

**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
- Severe stomach pain
- Redness in the eyes
- Stomach pain
- Steady rise in pulse or rate, blood or vomit, urine or stool
- Redness

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## Sigh of relief: Fresh wet spell reduces rainfall deficiency to 69% from last week's 83%

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26 (KNO)

The fresh spell of precipitation has brought down the rainfall deficiency by 14 per cent as the deficit rainfall has reduced from 83 per cent last week to 69 per cent till Wednesday.

Major precipitation has been recorded at Kargil station in Ladakh as well as Rajouri and Poonch districts in Jammu division over the last one week. After zero rainfall in the first 50 days of this year, Kargil recorded 16.4 mm

rainfall against the normal precipitation of 25 mm in the last 57 days of 2025.

The precipitation deficit has reduced from above 70 per cent to 50 per cent in Rajouri and Poonch districts of Jammu division, reveals data accessed by the news agency.

In the entire Jammu and Kashmir, the deficit rainfall has reduced to 69 per cent compared to 83 per cent last week. According to data, against the normal precipitation of 215.5mm, the region recorded a rainfall of 65.8



mm from January 01, 2025, to February 26, 2025.

However, other districts of Jammu and Kashmir despite witnessing a reduction in the precipitation deficiency continued to be categorised in the large deficiency list.

The data reveals a deficiency of 60 to 84 per cent in other districts of Jammu and Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of the Union Territory, having a deficiency of 74 per cent during the period.

There is a forecast of more snow and rain for the next

two days, which would likely reduce the rainfall deficit of this season. The weatherman has issued yellow and orange alerts for Jammu and Kashmir, predicting light to moderate rainfall till February 28.

KNO reported that amid the declining trend in precipitation for the last three consecutive years, Kashmir Valley has recorded the worst-ever deficit rainfall in 2025 in the last eight years.

Official data revealed that a deficiency of 70 per cent was recorded from December 2024 to February 2025.

### MP Jugal Kishore led delegation, others call on LG

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26 (KNO)

A delegation of elected public representatives from Reasi led by Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member of Parliament called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Wednesday.

The delegation comprises of Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Development Council Reasi; Baldev Raj Sharma and Kuldeep

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### BSF foil infiltration bid along IB, intruder shot dead

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26 (KNO)

Border Security Force (BSF) personnel foiled an infiltration bid along the International Border in

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### ECI is always with voters : CEC

**AGENCIES**  
Chennai, Feb 26: Chief Election Commissioner of India Gyanesh Kumar on Wednesday said the Election Commission of India will always stand with the voters.

Talking to reporters in Madurai, after a review meeting with Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Archana Patnaik, District

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## Terrorists open fire at army vehicle near LoC, no casualties reported

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26 (KNO)

Terrorists opened fire on an army vehicle in a forward hamlet near the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district on Wednesday.

Officials told the news agency that there were no casualties in the brief firing near Phal village in the Sunderbani sector.

“The terrorists, believed to be hiding in a forest, fired a few rounds at the army vehicle passing through the area, which is considered a traditional infiltration route for terrorists,” they said, adding, “The troops returned fire and reinforcements were rushed to neutralise the terrorists.”

Officials said that a massive cordon and search operation has been launched by the security forces in the area.

In another development,



the officials said, army soldiers opened fire after observing suspicious movement near the LoC in the Keeri Battalion area of the Akhnoor sector during the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. It may be recalled that last week the representatives

of India and Pakistan Armies had agreed to uphold the February 2021 ceasefire agreement and explore measures to prevent future misunderstandings.

An official had told KNO that Brigade commanders of both the countries held a flag

meeting in Poonch district. They agreed to uphold the ceasefire agreement.

Meanwhile, security forces had launched massive search operations in the Jammu region last week to tighten noose around the terrorists and General Officer Commanding White Knight Corps Lt Gen Navin Sachdeva had chaired a joint security review meeting with focus on maintaining peace in the province.

Search operations were conducted in response to the presence of terrorists in the region. “Searches will continue till the Jammu region is sanitized and made terror free,” the officials had said.

GOC Sachdeva while chairing a joint security review meeting in Jammu had directed the security forces to ensure that no one disrupts the peace and tranquility in the region.

## Devotees flock to Shankaracharya Temple for Maha Shivaratri prayers



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26 (KNO)

A large number of devotees thronged the historic Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar on Wednesday to offer prayers on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri, locally known as

“Herath”. Braving the chilly and wet weather conditions, devotees formed long queues to seek blessings at the revered temple, which was beautifully decorated for the festival. According to the news

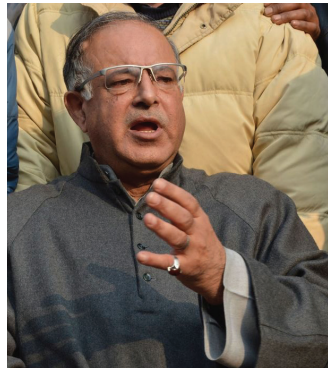
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## Kara reiterates demand for coordination committee, says Cong-NC ties ‘workable for now’

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26

Reiterating the demand for a coordination committee between the two coalition partners to streamline governance and address key policy matters, J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief Tariq Hameed Karra on Wednesday described the

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## Dr Jitendra inspects ‘Microbe Repository’ at Chandigarh, virtually inaugurates Palampur ‘Tulip’ Garden

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
CHANDIGARH, FEB 26

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, inspected “Microbe Repository” and other facilities at the CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology (CSIR-IMTECH) here and also took an update on the ongoing projects in the institute.

During the review, Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted



that microbial technology is a crucial pillar of biotechnology, emphasizing its growing significance in shaping the next generation industrial revolution.

Dr. Jitendra Singh credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the groundbreaking New BioE3 Policy, which places a renewed focus on biomanufacturing and bio foundries. He underscored India’s rapid progress in the biotech sector, stating, “India’s

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## India, Africa engagement is through mutually beneficial partnerships, not extractive: EAM

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, FEB 26

India’s engagement with Africa has been through capacity-building, skill development, and technology transfer, “unlike extractive models of engagement”, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said today, in an apparent reference to China’s significant presence in extractive industries in Africa.

Addressing the Japan-India-Africa Business Forum, the EAM said that India’s approach to Africa has always been guided by a deep-rooted commitment to building long-term,



mutually-beneficial partnerships.

“Unlike extractive models of engagement, India believes in capacity-building, skill development, and technology transfer, ensuring that African countries not only ben-

efit from investments but also develop self-sustaining growth ecosystems.”

The EAM’s oblique reference was to Chinese firms that over the past few decades are reported to have expanded their presence in Africa’s

extractive industries such as mining, petroleum, and natural gas -- as part of “minerals-for-infrastructure” agreements, where Chinese companies provide infrastructure development in exchange for access to minerals. However, this kind of engagement has not benefitted the African partners, with many countries heavily indebted to China.

The EAM listed out India’s capacity building initiatives, like the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, the Pan-African e-Network Project, and High-Impact Community

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## JK doles out plans of additional 2200 MWs power to CEA

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26 (KNO)

Jammu and Kashmir has informed Central Electricity Authority (CEA) that it has planned an additional 2200 Megawatts (MWs) of power till 2030.

This includes nearly 1,000 MWs of coal and solar energy with the officials saying that “Last JKPDD has already entered a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) of coal-based power of over 390 MWs under Shakti Policy.”

The official documents accessed by the news agency reads, “According to the data

provided by Jammu and Kashmir, an additional 392 MW of Coal (Shakti Scheme), 620 MW of solar and 1206 MW of hydro is planned till 2030.”

It also said that Jammu and Kashmir being a hilly state, the share of Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) in the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) trajectory has been taken as half of the share as stipulated in RPO-2023. “The other half of the DRE component has been considered to be met from RE general and from other sources.”

Referring to resource adequacy plan for the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh

2034-35, CEA has said, “One of the main criteria of resource adequacy studies is to determine the reliability of the system to meet the demand adequately at very instance of time. This reliability is measured with two indicators including Loss of Load Probability (LOLP) and Expected Energy Not Served (EENS).”

Pertinently, KNO in previous week reported that Jammu and Kashmir is currently relying on more than 85 percent of coal and solar power amid acute deficit of hydro power generation. Officials of PDD department had claimed

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## Fighting Extinction: Rana calls for innovative measures to protect endangered species

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, FEBRUARY 26

Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, today impressed upon the officers of Wildlife department to undertake innovative conservation measures for protection of rare and endangered species, that have been recently spotted in the Pir Panjal region.

He issued these directions during his visit to the Pir Panjal region where he discussed various conservation measures with the officers of the wildlife department.

Wildlife Protection (Poonch-Rajouri) had last year captured Brandt's Hedgehog from Nowshera and Shachera. They were released into the natural

habitat after taking proper sampling and completing all other studies. They had also confirmed the presence of smooth coated Otter from Ghambir Mughlian, Rajouri in October 2024 and critically endangered Pangolin in January 2025 from Nowshera.

The Minister said that these findings are a great news for the wildlife department and calls for their protection and conservation.

"We need to take conservation steps in these areas where biodiversity supports Brandt's Hedgehog, Pangolin, Otters and other rare and endangered species," the minister said.

He called upon the officers to evaluate the activities that threaten the biodiversity and research pos-



sible solutions that weigh environmental, economic and social concerns. He said that environmental conservation has become a global priority due to the growing concerns of climate change and increasing pollution.

"To restore environmental balance, it is crucial to adopt a more sensitive approach toward nature and wildlife conservation as each species has an important role to perform in the ecosystem. If we want to protect them

we have maintain a fine balance between human development and wildlife conservation," he added.

Rana said that co-existence of varied life forms is indispensable to maintain a fine balance in the ecosystems and conservation efforts included status surveys, research, monitoring, development of conservation action plans and advocacy. He further directed the wildlife warden to carry out a population estimation of the animals in the particular

area and to survey other areas for their presence.

"Population assessments provide the foundation for evaluating the status and threats to endangered species and plan and implement species recovery and conservation plans accordingly," he added.

Rana also called for involvement of local communities in the conservation of endangered species and their habitats. These communities play a significant role in shielding endangered species from hunting, while protecting the places these animals live, he said.

He further called for strengthening enforcement mechanisms like wildlife monitoring activities, mitigating human-wildlife conflict which

form an integral part of conservation achievements.

"There is need to design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity," he said. Rana also praised the efforts of the field staff in discovering these rare species in the dense forests.

Wildlife Warden, Amit Sharma, a wildlife expert, said that the sightings of these rare species has sparked excitement among wildlife enthusiasts, experts and renewed interest in the region's ecosystem. He said that the department will be conducting population census and research on these species to ensure their conservation and protection in harmony with nature.

## DC reviews achievements under HADP initiatives in Doda District



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, FEBRUARY 26

Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh took a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) in the District here at a meeting held in the Conference Hall DC Office Complex, the other day.

The meeting focused on evaluating the progress of key agricultural and allied sector initiatives.

The district nodal officer, along with officials from Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Floriculture, and Fisheries, provided a comprehensive overview

of the progress made so far.

Both physical and financial aspects, as well as the processing of applications on various portals, were discussed in detail.

The DC urged all departments to expedite registrations and ensure effective implementation of schemes to create a robust and profitable agricultural ecosystem.

The meeting was attended by CPO Doda, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, AD Fisheries, District Sericulture Officer, Assistant Floriculture Officer, and other officials from concerned departments.

## Thousands throng Poonch Shiv Khori Mandir on Maha Shivratri



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, FEBRUARY 26

The local Shiv Khori Temple witnessed the influx of thousands of devotees on the eve of Mahashivratri.

Men, women and children adorned in colorful attires filled the temple, taking part in special prayers held on the occasion. Visitors also enjoyed local cuisine at food stalls set up along the route to the temple shrine, enhancing the festive atmosphere of the day. Deputy Com-

missioner Vikas Kundal also paid obeisance at the temple shrine and sought the blessings of Lord Shiva.

The Deputy Commissioner exchanged Maha Shivratri greetings with the pilgrims. He said that the auspicious occasion embodies the true spirit of India's composite culture, fostering brotherhood and harmony among all communities.

Earlier, the Management Committee of the temple extended a warm welcome to the Deputy Commissioner.

## Sakeena Itoo reviews performance, functioning of JKMSCL

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEBRUARY 26

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the performance and functioning of Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL).

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed; Managing Director, JKMSCL, Principals of all GMCs, Principals of Dental Colleges, CMOs of all districts and other concerned officers, either in person or virtually.

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo underscored the need for further strengthening monitoring system of medical supplies for enhanced healthcare service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir. She called for



bringing added transparency and efficiency in medicine distribution for patients in all district and Sub-district hospitals as well as health centres.

The Minister asked the Principals of all GMCs to maintain proper record of medicines distributed among patients at their respective hospitals as well as of those prescribed for patients but not available in their stocks.

Sakeena further stressed on the management of JKMSCL to maintain quality standards in medical supplies as well as machinery and equipments being procured by the corporation.

Acknowledging the role of JKMSCL in upgrad-

ing the healthcare infrastructure across J&K, she urged the management to work towards a more responsive and efficient system that caters to growing medical needs of locals here.

