were also discussed with the concerned officers to facilitate swift resolution. Apart from grievance redressal, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the status of the physical verification of development



works across the district. He directed the Tehsildars to identify patches of state land and instructed that the issuance of category certificates to the general public should not be delayed. Strict vigilance was emphasized to maintain transparency in public services delivery.

Reiterating the administration's commitment to good governance, DC Rajouri stated that there shall be zero tolerance for corruption. He urged all officers to ensure efficiency and accountability in addressing public concerns. The meeting was attend-

ed by ADC Kalakote Tanveer Ahmed, ADC Rajouri Rajiv Khajuria, ADC Sunderbani Rajeev Magotra, ADC Nowshera Babu Ram Tandon, ACP Sheraz Chouhan, SDM Thanamandi Abid Hussain, ACD Vijay Kr Verma, CMO Manohar Rana, along with Tehsildars and BDOs.

Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan: District Admin Udhampur organises orientation programme on IEC campaign against drug abuse

JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, APRIL 01

A one-day orientation programme to train resource persons for conducting Information, Education and Communication Campaign against drug abuse was organized today by the District Administration Udhampur here under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai.

The IEC campaign forms part of the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction initiated under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

The event witnessed the participation of District Social Welfare Officer Kanika Gupta, all Block Development Officers and officials from other stakeholder departments.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh



was the chief guest, while Assistant Commissioner Development, Dr. Ranjeet Singh Kotwal presided over the programme.

At the outset, ACD Dr. Ranjeet Singh Kotwal, who is also the Nodal Officer for the IEC campaign, delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the importance of equipping resource persons

with proper training and knowledge for effective implementation.

Addressing the participants, the ADC emphasized the necessity of a coordinated, multi-departmental effort to implement the IEC campaign at the grassroots level. He urged resource persons to ensure the successful execution of the cam-

campaign across the district. Resource persons were sensitized on the importance of executing the campaign in mission mode by conducting awareness drives, drug-free pledge ceremonies and organizing events at the Block and Panchayat levels to promote drug abuse prevention across all Panchayats in the district.

Shabnum Jan urges CM Omar Abdullah to establish drug de-addiction centres across J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, APRIL 1

Shabnum Jan, a dedicated member of the All India Mahila Congress, has appealed to Hon'ble Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to take immediate action against the escalating drug addiction crisis in Jammu and Kashmir. In a statement released today, Jan emphasized the urgent need for the establishment of Drug De-Addiction Centers in every Tehsil of the Union Territory through a Memorandum of



Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Highlighting the alarming rise in substance abuse, particularly among the youth, Jan underscored the necessity of accessible and well-equipped rehabilitation facilities. "The absence of adequate de-addiction centers has left many young individuals without proper support for recovery. It is imperative that the government takes swift action to address this crisis," she stated.