While assessing the purchase status of machinery and other high end equipments for various healthcare facilities of J&K, Sakeena called upon the management of the Corporation to reduce delays in procurement and adopt an enhanced framework for timely delivery of machinery and equipments. She directed the JKMSCL management to expedite pending procurement processes and ensure timely delivery of

medical supplies, machinery and equipments, especially in rural and remote areas.

While reviewing the status of Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS) portal, Sakeena Itoo stressed on the management of JKMSCL for physical monitoring of drugs being distributed among various health facilities. She asked them to constitute teams for conducting surprise inspections of drugs and medicines being delivered to hospitals and other facilities.

She further asked the management of corporation to take action against officers who are yet to onboard on DVDMS portal.

During the meeting, MD, JKMSCL provided a detailed presentation on procurement mechanisms, supply chain management, availability of medicines as well as financial position of the Corporation.

## I Create India celebrates Empowering Indian Army Veterans through Entrepreneurship Training

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU : 26 FEB 2025

I Create India, a leading non-profit organization dedicated to entrepreneurship development, commemorated its 25th anniversary with a Silver Jubilee celebration on February 26th at the Manekshaw Centre in Delhi. Founded with the mission of transforming job seekers into job creators, I Create India has spent the last quarter-century fostering entrepreneurial skills, particularly amongst army veterans and un-deserved communities.

The organization's Silver Jubilee event highlighted the achievements and felicitation of over 40 Indian Army Veteran entrepreneurs, who have successfully transitioned to business ownership following I Create's comprehensive training and mentorship programs. Key component of I Create's success is its collaborative partnership with the Directorate of Indian Army Veterans (DIAV), formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This partnership has facilitated the establishment of Business Incubation Centres (BICs)



at 13 Regimental Centres and 04 more Regimental centres are in the process to be on boarded under this initiative.

The Chief Guest for the event, Lieutenant General Ranjeet Singh, the Director General of Discipline, Ceremonial, and Welfare of the Indian Army, honoured the outstanding contributions of over 40 Indian Army veteran entrepreneurs. He took a moment to commend each of them for their remarkable dedication and perseverance in achieving self-reliance. Lt Gen Singh expressed his deep appreciation for their entrepreneurial spirit and emphasized the importance of their efforts in inspiring other veterans to pursue self-employment and economic independence. Moreover, he highlighted the crucial role that these

veteran entrepreneurs play in the nation's economic growth and social stability. By turning their military discipline and leadership skills into successful business ventures, they not only ensure a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families but also contribute to the community and the larger economy.

The senior representatives of the initiative's sponsors, including HCL Foundation, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Allianz, The Hans Foundation and IndusInd Bank, graced the event with their presence. The celebration prominently featured a documentary highlighting the remarkable impact of I Create's efforts, as well as the unveiling of a commemorative coffee table book.

To date, I Create India has trained nearly 14,500

Indian Army Veterans across various Business Incubation Centres established throughout the country. Upon retiring from the Indian Armed Forces, these veterans have successfully launched micro and small businesses in diverse sectors such as grocery stores, various types of agricultural farming, travel agencies, dairy farms, poultry farms, cosmetic stores, medical stores, gyms, hardware stores, coaching centres, restaurants and real estate ventures. Among these veterans, 1,687 have already become successful entrepreneurs, while nearly 3,000 others are currently in the mentoring phase or working on their business plans. These veterans, typically aged 35-40 years, were acknowledged for their entrepreneurial achievements during the

event.

Harsh Bhargava, the Founder of I Create India, highlighted the organization's unwavering dedication to tackling India's employment challenges. He stated that for the past 25 years, I Create has been steadfast in addressing India's employment crisis through entrepreneurship. Our Army veterans leverage their disciplined approach to overcome business obstacles, our women entrepreneurs uplift entire communities and our youth embrace self-reliance to become job creators. As we commemorate this Silver Jubilee, we pay tribute to those who are shaping India's future, one business at a time. Indian Army veteran entrepreneurs are making significant contributions to nation-building through their disciplined approach and leadership skills acquired during their service. Through their dedication and perseverance, these veterans are playing a crucial role in strengthening the nation's economic growth and social stability, ultimately contributing to a more self-reliant and Viksit Bharat.

## Four-Day Training Program on Natural Farming begins at SKUAST-Jammu



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The Directorate of Extension, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-J), in collaboration with the Directorate of Research, SKUAST-Kashmir, commenced a four-day training program on 'Natural Farming' from 25th to 28th February 2025. The program is organized under the National Mission for Natural Farming and is specifically designed for Scientists and Professors from Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) of SKUAST-J from Rajouri, Poonch, Doda, Kishtwar, Kathua, Ramban, and the Centre for Organic and Natural Farming (CONF).

Prof. Vikas Sharma, Head, Division of Soil Science, is the Coordinator, while Prof. Parshant Bakshi, Head, Division of Fruit Science and In-Charge of CONF, is serving as the Co-Coordinator of this training initiative.

During the inaugural session, Prof. Vikas Sharma extended a warm welcome to Prof. R K Salgotra, Director, Institute of Biotechnology, Head, CONF, and all participants. He expressed gratitude to the Director Extension, SKUAST-J, for entrusting them with this significant endeavor. Prof. Sharma also provided a comprehensive overview of the training program, highlighting its objectives and expected outcomes.

Prof. Ramesh Salgotra, in his address, emphasized

the relevance of natural farming in the current agricultural landscape. He shed light on the potential of gene editing in developing crop varieties tailored to local agro-climatic conditions, aligning with sustainable and natural farming practices.

Prof. Parshant Bakshi discussed the ongoing activities and initiatives of CONF in promoting natural farming practices. He also extended the vote of thanks, acknowledging the contributions of all stakeholders involved in making this program a reality.

The training program features interactive sessions where participants are encouraged to share their practical experiences and insights on natural farming.

## Two-day Pahari Literary & Cultural conference concludes

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages successfully organized a two-day Pahari Literary and Cultural Conference in Jammu. Held at the Hall of the Arts, the conference featured sessions including poetry recitals, short story readings, scholarly papers, music performances, and drama presentations. Additionally, two significant books were launched during the event.

Pahari Literary cum Cultural Conference concluded with a unanimous resolution to document the ethos of the Pahari language in audio-visual and book formats, ensuring its preservation and promotion for future generations.

On the second day, the first session was graced by Member of the Legisla-

tive Assembly (MLA) from Thanamandi, Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, as the chief guest. Academy's Secretary, Harvinder Kaur; former Secretary of the Pahari Advisory Board, Showket Ali Kazmi, Senior SSP Rashid Bhatt; Pahari leader Jamaat Ali Shaheen; and Cultural Officer and Pahari Editor, Mohd Ayub Mir Naeem (Karnai) also shared dais. Adv. Altaf Hussain Janjua conducted the programme.

The session featured musical performances by Master Kartar Chand, Sher Singh, Waseem Anjum, and Muzammil Shah Nazki, who entertained the audience with Pahari music. The welcome address was delivered by Secretary Harvinder Kour, while Ayub Mir presented a descriptive speech highlighting the Academy's Pahari Sections' achievements. The chief guest



emphasized the importance of organizing such events to promote Pahari language and literature and assured full support. He also pledged to raise issues related to the Academy in the legislative assembly. Following the inaugural session, a music session was held where artists like Master Kartar Chand and his team, Ashfaq Ahmed Mir and his team, and Parvez Malik presented various Pahari musical pieces. Tabla player

Prabhat Bali and flutist Rakesh Basotra enhanced the musical ambiance. The most significant session on the second day was Mehfil-e-Mushahira, where approximately twenty poets presented their latest Pahari poetry. The session was chaired by senior poet and writer Rashid Qamar, with SSP Rashid Bhatt as the chief guest and Sheikh Azad Ahmad Azad as the guest of honor. The session was moderated by renowned

poet, writer, and senior principal Anwar Khan. Participating poets included Rashid Qamar, Sheikh Azad Ahmad Azad, K.D. Mani, Parvez Manos, Sheikh Zahoor, Swami Antar Nirro, Parvez Iqbal Malik, Anwar Khan, Bashir Ahmad Lohar, Mahmood Tahir, Sadiq Ahmad Siddiqui, Dr. Arif Iqbal Malik, Malik Zakir Khaki, Sameena Sahar, Syed Ishaq Tabassum, Khalid Awan Rahat, Bilal Ahmad Bilal, and Zulfiqar Rahat.

The final session featured a Pahari drama titled "Betti Te Doctor" (Daughter and Doctor) under the banner of Pakiza Cultural Club, Dera Hall, directed by Parvez Malik. Former MLA Ravinder Raina was the chief guest, with DDC member Iqbal Malik, former MLC Mohammad Rashid Qureshi, and renowned historian and researcher K.D. Mani as

guests of honor. During the conference, Iqbal Shawl's short story collection "Terran" and Parvez Manos's Pahari novel "Qabeela" were launched. Advocate Altaf Hussain Janjua, Dr. Abdul Haq Naemi, Javed Haqani, and Saleem Bukhari presented scholarly papers. Zafar Khokhar, Sardar Rattan Singh Kanwal, Iqbal Shal, and Sheikh Azad Ahmad Azad presented short stories. The conference was attended by notable personalities, including Rtd Director Gulzar Qureshi, former DC Ghulam Ahmad Khwaja, former Secretary of the Pahari Advisory Board Dr. Ikram, Prof. Abdul Rashid Munhas, Professor Dr. Javed Iqbal, Prof. Abdul Qayoom, Prof. M.K. Waqar, Sarwar Chohan, DSP Manzoor Haq Kalaiwi, Dr. Shah Nawaz Chaudhry, Iqbal Shal, Prof. Mohd Imran

Khan, Prof. Natan Sharma, Dr. Rajiv Chaddha, Rakesh Khajuria, DSP Crime Aftab Bukhari, KAS officer Nasir Khan, Preeti Sharma, Dr. Abdul Haq Naemi, Saima Qazi, Advocate Murtaza Akser, Advocate Sheikh Altaf Hussain, Gohar Hafeez Wani, Dr. Kifayat Rizvi, Trade Union leader Babu Hussain Malik, Tauseef Sabri, and Mushtaq Ahmad Shawl. The conference was organized under the leadership of Dr. Javed Rahi, the Academy's divisional head and chief editor of the Gujri department, who played a pivotal role in its successful execution. The two-day conference proved to be a significant step towards fostering the Pahari language, literature, and cultural heritage, reaffirming the commitment of scholars, artists, and institutions to its preservation and promotion.

## Police Registers First-Ever e-FIR via Email In Awantipora

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26

In a sophisticated way towards digital policing, Police in Awantipora has registered its first electronic First Information Report (e-FIR) following a complaint lodged via Email.

The complaint was filed by Mushtaq Ahmed Bhat resident of New Colony Khrew, against Adil Ahmad Bhat and Bilal Ahmad Bhat both residents of New Colony Khrew.

The complainant alleged them about assaulting his whole family causing injury to them. The complainant has supported the complaint with OPD ticket from PHC Khrew and copy of Aadhaar card as evidential proof.

## High Court order regarding Toll brings major relief to people, will reduce muscle power: PHDCCI, HRAK

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Jammu Region Chapter (PHDCCI-JR) & Hotel & Restaurant Association, Katra (HRAK) jointly in a meeting held here today besides hailing the decision of The Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court with regard to Toll Plazas from Lakhampur to Udhampur discussed in detail the positive impacts of that order which are going to be seen in future in details.

Rakesh Wazir, Chair PHDCCI & President HRAK, while welcoming the decision wherein the Court directed that toll fees at Lakhampur and Ban Toll Plazas be reduced to 20% of previous rates until the Lakhampur-Udhampur

highway is fully operational and also instructed authorities to reassess the current toll charges, noting they are excessively high and prohibited the establishment of new toll plazas within 60 kilometers of existing ones on National Highway-44, said that this order will have far reaching impact in whole society and J&K people as well as Vaishnodevi ji pilgrims will get benefitted from it.

He while referring the decision wherein respondents i.e. NHA as well as the contractors of the Toll Plazas are directed not to employ any person at the Toll Plazas having criminal background and the respondent as well as the contractors should deploy the persons at the Toll Plazas only after verification of such employees by the concerned

police agency and in case of any deviation in this regard, the concerned SHO/Incharge shall be personally responsible for the same will change the equation not only in J&K but this decision's impact would be seen in whole India in coming days and rule of muscle power which we used to see on Toll Plazas will get reduced because people will refer that order and asked the authorities for its strict implementation.

Mr. Shyam Lal Kesar Executive member PHDCCI and Chairman HRAK while speaking on the occasion said that residents in the vicinity of toll plazas have faced unfair overcharging as they commute through the points very frequently and used to face problems in getting the Local passes which are given to

people residing within 20 Kms as per NHA guidelines particularly at Ban Toll Plaza just on basis of muscle power and even asked the authorities for having prove of all the irregularities which are routine matter overthere.

Mr. Sanjay Gupta Co-Chair PHDCCI and Virender Kesar Convenor (Head) Katra PHDCCI said that this historic decision delivered long-awaited justice to the public and emphasized that these type of decisions and interventions of Courts make the society a real place to live in otherwise some time common man loose hope from the system and asked for immediate and effective implementation of the court's directives to ensure genuine relief for commuters and residents.

## Valedictory Ceremony of Trekking-Based MDP for Leadership Skills for NTPC Managers (Batch II) at IIM Jammu comes to a Grand Close

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu under the leadership of Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu concluded the valedictory ceremony of the trekking-based Management Development Programme (MDP) for NTPC's young leaders on 26th Feb 2025. The event, held at the Prahalad Classroom, marked the culmination of a transformative three-day program designed to enhance leadership skills through experiential learning in the scenic lower Himalayas.

The program, which ran from Feb 24th to 26th, 2025, featured seven meticulously designed sessions focusing on themes such as team building, conflict resolution, strategic thinking, sustainability, and digital transformation. A key highlight of the program was a trekking expedition to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra, which offered participants a unique platform for field-based experiential learning.



The valedictory ceremony commenced with a warm welcome, followed by a detailed program report presented by Prof. Nitin Upadhyay, Program Director, IIM Jammu. Participants shared their reflections of their journey, highlighting the program's role in enhancing their leadership capabilities and personal growth.

Prof. Nitin Upadhyay, Program Director, IIM Jammu, appreciated the participants for their valuable feedback and emphasized that this marks the beginning of a long-lasting relationship. He expressed hope that the bond formed

here would extend for a lifetime, as the participants are now part of the IIM Jammu family. Encouraging them to explore other programs offered by IIM Jammu, including career counseling, he invited them to visit the institute's website and looked forward to meeting them again in the near future.

Dr. Chinmaya Swain, Program Director, IIM Jammu, emphasized that while every beginning has an end, at IIM Jammu, every end marks a new beginning, reflecting the institute's commitment to continuous collaboration. On the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri, he

extended heartfelt gratitude to all participants for their dedication and efforts in pushing their limits. He also thanked NTPC for organizing the MDP program and expressed enthusiasm for future leader-specific programs.

The event concluded with a formal certificate distribution, followed by a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Chinmaya Swain, Program Director, IIM Jammu. The National Anthem marked the end of the ceremony, leaving participants inspired to embark on their leadership journeys with renewed vigor.

This program highlights IIM Jammu's unwavering commitment to fostering future-ready leaders through impactful executive education, blending experiential learning with strategic insights to meet the dynamic demands of modern organizations. The program was coordinated by Executive Education and Consultancy Office, IIM Jammu.

## Poonch Campus Shines at SILKTECH 2025: Dr. Rubia Bukhari wins 2nd Prize for Pioneering Work in Cocoon Artistry

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, FEB 26

Dr. Rubia Bukhari, Founder of the Dr. Rubia Bukhari's Cocoon Artistry Initiative and Lecturer at the Department of Sericulture Poonch Campus University of Jammu, has made a remarkable impact at SILKTECH 2025, securing the 2nd Prize in the prestigious Poster Presentation category. The international event, dedicated to innovations in Sericulture and Silk Technology, witnessed the participation of leading experts, researchers and professionals from across the globe.



He his heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Rubia Bukhari for securing the 2nd Prize at SILKTECH 2025 and bringing laurels to the University of Jammu. He commended her dedication to research and innovation in Sericulture and Cocoon Artistry, emphasizing that her achievement not only highlights the academic excellence of Poonch Campus but also strengthens its role in promoting skill development and sustainable entrepreneurship in the region.

Speaking on her achievement, Dr. Rubia Bukhari expressed her gratitude to the organizers of SILK-

TECH 2025 and credited the success to her dedicated research in Sericulture and Cocoon Artistry. "This recognition is a testament to the potential of Cocoon Artistry in fostering sustainable livelihoods and promoting the rich heritage of silk production in Jammu and Kashmir. My goal is to take this initiative to a global stage and contribute to the growth of Seri-Tourism in the region," she remarked.

Her innovative approach in fusing traditional silk-based practices with modern entrepreneurship has been widely recognized and her work con-

tinues to inspire young researchers and artisans. The Cocoon Artistry Initiative, under her leadership, has played a crucial role in promoting skill development, economic self-reliance, and the revival of the silk industry in border districts like Poonch and Rajouri.

With this success, Dr. Rubia Bukhari continues her journey of innovation research and skill development, furthering the mission of Dr. Rubia Bukhari's Cocoon Artistry Initiative and positioning the region as a hub for Seri-Tourism and sustainable silk entrepreneurship.

## Rajat, Sahil inaugurate Bhandara at Maa Vaishno Devi Mandir, Shahidi Chowk, Jammu

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

On the holy Occasion of "MahaShivratri" Rajat Sharma MD (Unique Outsourcing, Unique Jan Kalyan Sewa Simiti, Unique Voice & Sahil Mahajan (BJP JK UT Co-Convenor Sanskriti Art and Culture Cell, Maa Bawe Wali Records MD & Pushkar Kumar Sharma (Gadighar Mandal Adyakash) inaugurated Bhandara at Maa Vaishno Devi Mandir, Shahidi Chowk Jammu. Programs was organised by Swarna Singh Munna (Auto Stand) They also performed seva at different Shivratri programs. In the program Firstly they paid Obseance in the feet of Lord Shiva, After that they inaugurated Bhandara for general public performed langer sewa and distributed Langer among people present there. Heavy number of devotees pays obeasnce to Lord Shiva. Speaking on the occasion Rajat Sharma



greeted Public on this holy occasion and said the festival of Mahashivratri is being celebrated with high enthusiasm and religious fervor across world. He said During this entire day devotees performed various dance with drum beats and chanted bhajans in favour of Lord Shiva with zeal and gaiety. He said on this day people also perform kalash yatra and Maha Yagya which holds a very high importance since time immemorial and it literally means devotion, sacrifice, offer-

ing and worship and refers to any ritual done in front of sacred fire, often with mantras. He appreciated organisers and said on this day people organises various programs like bhandaras and Shiv vivah across country which is highly appreciable and said lord Shiva will bless all with health, wealth and prosperity. Sahil Mahajan greeted public on this holy occasion and said MahaShivratri is big festival of hindu which is Celebrated across whole country. On this day people

performed Shiv Vivah at various different sites. BJP bows down in the feet of Lord Shiva and prays for the peace and well being of our Nation. He said Lord Shiva is Generator, Destroyer and Operator of whole Universe. He is also Care taker of every living thing present on this earth and BJP is praying for Happiness and peace of Jammu Kashmir. He said it is known as Maha Shivratri which means the great night of Shiva. It is observed by remembering lord Shiva Devotees chants Shiva prayers, Fasting themselves and performs various religious function on this day. He also appreciated the bhandara Organisers and said these types of social activists are boon to humanity and he thanked whole Organising committee and public for making this a successful event and he appealed the whole Public to come forward in big numbers and join this program.

## England sent packing as Zadran, Omarzai deliver CT25 stunner

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, FEB 27

England are out of the 2025 Champions Trophy, their insipid challenge floundering in another major tournament as a vibrant Afghanistan ran home victors by eight runs in a scintillating clash at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. On a ground in which they failed to defend 351 a few nights ago, England fumbled in a chase of 326 despite being propped up by an excellent 120 by Joe Root - his first ODI century in nearly six years.

Afghanistan's second win over England in as many ICC ODI events was underpinned by a record-breaking 146-ball 177 from Ibrahim Zadran that rescued the side from a wobbly start which saw them reduced to 37 for 3. Zadran's knock was both the highest-ever score in Champions Trophy history as well as the highest individual score in the format for an Afghanistan batter. However, the more influential contribution on another belter of a surface in Lahore came from Azmatullah Omarzai, who backed up his 31-ball 41 with career-best figures of 5 for 58 to wrestle back a game, which at different times, appeared to be drifting away from his side.

Fittingly, it was Omarzai that closed out the game in the 100th over of this seesawing contest when he had Adil Rashid mis-hit a slower ball to long-off. For it was he that set the Afghanistan ball rolling in what seemed a fairly straightforward chase for England when viewed from the prism of Josh Ing-



lis's exploits a few nights ago.

Phil Salt got going with two boundaries in the first over but lost his stumps while attempting to swipe Omarzai across the line. England then slipped to 30 for 2 when for the second game in a row, Mohammad Nabi struck with his first ball. This time Jamie Smith chipped a leading edge straight to point in a bid to lay down an early marker against spin.

Even under some pressure, Root managed a very pristine start to his innings, finding the boundary thrice in his first 10 balls as England added 60 runs in the PowerPlay. As ever, his footwork against spin was exemplary as he alternated between either going back deep into his crease, or using his reach to meet the ball early with his reverse sweeps. Ben Duckett, as he had been in his big century against Australia, scored mostly in 'v' down the ground. The southpaw was a recipient of a reprieve when he was

put down by captain Hashmatullah Shahidi on 30. But Duckett managed to add only eight more runs before he played around a slider from Rashid Khan and was pinged on the pads. The Afghans managed to end the 68-run stand with a review that overruled the on-field 'not out' decision against Duckett. However, they weren't particularly good at building the pressure on the new batter and like Root before, Harry Brook managed three boundaries from the first 11 balls he faced to get off to start. Eventually, the fourth wicket came against the run of play as Brook tamely chipped a catch back to Nabi for the veteran's second wicket.

At 133 for 4 in the 22nd over, England were in some strife especially with Buttler struggling to find any kind of tempo to his innings against the spinners. The England captain survived an LBW review against Nabi on Umpire's Call and his attempts to reverse sweep Noor Ahmad

didn't pay any dividends. Even as Root held one end up, batting serenely, Buttler's struggles added to the scoreboard pressure. He was on 12 off 24 at one point before he cut loose by charging Nabi and lofting a six. Another maximum came soon enough, this time via a slog sweep.

England's two most senior batters added 83 before Omarzai returned with another twist by bouncing out Buttler for a 42-ball 38. Gulbadin Naib had Liam Livingstone caught behind cheaply as England headed to the final 10 overs of the chase needing 90. Jamie Overton then played it smartly, eschewing all risks in the remaining overs of spin bowled by Noor and Rashid to hold back the attack for Afghanistan's medium pacers. But as it turned, he and the rest of his colleagues were up against an inspired Omarzai. Joe Root completed a 98-ball 100 and even as he began to experience the after effects of his long innings in the

heat, he still managed to unfurl a pair of outstanding shots. One of them was a reverse-scoop for six against Farooqi while the other was a delayed bat swing to maneuver a short ball past square leg for four. England needed 39 to win off 25 when he hobbled off the field for 120 after being undone by Omarzai's slower-ball bouncer.

Overton and Jofra Archer dragged England closer but like some others before him, the former chose the wrong option at the wrong time as he chipped Omarzai to long on with just 17 to win off 14. With an injured Mark Wood in at 11, the game had turned decisively for one last time on the day.

That finish didn't seem possible some five hours before when Afghanistan were teetering at 37 for 3 after interestingly opting to bat. It was a ploy that had served them well 16 months ago when they beat England in a World Cup encounter at New Delhi. But here, they were put under early strife by Jofra Archer, who bowled six of England's first 11 overs to prize out Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Sediqullah Atal and Rahmat Shah.

In the company of captain Hashmatullah Shahidi, Zadran began the rebuild job, finding the odd boundary to keep the scoreboard ticking. He got to his half-century off 65 balls as Afghanistan crossed 100 in the 25th over. The acceleration began three overs later when he took down Jamie Overton for 16 runs, which included a slap back over the bowler's head for a six. No sooner had the

Zadran-Shahidi partnership crossed 100 than the latter fell for 40, attempting to reverse a very full ball from Adil Rashid and losing his stumps.

Zadran, who hit 12 fours and half-a-dozen sixes in his knock, only slowed down briefly as he got closer to the century but crucially, it was Omarzai who ensured there was no dip in the scoring and added 41 off just 31 including a takedown of Wood, who was down on pace in his second spell after seemingly suffering a knee injury after his first spell of four overs.

After taking 106 balls to get to this century, Zadran needed only 28 for his next 50 as he and Mohammad Nabi opened the sluice gates against a faltering England attack. Zadran found a six and then carved three successive boundaries off Archer's over while Nabi matched that enterprise by clubbing Joe Root for a pair of sixes. England also began to make errors on the field in the form of missed half-chances and general clumsiness with even Liam Livingstone seemingly picking up an injury. The all-rounder did return to bowl a fantastic 50th over, giving away just two runs for two wickets, but Afghanistan had plundered 113 from the final 10 overs, which as it turned out was enough to turn the match on the head.

Brief scores  
Afghanistan 325/7 in 50 overs (Ibrahim Zadran 177, Azmatullah Omarzai 41; Jofra Archer 3-64) beat England 317 in 49.4 overs (Joe Root 120; Azmatullah Omarzai 5-58) by 8 runs.

## Tendulkar's vintage knock propels India Masters to win



AGENCIES

NAVI MUMBAI, FEB 26 (UND)

India Masters secured a dominant nine-wicket victory over England Masters in the International Masters League T20 2025, with Sachin Tendulkar rolling back the years with a blistering knock of 34 runs off just 21 deliveries at the DY Patil Stadium here on Tuesday night.

Opening the innings alongside Gurkeerat Singh Mann, Tendulkar struck five boundaries and a six before being dismissed by Chris Schofield in the eighth over of the chase. The highlight of his innings came in the fifth over, when he took on English pacer Tim Bresnan. Tendulkar dispatched the second ball for a six over backward square leg before following it up with consecutive fours over deep mid-wicket and deep extra cover. His fluent stroke

play ensured India Masters remained on course for a comfortable victory.

Earlier, India Masters won the toss and opted to field, restricting England Masters to a modest total of 132 for eight in their allotted 20 overs. Darren Maddy top-scored for the visitors with 25 runs, while Dhawal Kulkarni was the pick of the bowlers, finishing with figures of 3/21 in four overs.

In reply, India Masters chased down the target in just 11.4 overs with nine wickets in hand. Gurkeerat was the star of the innings, smashing an unbeaten 63 off 35 balls, while Yuvraj Singh added a quick-fire 27\* off 14 deliveries.

India Masters will next face South Africa Masters at the BCA Stadium in Vadodara on March 1, while the Eoin Morgan-led England Masters will take on West Indies Masters on February 27 at the same venue.

## FROM THE PAGE 1...

### Devotees flock to...

agency, the worshippers, while chanting hymns and performing rituals, expressed their devotion to Lord Shiva.

Mohan, a devotee in Srinagar said Maha Shivaratri holds great significance for them. "Every year, we come here to offer prayers and seek divine blessings," he said.

Another worshipper at the shrine said the festival symbolises spiritual awakening and unity. "This festival is about faith and devotion. We pray for peace and prosperity," he added.

Maha Shivaratri, meaning 'The Great Night of Shiva', is a Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Shiva. Observed annually, it is believed to be the night when Lord Shiva performed the "Tandava", the cosmic dance of creation, preservation and destruction. Devotees fast, offer milk and bel patra (Belva leaves) to Shiva Lingams, and engage in night-long prayers.

Interestingly, in Kashmir, Maha Shivaratri is observed as Herath, which is a celebration of cultural and religious importance for the Kashmiri Pandits.

As per tradition, Kashmiri pandit families observe grand rituals, such as the pooja of "Vatuk Bhairav", which is a part of Lord Shiva, followed by the "Herath Pooja" at home.

Security measures were arranged at the Shankaracharya temple to provide a smooth and peaceful celebration. The temple authorities also made necessary arrangements for devotees. KNO

### Kara reiterates...

current Congress-National Conference relation as 'workable and functional.'

The JKPCC chief, speaking to the news agency, said that Congress continues to push for clarity on business rules and that the restoration of statehood is their primary demand.

"Currently, the relationship is workable and okay. The partnership is functional," Karra said.

He, however, again emphasized on the need for forming a coordination committee between the two coalition partners to streamline governance and address the key policy matters.

Karra stated that his party was committed to 'mitigating' the miseries of the people as outlined in its manifesto.

"When we went to the people through district-wise meetings, we found that while they participated in elections with an open heart, their expectations are yet to be met. We hope that after the budget session, with the flow of funds and allocations, these issues will be addressed," he said.

He highlighted that public sentiment strongly favours the restoration of statehood.

"People understand that statehood is the biggest issue at this time. They are even willing to take this movement forward," he said, adding that he has taken the matter to the public and is working to make it a people's movement.

He said as the assembly session approaches, the Congress would continue to press for greater clarity

on business rules and push the government to take up the statehood demand with the Centre. KNO

### Dr Jitendra inspects...

bioeconomy has witnessed an extraordinary surge from \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$130 billion in 2024, with projections to reach \$300 billion by 2030."

The Minister also recalled the recent launch of India's first indigenous antibiotic, Nafithromycin, developed to combat resistant infections. He noted that the number of biotech startups in India has grown exponentially from just 50 in 2014 to nearly 9,000 today, solidifying India's position as a global hub for biotech innovation. Furthermore, he informed that India now ranks third in the Asia-Pacific region and 12th globally in bio-manufacturing, underscoring the increasing importance of CSIR-IMTECH in driving pioneering research in microbial genetics, infectious diseases, fermentation technology, environmental microbiology, and bioinformatics.

CSIR-IMTECH, a premier research institute in microbial biotechnology, hosts a repository of over 14,000 microbial strains through its Microbial Type Culture Collection and Gene Bank (MTCC). This national repository not only provides authenticated cultures to researchers and industries but also supports key regulatory authorities, including IPC, BIS, and NBA, in microbe-related concerns. The institute is at the forefront of harnessing microbial resources for scientific and industrial applications, addressing unmet needs in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and environmental sciences.

Connecting virtually with CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT), Palampur, Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated several new facilities and participated in critical scientific discussions. He joined the EMBO Workshop on High Elevation Plant Adaptation in a Changing Climate (HEPACC) and the Industry, Farmer & Academia (IFA) Meet, emphasizing that such initiatives reflect the Government of India's commitment to scientific advancement, economic empowerment, and sustainable agriculture.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also virtually inaugurated the new "Tulip" Garden at Palampur in Himachal Pradesh, commending the CSIR-IHBT Palampur team for their scientific interventions that have enabled wider tulip cultivation even in other seasons, a model that can be replicated in other regions. Additionally, he launched products developed by agri-startups that have been supported by the institute, fostering innovation in the agricultural sector.

Dr. Jitendra Singh lauded CSIR-IHBT for leading multiple national missions, including: CSIR Floriculture Mission - Expanded floriculture to 1,000 hectares, benefiting 3,800 farmers across Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh, generating an income of 80 crore. Aroma Mission. Millet Mission. Immunity Mission. Waste to Wealth Mission. Phenome India-CSIR Health Cohort Knowledgebase. CSIR Precision Agriculture Mission

The Minister also inaugurated state-of-the-art facilities, including Autonomous Green House, Heeng Seed Production Centre, Heeng QPM Facility, Ornamental

Bulb Processing Facility and Phyto-Analytical Facility. Additionally, he laid the foundation stone for the Phyto factory Facility and dedicated a Cement Concrete Road from Floriculture Junction to Chandpur R&D Farm.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized that by integrating scientific research, industry collaboration, and government policies, the rich biodiversity of Himalayan states can be harnessed for economic prosperity, benefiting farmers and advancing India's scientific ecosystem.

### JK doles out plans...

that local hydro power generation from the local power plants have reduced by nearly 90 percent.

An official had informed that "At present Jammu and Kashmir is 85-90 percent dependent on coal and solar energy that is being procured from the other states because as of now we don't have a local power generation."

"In winters the local hydro power generation of Jammu and Kashmir power plants has reduced by almost 90 percent and in order to cater the requisite power demand, we need to have a base power availability that we procure from outside states. The energy is coal based energy," the official had said. KNO

### MP Jugal Kishore...

Raj Dubey- Members of Legislative Assembly, submitted a memorandum of demands pertaining to development of Shiv Khori Shrine, promotion of tourism potential areas and upgradation of Tourism, Water, Power and Health infrastructure, and various other public important issues of Reasi District.

The Lieutenant Governor assured the members of the delegation that appropriate action will be taken for redressal of the issues projected by them.

A delegation of Swarankar Sangh Jammu City called on Lieutenant Governor.

Representatives of All India Registered Nurses Federation, J&K headed by its President Vishav Mohan Sharma also called on the Lieutenant Governor-(KNO)

### BSF foil infiltration...

Pathankot sector, officials said on Wednesday.

An official, according to the news agency said, "BSF personnel observed a suspicious movement across the International Border at Tashpatan, Pathankot border area.

An intruder was observed crossing the IB, he was challenged by the alert troops but he paid no heed and kept on moving; BSF troops sensing threat neutralised the intruder." The official said that the identity of the intruder is being ascertained.

"Strong protest will be lodged with Pakistan Rangers at the highest level," the official added. KNO

### ECI is always...

Election Officer M.S. Sangeetha and senior police officials, he said the first step towards national service is voting.

All the citizens of India who have completed 18 years of age should become electors and should always vote, he said, and lauded the Election officials in the district for doing a good work.

Mr Gyanesh Kumar along with his wife later offered prayers at the Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple and later reached Ramanathapuram for a review meeting, after which he visited former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam National Memorial at Peikarumbu near Rameswaram and also offered prayers at the Sri Ramanathaswamy Temple.

Later, he said the meetings went on well.

### India, Africa...

Development Projects (HICDPs) that have helped to strengthen local capacities across education, health, and digital infrastructure.

He listed the e-VidyaBharti and e-ArogyaBharti network for tele-education and tele-medicine.

"India believes that investments in human capital would be a truly collaborative and mutually beneficial partnership with Africa," he added.

EAM said that India is Africa's fourth-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching nearly USD 100 billion and growing steadily. India has also made a significant commitment to Africa's connectivity and infrastructure development, with over USD 12 billion in concessional credit and more than 200 completed projects spread across the continent in areas such as railways, power generation, agriculture, and water supply.

"India's development projects in various sectors such as drinking water schemes to irrigation, rural solar electrification, power plants, transmission lines, cement, sugar and textile factories, technology parks, railway infrastructure, etc. have generated local employment and in fact changed life in Africa," he said.

"India's deep and longstanding engagement with Africa can make it a natural bridge, whether geographically or in the industrial value chain. With India set for continued rapid economic growth, it serves as an ideal hub for Japanese companies seeking to expand into Africa and the Middle East.

"Japanese investments, India's solid industrial base and digital capacities and African's talent and consumption can come together to create beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders. India and Japan can also collaborate to strengthen resilient supply chains for African countries, particularly in critical and emerging sectors," he added.

"The growth and prosperity of Africa will not only benefit its people but also contribute to broader global stability and economic progress. India and Japan, with their complementary strengths, are well-positioned to support Africa's development in a sustainable and inclusive manner," he added.

Earlier in his address, the EAM mentioned how India has consistently championed the cause of the Global South, whether through the Voice of the Global South Summits and India's G20 Presidency—where the African Union's full membership in the G20 was successfully ensured in 2023.

## Dilip Jaiswal resigns as Bihar cabinet minister

AGENCIES  
PATNA, FEB 26

Bihar Revenue and Land Reforms Minister Dilip Jaiswal on Wednesday resigned from Nitish cabinet, triggering intense speculations over cabinet expansion.

Jaiswal, also president of Bihar BJP, resigned from the cabinet this morning, paving the way for new face during its expansion. Jaiswal will now remain president of Bihar BJP and focus on party affairs, in view of next Bihar assembly elections, scheduled to be held in October-November this year.

“One man one post norm has been the principle and convention of party, so I resigned from the cabinet”, Jaiswal said while confirming his resignation from the cabinet. It was time for him to devote completely to party affairs, he remarked.

## International Conference on AI from Feb 28 to Mar 2

AGENCIES  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 26

An International Conference on ‘AI as a Catalyst for Transformative Research: Social Inclusion, Equity, Secular Outlook’ is set to take place from February 28 to March 2, 2025.

The conference, hosted in a hybrid format, will bring together distinguished scholars, researchers, and students from around the world to discuss the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on research and education.

The three-day event will feature a mix of online and offline sessions, covering key themes such as AI-driven research quality, the role of AI in education, and its contributions to social equity and inclusion.

The highlights include AI training sessions, discussions on AI in research and education, and insights from global experts such as Prof. (Dr.) Gabriel Simon Thattil, Dr. Achuthsankar S. Nair, Dr. Carolina Lopez, and Dr. Ajitha.

The Mar Theophilus Training College (MTTC) and Association of International Researchers of Indian Origin (AIRIO) in collaboration with State Resource Center (SRC), Government of Kerala are organizing the event.

## Lakhs converge on Sangam banks for final bath of Maha Kumbh on Shivratri

AGENCIES  
PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 26

A sea of devotees converged on the banks of Sangam to take a holy dip on the auspicious occasion of the last bathing festival of Maha Shivratri, which also marks the culmination of the 45-day-long Maha Kumbh, one of the largest spiritual and cultural congregations in the world, on Wednesday.

The banks of Triveni Sangam, the confluence of holy Ganga, Yamuna, and mystique Saraswati rivers, reverberated with the chants of ‘Har Har Mahadev,’ ‘Ganga Maiyya ki Jai,’ and ‘Jai Shri Ram’ as tight security arrangements have been made to ensure a seamless bath on Maha Shivratri.

The enthusiasm among the devotees could be gauged from the fact that from 2 am more than 60.12 lakh devotees took a holy dip in the Sangam waters till 8 am. According to the official figures, so far more than 65 crore devotees have taken advantage of the holy bath.

Flower shower from the helicopter by the Uttar Pradesh government on the last day of the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj added enthusiasm among the devotees. Special attention is being paid to the security and arrangements of the devotees reaching the Sangam banks in large



numbers. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath himself is monitoring the holy bath from Gorakhpur. Like all the past Amrit Snan and Snan Parv, the CM reached the control room at 4 am to see the arrangements.

Due to his stay in Gorakhpur, a control room was set up for him in the Gorakhnath temple itself, where he was seen monitoring the bathing festival every moment. He watched every feed of devotees bathing live on TV and directed the top officials from the control room itself.

The entire Prayagraj has been converted into a no-vehicle zone. Apart from Prayagraj, lakhs of devotees are queuing up to have the darshan of Baba Vishwanath in Varanasi as well.

As per the directives of CM Yogi, all the top officials also appeared alert, and they also took charge from the morning itself. Earlier, Yogi had also held a meeting with the officials in the war room since morning on the occasion of Basant Panchami and Magh Purnima Amrit Snan

and kept monitoring. The CM took stock of the entire situation in terms of security and arrangements for this important event of the Maha Shivratri Snan festival. In Gorakhpur, he reached the control room located at Gorakhnath temple in the morning and kept monitoring the live feed of the bathing festival.

He directed the administrative and police officials that the devotees should not face any kind of inconvenience during the bath and all the arrangements should be kept in order.

Yogi directed the officials to ensure complete security at all the ghats and make all necessary arrangements for the devotees. Along with this, he also directed to ensure the readiness of the administration on this great festival of faith.

He especially focused on security arrangements and traffic management so that crores of devotees can get the benefit of bathing in Triveni Sangam without any problem.

## Lakhs of devotees throng Shiva shrines across Odisha on Maha Shivaratri

AGENCIES  
BHUBANESWAR, FEB 26

Lakhs of devotees thronged Shiva temples across Odisha on Wednesday to observe the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri, popularly known as “Jagar Ambasya.”

The festival, dedicated to Lord Shiva, was observed in all Shiva temples with great fervor and religious gaiety.

Since early morning, a large number of devotees were seen standing in long queues for hours before major Shiva temples across the state, carrying holy water, flowers, and bel leaves to offer prayers to Lord Shiva.

Heavy rush of devotees was reported at major Shiva temples such as Loknath Temple in Puri, Lingaraj Temple in Bhubaneswar, Dhaleswar Temple in Cuttack, Kapilash Temple in Dhenkanal, Gupteswar Temple in Koraput, Chandaneswar Temple in Balasore, Akhandalamani Temple in Bhadrak, and



the temple compound and keeping vigil throughout the night to ensure the lamps remained lit until morning.

At night, a special group of servitors lifted the Maha Dipa (a huge earthen lamp) to the top of the temple. Devotees observing a fast on this day broke it only after the Maha Dipa was placed atop the Shiva temple.

Heavy police deployment was made at important Shiva shrines across the state, and CCTV cameras were installed to control the crowd and monitor anti-social activities.

Reports indicated that since early morning, devotees were seen standing in queues in front of famous Shiva temples across the state to offer holy water, flowers, and bel leaves on the Shiva Lingam.

Approximately 40 platoons of police forces were deployed in Bhubaneswar to manage the huge congregation of devotees.

## Preity Zinta terms Maha Kumbh experience magical and heart-touching

AGENCIES  
PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 26

Bollywood actress Preity Zinta recently shared an emotional and deeply spiritual post about her visit to Prayagraj for Maha Kumbh as in a heartfelt message she reflected on her experience at the last bathing festival on Wednesday.

Taking to the social media platform X, Preity Zinta posted a video capturing moments from her visit to the Maha Kumbh. Alongside the video, she expressed her profound spiritual experience, describing it as “magical and heart-touching”.

She revealed that this was her third time attending the Kumbh Mela, and each visit had been transformative. “It was magical, heart-touching, and sad. Magical because no matter how hard I try, I cannot explain how I felt.



Heart-touching because I went with my mother, and it meant the world to her. Sad because I wanted to be free from the various cycles of life and death, but I realised the duality of life and attachment,” she wrote.

Zinta said, “Am I ready to leave my family, my children, and my loved ones? No! I am not ready! It is very emotional and humbling when you realise that the strings of attachment are strong and powerful.

No matter how deep your attachment is, ultimately, the spiritual journey is one you must take alone.”

With a profound realisation, she said, “I came back with the belief that we are not humans having a spiritual experience, but spiritual beings having a human experience. Beyond this, I don’t know, but I believe my curiosity will surely pave the way towards all the answers I am looking for... Till then, Har Har Mahadev!”

## Arunachal becomes first state in NE to integrate AI into governance

AGENCIES  
ITANAGAR, FEB 26

In a landmark move, the Arunachal Pradesh Government has become the first in the North-East to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into governance, revolutionising policy monitoring and project implementation.

The Northeastern state has developed an advanced AI system to analyse Monthly Development Reports (MDRs) submitted by 67 departments, ensuring data-driven decision-making and efficient governance.

Each department submits MDRs detailing progress on key government agendas, including budget implementation, Cabinet decisions, flagship schemes like PM Flagship Schemes and Chief Minister’s initiatives, online services, e-Office operations, and updates on public



ing raw data into meaningful insights, this initiative enhances governance efficiency and ensures the timely execution of public welfare initiatives.

A key highlight of this AI-driven system is an interactive dashboard with real-time visualisations, enabling seamless monitoring for government officials. This user-friendly platform not only streamlines policy tracking but also supports smarter decision-making, setting a precedent for AI integration in public administration.

Officials hailed this initiative as a significant step toward modern governance, positioning Arunachal Pradesh as a pioneer in leveraging AI for enhanced transparency, accountability, and effective policy implementation.

grievance platforms such as CPGRAMS and CM Jan-suwai.

Additionally, the reports cover crucial aspects like government vacancies, legislative updates, and major projects under MDoNER and NEC. These reports are uploaded onto a dedicated portal by the 7th of every month.

The AI system meticulously analyses these MDRs, generating comprehensive analytical reports that are reviewed by the State Chief Secretary during monthly review meetings. By transform-

## SCR: Purchase rly tickets through r-wallet in UTS mobile app and avail 3pc cashback

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, FEB 26

The South Central Railway (SCR) introduced a cash-back facility to promote the purchase of unreserved tickets through the UTS Mobile App.

The Zone has introduced the ‘UTS’ mobile application over 26 suburban stations in Hyderabad twin cities in 2016.

Later, this facility has been extended to all the non-suburban stations for the booking of platform, journey, and season tickets with effect from July

2018, covering all the UTS stations over this railway.

In a step to facilitate more convenience for unreserved passengers, booking of paperless tickets has been enabled to all the destinations across Indian Railways, the SCR said in a release here on Tuesday. The UTS app is a big leap in the modern ticketing system and a boon to the huge segment of passengers on Indian Railways who travel on unreserved tickets.

In line with the Digital India initiative, the app enables cashless transac-

tions, and passengers can make the payment through different digital modes such as R-Wallet, Paytm, PhonePe, Google Pay, UPI apps, or through internet banking.

R-Wallet will be available in the UTS app, in which the amount can be deposited up to the limit of Rs 20,000. As a promotional gesture, 3 per cent cashback is being given on the tickets purchased through R-Wallet. Since the date of introduction of the UTS app, the app has been receiving positive responses from rail users,

and the number of passengers utilising the app has always been encouraging. The share of unreserved tickets booked through the mobile app has been steadily increasing with the initiatives of the zone.

The average passengers in a day availing the UTS mobile app facility in 2023-24 from April to January was 83,510, while the average passengers per day in the current financial year 2024-25 is 93,487, which denotes a 12 per cent increase in the usage of the UTS app for purchasing tickets.

## Yogi monitors final snan of Maha Kumbh from Gorakhpur

AGENCIES  
GORAKHPUR, FEB 26

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday remained highly active during the early hours of the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivaratri, the final bathing day of the ongoing Maha Kumbh.

Like every previous Amrit Snan and bathing festival, CM Yogi began his day early at 4 am to oversee the arrangements. Due to his ongoing visit to Gorakhpur, a control room was set up at the Gorakhnath Temple, where he closely monitored the event, watching live feeds of devotees bathing at the Sangam on TV.

From the control room, he gave real-time instructions to senior officials. Under the guidance of the CM, top officials were on high alert and promptly



took charge of the situation.

Earlier, on the occasions of Basant Panchami and Magh Purnima Amrit Snan, Yogi had also held meetings with officials at the war room from early morning, ensuring smooth operations through constant monitoring.

On this significant day of Maha Shivaratri Amrit Snan, which also marks the culmination of

Maha Kumbh, he closely assessed the security and arrangements for the event. From the Gorakhnath Temple control room, he monitored live feeds of the snan festival, ensuring everything was proceeding as planned.

He also gave strict instructions to administrative officials to ensure that no devotee faced any inconvenience and that all arrangements were up to the mark. He specifically

## Teach a stern legal lesson to miscreants: Yogi

AGENCIES  
GORAKHPUR, FEB 26

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday directed the official to teach a stern legal lesson to the miscreants who harass, threaten and occupy the property of the common people and there should not be any kind of laxity or negligence in this.

During Janata Darshan, the CM directed officials to resolve public grievances swiftly, ensuring transparency and efficiency. He stressed that the government’s priority is ensuring justice and relief for every citizen.

He reached out to people seated outside Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan at the Gorakhnath Temple complex, listening attentively to their grievances. He assured nearly 200 individuals that no injustice would be tolerated and directed officials to expedite case resolutions.

Yogi said that special emphasis was laid on cracking down on illegal land grabbers and those exploiting the weak. Several individuals sought financial assistance for medical treatment on which he assured them of full government support, directing the officials to expedite the necessary estimates and process their applications without delay. He also directed authorities to handle revenue and police-related matters with utmost transparency and impartiality, ensuring that every victim receives fair treatment. He emphasised the need for sensitivity in dealing with public grievances and ensuring justice.

During his visit to Gorakhpur, the CM also paid respects at the Samadhi Sthal of his Guru Mahant Avedyanath, and took a tour of the temple premises. Amid his busy schedule, he interacted warmly with children visiting the Gorakhnath Temple.

He inquired about their studies and as a token of his blessings, gifted them chocolates, while wishing them a bright future.

## EDITORIAL

## A political tightrope for Omar govt

As the second session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly is set to begin on March 3, the absence of a Deputy Speaker continues to stir political debate. More than 100 days after the Omar Abdullah-led government took office, the post remains vacant, fueling discussions about the implications of this delay. The vacancy has ignited criticism, particularly from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has emerged as the principal opposition party with 29 seats following the recent Assembly elections. According to established legislative conventions, the position of Deputy Speaker is typically reserved for the largest opposition party—a tradition that, in this case, points to the BJP. The delay in filling this key position has raised eyebrows, as it is crucial for the smooth functioning of the Assembly. The Deputy Speaker plays a pivotal role in maintaining order during proceedings, ensuring parliamentary discipline, and even stepping in for the Speaker when necessary. More importantly, this post gives the opposition party a significant voice in the legislative process, reinforcing the democratic principle of checks and balances. As such, the BJP has been eagerly awaiting its nomination for the role, arguing that the NC government's reluctance to act is undermining parliamentary tradition. The BJP in Jammu and Kashmir has not been shy in expressing their concerns. Yet, despite the mounting pressure, the Omar Abdullah government has remained silent on the matter. There has been no official explanation for the delay, and this silence has sparked speculation about underlying political calculations. In a region with a historically complex political landscape, where alliances shift and regional considerations often take precedence, the Deputy Speaker's role could serve as a powerful tool for the opposition. Moreover, while there is no constitutional mandate to immediately fill the position of Deputy Speaker, the prolonged delay—over three months since the government assumed office—raises questions about the motivations behind this indecision. For the BJP, the issue is not just about the importance of the post but about sending a message to both the people of Jammu and Kashmir and to the central government. Appointing a BJP nominee to the Deputy Speaker's post would not only adhere to parliamentary traditions but could also open avenues for a more cooperative relationship between the state government and the Centre. The absence of a Deputy Speaker is not just a technicality; it is a reflection of the broader political dynamics at play. The NC-led government's hesitation to appoint a BJP member could be seen as a sign of reluctance to share power with its main political rival, even in a seemingly symbolic role. Given the stakes involved, it is clear that the government is carefully weighing its options, looking to strike a balance between adhering to tradition and asserting its political dominance. As the Legislative Assembly session approaches, this issue is unlikely to fade into the background. Political observers suggest that the NC government could be waiting for a more politically advantageous moment to make the appointment. The longer the delay, however, the more it risks exacerbating tensions between the ruling party and the opposition. For the BJP, this is more than just a procedural matter; it is an opportunity to assert its influence in the Assembly and secure a foothold in the governance of Jammu and Kashmir. The Deputy Speaker impasse has become a focal point of political discourse in Jammu and Kashmir. While the government may eventually act, the question remains: when will it do so, and at what cost? Until then, the BJP's patience will be tested, and the political complexity of the region will continue to unfold.

## Maha Kumbh 2025: A grand confluence of tradition, technology and transformation

PRADIP SWARNAKAR

The Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj draws millions of pilgrims worldwide to the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers. As this grand spiritual event unfolds, an ongoing IIT Kanpur study provides real-time insights into stakeholder experiences. This research examines how government initiatives shape pilgrim experiences, blending ancient traditions with modern technology.

For devotees, the Mela remains a deeply spiritual journey, with bathing in the Triveni Sangam seen as a path to salvation. While age-old rituals and processions inspire awe, an extensive logistical network operates behind the scenes to manage massive crowds.

A key focus of the study is transportation. With pilgrims arriving from across India and abroad,

the government's commitment to improving accessibility is evident. Nearly 40 per cent of attendees rely on public transportation, primarily trains and buses. Despite expanded shuttle services and improved parking facilities, feedback is mixed. While most find transportation satisfactory, some report overcrowding and delays during peak hours. A hallmark of Maha Kumbh 2025 is its technological integration, earning it the title "Digital Maha Kumbh." Mobile apps, e-wallets, and real-time crowd monitoring enhance the experience for pilgrims and organisers. Many appreciate online registration, virtual darshan booking, and real-time updates on crowd density, transport, and amenities.

These tools streamline accessibility, particularly for international visitors and those from remote areas. However, bridging the digital divide remains

a challenge. While tech-savvy pilgrims adapt easily, older attendees and those from rural regions often struggle with digital platforms. Some report difficulties using smartphones or accessing the internet, highlighting the need for alternative engagement methods. Feedback underscores the importance of inclusive communication strategies blending digital and traditional approaches.

Security and crowd management are also key concerns. Managing millions of attendees in Kumbh Mela is a massive undertaking. The government has deployed extensive security personnel, CCTV surveillance, and designated safe zones, including lifeguard-staffed bathing areas. Nearly 93 per cent of respondents feel secure within the Mela's vast grounds, affirming these measures' effectiveness. However, congestion near ghats causes anxiety among some pil-

grims, emphasizing the need for refined crowd management as the event progresses.

Health and sanitation remain top priorities. Overall, 81 per cent of respondents find sanitation facilities adequate, reflecting high satisfaction with cleanliness. Temporary medical camps and mobile health units ensure pilgrims' wellbeing, yet restroom overcrowding persists during peak hours. Despite thousands of cleaning staff and waste management facilities, additional measures are needed to maintain hygiene during busy periods. These findings highlight commendable efforts while emphasising the need for continued improvements.

Inclusivity is also a focus, with the government enhancing accessibility for differently-abled individuals and senior citizens. Dedicated pathways, toilets, and designated spaces reflect a commitment to

inclusive participation. The widely appreciated 'Lost and Found' services further ease concerns, helping separated families navigate the crowd more efficiently. Environmental impact remains a major concern. The government has introduced eco-friendly initiatives, including waste segregation, solar-powered lighting and over 25,000 trash bins to reduce the ecological footprint.

Despite these efforts, concerns persist over plastic use and non-biodegradable waste. While 62 per cent of respondents recognise sustainability progress, stronger awareness campaigns and stricter enforcement of eco-friendly practices are needed.

The ongoing study suggests green initiatives must be reinforced through greater public education on waste management and sustainability. As the IIT Kanpur study continues to document stakeholder experiences, the

Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 is a testament to the evolving nature of large-scale spiritual events. Government initiatives have improved efficiency, security, and inclusivity. Stakeholder feedback highlights the need to refine transportation, expand digital inclusion, enhance crowd management, and address environmental concerns.

The success of the Mela hinges not only on preserving spiritual traditions but also on integrating modern infrastructure, technology, and inclusive governance. More than a massive gathering, the Maha Kumbh exemplifies how government initiatives can transform spiritual events into safer, more efficient, and enriching experiences. As it unfolds, it remains a dynamic confluence of tradition, technology and transformation.

**(The author is a professor of Sociology at IIT Kanpur. Views expressed are personal)**

## The growing threat of radicalisation of Central Asia

NISHAKANT OJHA

In recent years, the increasing attraction of Central Asian youth to extremist and Takfiri groups has become a significant security concern for regional governments and international experts. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict has only intensified these concerns, with reports indicating that young migrant workers are being recruited for extremist activities, a pattern reminiscent of the recruitment seen during the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

The emergence of the Turan Battalion, a group of Turkic-speaking Central Asians fighting alongside Ukrainian forces against Russia, highlights the pressing need to address radicalisation among young people. At the same time, extremist propaganda spread by figures such as Idas Sadehgov has contributed to the rising tide of radicalism, further complicating the region's security landscape.

The radicalisation of Central Asian youth stems from a combination of social, economic and political factors that

make them vulnerable to extremist narratives. Economic hardship is one of the most significant drivers, particularly in countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where persistent poverty, high unemployment, and limited socio-economic opportunities push young people toward alternative ideologies. Over three decades of independence, Kyrgyzstan has experienced multiple coups, widespread corruption, and growing dissatisfaction with the secular governance model.

Many young people, disillusioned with their governments, seek a sense of purpose and community in extremist ideologies that not only provide identity but often come with financial incentives. Migration also plays a critical role in this radicalisation process. Millions of Central Asians migrate to Russia for work, where they frequently face exploitation, legal difficulties and social alienation. The absence of integration programs and social support leaves them vulnerable to extremist recruiters who exploit their grievances and isolation.

These recruiters present extremist ideology as a means of empowerment and justice, a dangerous proposition that finds traction among individuals struggling to navigate foreign environments with little institutional support. Religious education, or the lack thereof, is another crucial factor in the rise of extremism. In countries like Tajikistan, where Islamic teachings are heavily restricted and even prohibited for individuals under 18, a significant knowledge vacuum has emerged.

This vacuum is quickly filled by extremist propaganda, often disseminated via social media. Many young Tajik migrant workers in Russia rely on online content to shape their religious understanding, unknowingly consuming distorted interpretations of Islam that align with extremist beliefs. This unchecked exposure to radical ideologies fuels the rapid spread of extremist sentiment within vulnerable communities. Kazakhstan presents a unique case where extremist ideologies have infiltrated even the highest levels of power.

Salafi groups, for instance, gained traction with backing from influential figures such as General Kairat Satybaldy, making the fight against radicalisation more challenging.

The entrenchment of these ideologies within powerful circles emboldens extremist sympathisers and complicates government efforts to dismantle radical networks. The rise of social media has dramatically accelerated the spread of extremist propaganda. Extremist groups have mastered the use of digital platforms to reach and recruit young people, leveraging engaging content that is often more accessible and persuasive than state-backed religious teachings. Many of these online materials promise a sense of belonging, purpose, and spiritual rewards, making the path to radicalisation dangerously appealing. Experts emphasise that without a strong digital counter-narrative, governments and moderate religious leaders will continue to struggle in preventing the indoctrination of young minds.

The psychological manipulation employed

by extremist groups goes beyond simple recruitment, leading some individuals to commit acts of violence, including suicide attacks. The belief that martyrdom ensures a direct path to heaven is a powerful motivator, and extremist groups exploit feelings of injustice, social exclusion, and spiritual ignorance to persuade young people to sacrifice themselves for a perceived greater cause. By manipulating these vulnerabilities, these groups create a mindset in which violence is not only justified but seen as a divine mission.

Governments in Central Asia have responded to this growing threat with various strategies, though with mixed success. Initial measures included mass arrests and harsh prison sentences, particularly in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. However, this approach has often backfired, as prisons have become breeding grounds for further radicalization. Inmates exposed to extremist ideologies behind bars frequently emerge more radicalised than before, exacerbating the problem rather than solving

it. Recognising the limitations of purely repressive measures, some governments have turned to religious reforms as a more effective means of combating extremism. Uzbekistan, for example, has eased restrictions on religious practices, allowing the call to prayer from loudspeakers and providing greater freedom for Islamic education. These initiatives have had a noticeable impact, significantly reducing extremist recruitment within the country by offering legitimate avenues for religious expression. Education is widely regarded as one of the most effective tools in preventing radicalisation. Experts stress the importance of integrating religious education into school curricula to provide young people with a correct understanding of Islamic principles. Only through a holistic and sustained effort can Central Asian nations protect their youth from extremist influences and work toward a more stable and peaceful future.

**(The writer is expert in national security, radicalization, and counterterrorism.; views are personal)**

## Women pioneering change in Indian higher education

SUAJATHA KSHIRSAGAR

Women are leading from the front today - in academics or education, media, healthcare, armed forces and many other fields. The country is witnessing a pivotal shift in how women leaders were perceived before. Indian higher education landscape is also being driven by a strong women-led force, laying the foundation of the nation's progress, unlocking opportunities for socio-economic growth, self-reliance and an improved quality of life. Needless to say, education is essential for women's empowerment in the journey to Viksit Bharat. Educated women drive change, uplift families, strengthen communities and fuel national progress, creating a lasting impact for future generations.

The current scenario and notable mentions

Indian higher education remains male-dominated when it comes to leadership, even

as women are playing a significant role, data suggests. In 2021, women headed just 9.55 per cent of Indian higher educational institutions, whereas men headed 89.57 per cent. This makes more inclusive representation of females in academic leadership extremely important. If we compare India with the international landscape, it still has a huge gap to fill. Internationally, 25 per cent of leadership positions in the top 200 universities globally are occupied by women.

The good news is that the picture is drastically changing, especially over the last few years. Even in the past, the country has seen visionary women leaders like Savitribai Phule, a pioneering social reformer who, alongside her husband Jyotirao Phule, established India's first school for girls in 1848, championing women's education and social justice.

Other notable and pragmatic women leaders who are mark-

ing a significant shift in higher education include Ms Rashmi Mittal, Pro-Chancellor, of Lovely Professional University, and Dr Uma Bhardwaj, Vice-Chancellor, of Noida International University. Other honourable mentions include Dr Madhu Chitkara, Pro-Chancellor at Chitkara University and a Higher Education entrepreneur with a vast experience 42 years, who has built a successful university from scratch; Dr. Ananya Mukherjee, Vice-Chancellor of Shiv Nadar University, Delhi-NCR, recognised as an Institution of Eminence.

Apart from that, women leaders in business and entrepreneurial space have also inspired aspiring Indian youth. Notable mentions include Kiran Mazumdar Shaw and Indra Nooyi. Women leaders are transforming Indian higher education through inclusive environments and innovation. More women in leadership positions increase diversity and bring new perspectives to aca-

demia. Through their efforts, they are paving the way for future generations to have a more progressive and equitable educational landscape in India.

The Challenges Faced by Women Leaders in Academia

The challenges for women leaders include social stereotypes at one end and the barriers of an institution at the other. Several women are even still facing serious prejudices against them regarding their potential as leaders, especially in traditional fields. Women lack opportunities to get mentors and network for their professional advancement.

The chief issues for women leaders worldwide relate to work-life balance and insufficient presence in senior leadership positions. India has taken a holistic approach to orient and train women faculty across the country through the University Grants Commission (UGC).

These initiatives are designed to prepare women for leadership roles, equipping them with

the right skills and knowledge. Other countries have programs that focus on leadership training and inclusivity to break barriers for women in academia. Some countries have witnessed an impressive increase in the number of women represented in academia, but the world still has a long way to go, including India.

Women as Educators and Leaders

Empowerment in education is not merely a question of access; it involves equipping women with the role of teachers, leaders, and models. An increased number of women in schools and colleges has acted as a motivating force for girls to achieve excellence in academics. Diverse viewpoints among women in higher education leadership institutions create an inclusive and innovative atmosphere.

Female professors have formed the backbone for progressive educational policy and research quality. Many critical

departments and significant research initiatives now have women running them, evidence of their burgeoning influence in university life.

Programmes and fellowships dedicated to providing opportunities for girls and women, especially in these STEM fields, have helped a culture of creativity and excellence flourish within these disciplines. At present, there are some of India's most high-profile universities and institutions, with women at the helm, spearheading the trend of making education more accessible and equitable. Women leaders are playing an important role in academics.

For instance, women-led institutions, like competitive exam coaching institutions, have been responsible for guiding thousands of students in shaping their aspirations. Thus, it is clear that women leaders can bring transformational change in education and can be great change managers.

Women as Catalysts or Agents of Change

Women are educators and agents of change. They are innovators who are good leaders in filling knowledge gaps, fostering inclusivity, and empowering communities. Their contribution to a forceful, solution-focused, and responsive workforce is particularly indispensable for the simple reason that it is tantamount to ensuring not only economic prosperity but also social justice.

The most deep-seated effect of women in education has been in adult literacy and skill development. Women educators have led the process of increasing rural and marginalised communities' literacy rates, greatly improving their socio-economic conditions. Female entrepreneurs also are revolutionising education delivery by coming up with innovative solutions for diverse learners across India.

## Public surrenders 87 weapons in Manipur

AGENCIES

IMPHAL, FEB 26

A total of 87 different types of weapons, various ammunition/munitions, and other miscellaneous items were voluntarily surrendered by the public to Churachandpur, Imphal East, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Kangpokpi, Jiribam, and Imphal West Districts during the last 24 hours, police said on Wednesday.

Six 7.62mm Self-Loading Rifles (SLRs) with empty magazines, INSAS 5.56 LMG, M-79 40mm Lathi UBGL gun (Made in Pakistan) without a registration number were among those surrendered.

## India Book of records felicitates Sathya Media centre on Rudram chanting

AGENCIES

PUTTAPARTHI (ANDHRA PRADESH), FEB 26

India Book of Records on Wednesday felicitated Sri Sathya Sai Media Centre, Prasanthi Nilayam for chanting the maximum number of Rudram during the period of Ati Rudra Maha Yajnam, from February 14 to 25, scoring over 13000+ chanting from over 83 countries, connecting online.

India Book of Records COO Narvijay Yadav, felicitated Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust Managing Trustee RJ Rathnakar and Sri Sathya Sai Media Center Director Sundar Swaminathan in the presence of Trustees and senior officials, in Bhagawan's immediate Divine Omnipresence at Prasanthi Nilayam.

## DANSAF team seizes MDMA, ganja worth Rs 20 lakhs in Malappuram

AGENCIES

MALAPPURAM, FEB 26

The District Anti-narcotic Special Action Force (DANSAF) team on Wednesday seized 544 grams of Methylenedioxy Methamphetamine (MDMA) narcotic drugs and 875 grams of ganja, valued around Rs 20 lakhs, from a drug peddler at Muthuvallur near Kondotty on Wednesday.

According to police, they arrested Akash (22) of Muthuvallur in a raid conducted by a DANSAF team led by District Police Chief P Viswanathan, following a tip-off.

The synthetic drugs were brought from Bangalore and kept in small packets for retail sale through social media's various applications in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts.

Further investigation was going on, police sources said.

## AAP fields MP Sanjeev Arora for Ludhiana West Assembly bypoll

AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH (PUNJAB), FEB 26

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday named Rajya Sabha member Sanjeev Arora as its candidate for the Ludhiana West Assembly bypoll.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday, announced to field Rajya Sabha MP Sanjiv Arora from Ludhiana West assembly constituency, where bye-elections are to be conducted soon.

The bye-elections are necessitated by the demise of MLA Gurpreet Gogi on January 10.

## Not even a single LS seat will be reduced in southern states under delimitation: Amit Shah

AGENCIES

COIMBATORE, FEB 26

Launching a scathing attack on the BJP, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said not even a single Lok Sabha seat in southern states, including Tamil Nadu would be reduced under the proposed delimitation exercise.

Speaking after physically inaugurating a BJP party office at Peelamedu in this district by lighting a lamp and districts offices in Ramanathapuram and Tiruvannamalai via video-conferencing, Mr Amit Shah denied Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M K Stalin's charge that Tamil Nadu

would stand to lose eight Lok Sabha seats under the delimitation exercise to be undertaken based on population.

Mr Stalin also said that delimitation was a damocles sword hanging over the southern states and has called for an all party meeting on March five to discuss the issue and to protect the rights of the State.

Refuting it stoutly, Mr Amit Shah said not even a single seat would be reduced in southern states, including Tamil Nadu under the delimitation process. "Instead the number of seats will go up", he added.

Asserting that 2025 saw a new dawn for BJP by forming a government in Delhi, Mr Amit Shah the 2026 (when Assembly polls will be held) will see a new dawn in Tamil Nadu.

Stating that time has come to put an end to DMK's corrupt and anti-national rule in Tamil Nadu, he said "The year 2025 began with a historic victory in Delhi, and we will conclude 2026 by forming



an NDA government in Tamil Nadu", he asserted. "An NDA government is set to be formed in Tamil Nadu. Now, nepotism will come to an end, corruption will be eradicated, and anti-national forces will be rooted out. A new era of development will begin in Tamil Nadu, which will accelerate the overall progress of India," Mr Amit Shah said.

Appealing to all BJP cadres to brace up with renewed enthusiasm and move forward with impetus to form an NDA government in Tamil Nadu in 2026, the Union Home Minister singling out the DMK in his attack, said all DMK leaders have earned a master's degree in corruption.

"One leader is caught in a cash-for-job scam, another in money laundering, a third in disproportionate assets, and a fourth in a coal scam. Even the 2G scam has not been completely settled yet", he noted.

Sometimes, it feels like DMK has selectively grants membership only to the most corrupt individuals, he charged. Refuting Mr Stalin's allegation that the BJP government at the Centre has not released any

funds for Tamil Nadu, Mr Amit Shah said the Centre has released more than Rs five lakh crores for the State in the last ten years.

"Mr Stalin says that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government at the Centre was treating Tamil Nadu unfairly.

"But in reality, the injustice to Tamil Nadu happened when the Congress-led UPA government was in power at the Centre, and your (the DMK) Ministers were also a part of it", he said.

After independence, if any leader has done the most for Tamil Nadu's culture and language, it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

On the opening of three district party offices, Mr Amit Shah said the office of the BJP is different from the offices of other political parties.

"While for other parties, an office is just a workplace, for us, the BJP office is like a temple from where we manage the party's affairs", he added. The three offices inaugurated today will, in the coming days, become centers for public outreach, sensitivity to public sentiments, and mass movements for the BJP, he said.

## Arunachal remains only state in the region unaffected by terrorism: Guv Parnaik

AGENCIES

ITANAGAR, FEB 26

Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt General (Retd) KT Parnaik has said that Arunachal Pradesh remains the only State in the region unaffected by terrorism, allowing for aggressive developmental initiatives.

The Governor said this while participating in the prestigious ET Now Business Conclave & Awards 2025 held in New Delhi on Tuesday. He highlighted Arunachal Pradesh's business-friendly environment and state government's proactive initiatives to enhance ease of doing business. He also outlined investment opportunities in the state, emphasizing its unique advantages for businesses, including peace, stability, and strong infrastructural development.

The event brought together visionary leaders, policymakers, and industry experts to discuss India's transformative growth journey, with a focus on data-driven insights, strategic planning, and innovative solutions for inclusive

economic development aligned with India @2030.

Addressing the gathering, the Governor highlighted key infrastructure advancements, including the expansion of road networks to the 'first' villages and the provision of 4G connectivity. He said that Arunachal Pradesh is India's largest kiwi producer, with plans to export the fruit internationally.

Talking about the State's tourism potential, the Governor described Arunachal Pradesh as a land of unparalleled natural beauty, positioning eco-tourism, religious tourism, and adventure tourism as major economic drivers.

He also emphasized the strong nationalistic spirit of the people and the widespread use of Hindi and English, facilitating seamless communication for businesses.

Discussing the State's hydropower potential, he said that with a capacity of 58,000 MW (nearly 40% of India's total potential), several hydropower projects are operational or under development, including the Dibang Multipurpose Hydro Project

(2880 MW). Once fully commissioned, these projects are expected to generate over Rs 10,000 crore in annual revenue.

The Governor praised the tribal communities for their commitment to environmental conservation, underscoring Arunachal Pradesh's status as a Green State. He shared the state's initiatives that balance development with sustainability, including streamlined land acquisition policies and a single-window clearance system for businesses.

Governor Parnaik also reaffirmed his role as an 'enabler Governor', ensuring strategic policy advisory to the State Cabinet and senior bureaucrats to promote economic growth while prioritizing the well-being of the people. He assured the business leaders that Arunachal Pradesh offers vast opportunities for investment and collaboration.

As part of the conclave, the Governor also felicitated distinguished business leaders and organizations for their excellence in leadership and contributions across various sectors, including education.

## Devotees display enthusiasm to witness once-in-144-yrs sacred occasion



AGENCIES

PRAYAGRAJ, FEB 26

The sacred Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj resonated with the sweet tinkling of cymbals, holy chants and vibrant colours as devotees from across the country gathered for the last ritualistic bath of Maha Kumbh on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri.

The final bathing festival saw an overwhelming number of pilgrims making their way to this revered confluence, marking a spiritually enriching and historic moment. As it was the last auspicious bathing day, crowds began assembling on the banks of the Sangam from midnight.

While some devotees patiently awaited the Brahma Muhurta, the most sacred time for the holy dip, many took the plunge into the sacred waters before the scheduled hour, seeking divine blessings.

Among the countless devotees were four friends from Siliguri, West Bengal, who made a unique journey to Prayagraj. Dressed

in identical bright yellow dhotis, Akash Pal (MNC employee), Abhijit Chakraborty (content writer), Raja Sonwani (pharmaceutical professional) and Abhishek Pal (lawyer) were united by their shared devotion to Maha Shivratri at Maha Kumbh.

Expressing his excitement, Akash Pal said, "We are friends who drove from West Bengal to Prayagraj. When our vehicle permit ended, we walked the remaining distance to reach the Sangam. It is an exhilarating experience to be part of this magnificent gathering, especially on such a sacred day."

The four friends also carried saffron-coloured containers to take Ganga Jal back home. Many other devotees from Durgapur and Cooch Behar in West Bengal also made the journey to Prayagraj for the holy dip.

The sacred festival attracted not just Indian pilgrims but also devotees from neighbouring Nepal. Among them were four teenagers, including Manish Mandal, Rabbaj Mandal, Arjun Mandal

and Deepak Sahni, who travelled with their uncle Domi Sahni to take the holy dip on Maha Shivratri.

Wearing uniform tunics featuring Lord Shiva's imagery and 'Mahakal' inscribed gamchhas, they expressed their deep spiritual connection. Speaking about their journey, Domi Sahni shared, "We are from Janakpur, Nepal, a place deeply connected to Mata Sita. Our city is also home to the Jahnvi temple. After completing our bath here, we will proceed to Ayodhya to seek blessings from Lord Ram."

The group undertook a long journey from Janakpur to Jayanagar, finally reaching Prayagraj via Indian Railways. Many devotees said that the '144-year factor' played a major role in their decision to attend this Maha Kumbh at all costs.

The once-in-a-lifetime event attracted people from across India, including Karnataka, Bihar, Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, who travelled great distances to witness and participate in the historical spiritual gathering.

## BRS working Prez extends support to TN CM Stalin on fair, equitable delimitation of constituencies

AGENCIES

HYDERABAD, FEB 26

BRS working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) on Wednesday said that he strongly supported

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president MK Stalin in his efforts to ensure justice for Southern States in delimitation of the Assembly and the Parliamentary constituencies across the country.

On 'X' social media platform, KTR asserted

that one cannot penalise the Southern States for religiously implementing family planning when the nation needed it the most.

Responding to Stalin's call for a fair, transparent, and equitable approach in the delimitation process, he stated that to execute delimitation without considering the efforts of the Southern States is not in the spirit of democracy or federalism.

"If the Centre is keen

on implementing delimitation, I propose delimitation based on the fiscal contributions to the nation," he tweeted.

He said that none can ignore the contributions of Southern States towards nation building.

As a case in point, while Telangana constitutes only 2.8 per cent of the country's population, it contributes to more than 5.2 per cent of the nation's GDP, KTR added.

## Four killed, 3 injured as car rams into house in UP's Pratapgarh

AGENCIES

PRATAPGARH, FEB 26

Four persons were killed and three others injured when a car they were travelling in rammed into a roadside house in Kotwali Dehat area of Pratapgarh district in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday.

Police sources here said that the car lost control and rammed into a roadside house near Bhupiamau at around 3 am. "Four devotees travelling in the car died in the accident and three devotees were seriously

injured. The injured have been admitted to the district hospital," they said. Circle Officer (CO) Shiv Narayan Vaishya said that all the devotees travelling in the car were going towards Ayodhya after taking a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam at Maha Kumbh from Prayagraj. The car went out of control, rolled down the road and rammed into a house.

He said that all the seven devotees were taken out of the car with the help of villagers and taken to the district hospital where doctors

declared four devotees dead. "All the deceased and injured are residents of Bihar and Jharkhand," Vaishya said.

The CO said that the deceased included Raju Singh (25), a resident of Chainpur Marhaura in Bihar, Abhishek Kumar Singh (24), a resident of Garkha, of Chhapra district in Bihar, Saurabh (26) resident of Raigarh district in Jharkhand and driver Abhishek Ojha (30). "Rohit Kumar Singh (24), Akash (35) and Rupesh (22) were admitted to hospital," he said.

## Thousands of devotees converge at 3 Jyotirlinga temples to celebrate Maha Shivaratri

AGENCIES

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, FEB 26

The Marathwada region of Maharashtra state, comprising a total of eight districts, celebrated Maha Shivratri on Wednesday with religious fervour and sacred offerings to Lord Shiva.

In this city of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, fasting devotees poured in large numbers at the Shiva Temple located in the Khadkeshwar locality.

Following prescribed rituals, women devotees performed poojas commonly known as bael leaves since early this morning.

Thousands of people thronged towards the Grishneshwar temple since the wee hours of Wednesday in Verul (Ellora) town, about 35 km away from this district, located barely a kilometre away from the Ellora Caves—a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Grishneshwar temple holds extreme religious significance as it is one among twelve Jyotirlinga temples in India.

A large number of devotees converged at the other two Jyotirlinga temples—Parli Vajinath and Aundha Nagnath—which are located in the districts of Beed and Hingoli, respectively.

Elaborate security arrangements were put in place across the region of Marathwada to avert any untoward incident.

## Five youths drown in river Godavari while taking holy dip

AGENCIES

RAJAHMUNDRY (ANDHRA PRADESH), FEB 26

In a tragic incident, five teenage boys were drowned in the river Godavari at Tadipudi village in Tallapudi Mandal of East Godavari district on Wednesday.

Police said that a group of 11 youths went to the river Godavari in the wee hours to take a holy dip on the occasion of devotional Mahashivratri and five of them were drowned. The deceased were identified as Tirumalashetti Pawan (19), Padala Durga Prasad (19), Padala Sai Krishna (19), Anishetti Pawan (19) and Garre Akash (19). So far, four bodies have been fished out from the river. All the deceased belonged to Tadipudi village. The NDRF teams were pressed into service to retrieve the bodies. East Godavari district Collector P Prasanthi, DSP Dev Kumar and Kovvur RDO Rani Sushmita visited the scene of the accident.

Meanwhile, a pall of gloom descended on Tadipudi village with the death of five teenage boys. Four of the deceased boys were studying graduation and one was studying Intermediate.

## Dr. Farooq Abdullah joins Maha Shivratri celebrations, calls for communal harmony in J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) President and former Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah today joined the Maha Shivratri celebrations in Jammu, emphasizing the importance of maintaining communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized the importance of upholding the region's rich tradition of brotherhood and coexistence, highlighting that festivals like Maha Shivratri symbolize unity and shared cultural heritage.

The former Chief Minister was speaking at Shiv Mandir, Bhagwati Nagar, where he inaugurated a Langar organized to mark the sacred occasion. He also paid obeisance at the



temple and distributed Bhandara among devotees, reinforcing the spirit of service and unity. Accompanying him were several senior party leaders, including Provincial President Rattan Lal Gupta, MLA Pahalgam Altaf Kaloo, MLA Haveli Ajaz Jan, former Minister Babu Rampal, Ankush Abrol, and others.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Farooq Abdullah said, "Religious and cultural festivities serve as a

unifying force, fostering brotherhood and strengthening our deep-rooted traditions of mutual respect. The National Conference has always upheld the principles of secularism, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to building a society where people of all faiths live with dignity and harmony."

Dr. Abdullah also interacted with devotees and lauded the organizers for their commitment to com-

munity service through such spiritual initiatives. He extended his heartfelt wishes on Maha Shivratri, praying for peace, prosperity, and communal harmony across Jammu and Kashmir.

Later, Dr. Abdullah visited several Kashmiri Pandit families to personally extend his Maha Shivratri greetings. Recognizing their cultural and spiritual significance, he remarked, "Maha Shivratri is a celebration of our shared heritage. Kashmiri Pandits have always been an integral part of our composite culture, and their well-being remains a top priority. It is our collective duty to foster an atmosphere of respect, inclusivity, and togetherness in Jammu and Kashmir."

Speaking on the significance of the 'Herath

Poshte' in Kashmiri tradition, he highlighted its role as a symbol of warmth, unity, and shared heritage, urging all communities to uphold the region's ethos of communal harmony.

Earlier in the day, the veteran leader met several delegations from Jammu Province at his residence. These deputations apprised him of pressing public grievances, citing the hollow policies of previous governments that have left people struggling with unfulfilled promises.

The NC President assured them that the National Conference remains committed to address people's issues. He reiterated that NC Government will not waver in its mission to ensure justice, equitable development, and a secure future for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Diva International Foundation organizes Free Medical Camp at PHC Ransoo



JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Diva International Foundation A National NGO in Association with Directorate of Health Services, CMO Reasi and BMO Block Pouni Organised Free Health Check Up Camp and Medical Camp at PHC, Ransoo, Shiv Khori, District Reasi on 26-02-2025 (Shiv Ratri) for the benefit of General Public and Pilgrims on eve of Holy Shiv Ratri Festival.

In this Health Camp near about 576 Patients took benefit of Health Camp. S. Amardeep Singh Sasan CEO & Director of Diva International Foundation thanked Local Administration, Police Department, Shiv Khori, CMO Reasi, Dr Rajneesh Kumar BMO Pouni, Dr Ashu Rajput MO PHC Ransoo, Dr Tawheed Qadir MO & Volunteers for making this Programme a Grand Success.

## Keshav Chopra organizes 11th Annual Langar on Mahashivratri



JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

On the occasion of Maha Shivratri Chairman Samvedna Society Keshav Chopra organizes 11th Varshik langar at Talab Tillo in which BJP JKUT President Sat Sharma (CA), MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta, Prominent Journalist Sohail Kazmi, BJP Spokesperson Gaurav Gupta, District President Daffara, Swati Sharma, BJP Jammu Adv Rajesh Gupta, BJP JKUT Secretary Ayodhya Gupta, Neelem Nargotra, Suneet Raina, Jeet Angral, Ex Dy. Mayor Dharmveer Singh Jamwal, Dr Akshay Sharma, JKUT Health and Medical Cell Convenor Puneet Mahajan Participated.

Sat Sharma expressed Shivratri greetings to the people of the JKUT and said that Shivratri is such a festival which reminds us how to get rid of evils and lead a pious life.

Arvind Gupta also expressed greetings to the people of the JKUT and hoped that May this shivratri brings Peace for everyone.

Sohail Kazmi & Gaurav Gupta also expressed their best wishes to the

people of Jammu Kashmir and requested everyone to come forward and work for the needy sections.

Keshav Chopra while expressing the greetings said that these festivals also provide an opportunity to come together as a mark of respect towards our religion and also Prayed for peace and Prosperity of the JKUT

Veena Gupta, Kushant Daffara, Swati Sharma, Pritpal Singh, Social Activists Urja Singh, Tarun Sharma, Anu Gupta, Rahul Dutta, Jaideep Samyial, Ravi Kant Sharma, Manav Mahajan, Karan Singh, Rajesh Gupta, Dr R.K Gupta, Arun Dubey, Rahul Nargotra, Deepak Kumar, Rajesh Saini, Geeta Sodhi, Naveen Sharma, Harvinder Singh, Ramesh Kumar, Rajesh Saini, Raman Verma, Bablu Chand, Anupam Gupta, K.L Sharma, Sonali Gupta, Puneet Chawla, Vikas Gupta, Sanjeev Gupta, Kusum Gupta, Bhupinder Gupta, Sumit Malhotra, Bhanu Partap, S.K Rana, Vikas Kumar, Lokesh Bhagat, Kali Bhagat, Dr Sanchit Sharma, Rakesh Verma, and others were also present.

## Kakora Cricket League Grand Finale organizes at Kakora, Rajouri



JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The Kakora Cricket League (KCL) 2025 culminated in a thrilling final match at the breathtaking Kaniyal Gali Cricket Ground, delivering an electrifying contest between Mafia II and DSK Mafia II, wherein batting first, Mafia II put up a total of 90/10 in 11.4 overs.

Their innings was driven by an explosive knock from Mohd Sami (34 off 18 balls, SR 188.8) and a solid contribution from Fazan (14 off 7 balls, SR 200.0). However, disciplined bowling from DSK II, led by Pervaiz Ahmed and Mukhtar Prince, kept

them in check. Chasing 91, DSK dominated with their captain Ruksar Anjum, who played a match-winning knock of 80 runs off 41 balls at a strike rate of 195.1. Supported by Anaz Khan (26 off 4 balls), DSK comfortably secured victory at 94/1 in 11.4 overs, lifting the KCL 2025 Trophy in style.

The grand finale was a testament to the fierce competition and sportsmanship that defined KCL 2025, organized by Indian Army. Cricket fans can now look forward to even bigger and better action in next year's edition.

## MLA Sham Sharma inspects construction work of ring bund, repair, desilting of Ranbir Canal Head



JI NEWS SERVICE  
AKHNOOR, FEB 26

Jammu North MLA Sham Lal Sharma on Wednesday inspected the construction work of ring bund and repair and desilting of Ranbir canal head Akhnoor along with Chief Engineer manoj gupta of Irrigation and Flood Control Department

During this visit, the progress, quality and effectiveness of the ongo-

ing works were reviewed so that the work could be completed on time and as per the required standards. On this occasion, the officers of Irrigation and Flood Control Department were given guidelines regarding the quality of development works.

On this, the work to expedite the removal of silt from the canal was reviewed so that farmers could get water for farming on time.

## J&K Budget will lay strong foundation for public relief & development: Tanvir Sadiq

JI NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26

National Conference leader and Chief Spokesman of the party Tanvir Sadiq on Wednesday expressed confidence that the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir budget will lay a strong foundation for public relief and constructive development.

"The government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is by the people and for the people and providing relief to the people is the first priority of the government", Sadiq, who is also a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) said in a statement here today.

He said that the first budget of the newly elect-

ed government is going to be presented next month.

"The Chief Minister consulted extensively with all stakeholders before preparing the budget and we are confident that the budget will lay a strong foundation for public relief and development," the NC leader said.

Sadiq claimed that the Omar Abdullah led government has succeeded to a large extent in restoring the trust and confidence of the people towards the government.

"For the past 10 years, especially after 2019, the communication between the government and the people was broken", he said.

The NC Chief Spokes-

man said the government led by Omar Abdullah has managed to restore that connection once again, the Ministers and members of the National Conference have dedicated themselves to the people and are always available to listen to the people's problems and solve them.

"From 2015 to 2024, only anti-people decisions and actions were taken. But, now every decision of the National Conference government will be people-friendly and in public interest", he emphasized.

The NC leader said that during the last 10 years in Jammu and Kashmir, there was only public opposition and anti-people decisions were taken.

## Innovative Learning meets Tradition as Cambridge Montessori celebrates Mahashivratri in Pouni Chak

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The management of Cambridge Montessori School, Pouni Chak, organized a day-long celebration to honor the Mahashivratri Festival, creating a memorable event for children, parents, and teachers alike. The highlight of the celebration was a stage play performed by the children, where they depicted different characters, including Lord Shiva, Maa Parvati, and Lord Ganesha, effectively illustrating the story behind this significant festival. The innocence and enthusiasm of the children in their roles, along with the quality of their performance, clearly reflected the exceptional training and the supportive environment they are receiving from their school.

As part of the celebration, sweets were distributed to the participants and attendees, spreading joy and camaraderie among all present. During an interview with the media, Ms. Anuradha Sharma, Principal of the school, shared the institution's mission to redefine early education. She emphasized their commitment to shaping children into future lead-



ers, fostering innovation, a cultural awareness, and a deep love for learning. Ms. Sharma explained that the school's curriculum is designed to ignite creativity and curiosity through innovative, play-based learning approaches. Furthermore, the school prioritizes the well-being of its students by conducting quarterly health checkups, ensuring their holistic development. In addition, the school embraces technology by integrating projector-based smart classes, offering an immersive and tech-savvy learning experience for the children.

Cambridge Montessori, Pre-School & Daycare in

Pouni Chak, Jammu, is a cutting-edge institution that focuses on providing a nurturing and innovative environment for early childhood education. The children who participated in the special Mahashivratri performance were Vivaan Sharma, Aarvi Malhotra, Atulaya Gupta, Divish Koul, Aarvi Choudhary, and Aamani Gupta. The event was thoughtfully coordinated by Ms. Shakshi Zutshi, along with the dedicated teachers: Ms. Nupur Mahajan, Ms. Priyanka Ka-chroo, Ms. Sarika Malhotra, Ms. Pral Dutta, and Ms. Rashmi Gupta.

## SKUAST-TAJ performs Puja on eve of Mahashivratri



JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Jammu, 26 February: A hawan puja with chanting of vedic mantras was performed at Main Campus Chatha of SKUAST-Jammu for the well being and further development of the Institution. On the occasion

President SKUAST-TAJ Dr Vikas Sharma, General Secretary Dr. Vivak M. Arya, Joint Secretary Dr. P.K. Rai, President NTEA-J S. Kamaldeep Singh, other office bearers and Senior faculty members Dr. Sanjay Guleria, Dr. B.K. Sinha, along with other staff members and students from various divisions were present. All the teachers, non teaching staff and students present there, bowed to the Lord Shiva, sought the blessings and prayed for the long prosperity of the SKUAST-Jammu. A vishal bhandara was also organized after the puja.

## Ajeet demanded employment of one member of each land affected family in CVPP

JI NEWS SERVICE  
KISHTWAR, FEB 26

Senior National Conference Leader, Spokesperson of Chenab Valley Zone Ajeet Bhagat has demanded permanent employment for one member of each affected family whose land/property has been submerged in the Pakal Dool, Kiru, Kawar, and Rattle hydroelectric power projects, at par with Dool Hasti, Uri, Salal hydroelectric power projects. The National Conference leader said that the land losers of Pakal dool, Kiru, Kawar, and Rattle hydroelectric power projects have been given jobs by their contractor and will be retrenched by the contractor after the completion of these projects, which is unfair to them as the families affected by these lands have provided their ancestral land and properties and what will be their source of income after the completion of these projects.

## Chief Education Officer Doda constitutes Control Room for fairness in SSE Examinations

JI NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, FEB 26

In a well come step the newly posted Chief Education Officer Doda establishes Control Room for monitoring of in progress Secondary School Examinations in Distt. Doda under his control widely hailed by public.

Reports reveal scores of Masters and teachers are blamed for converting Examination Centers into venues for their vested interest and manage exam duty multiples times in an academic session thus contribute in bringing bad name to the Department of School Education and enjoy exam duty as escape route from institutional responsibilities at the cost of poor students. Energetic Chief Education Officer Doda on the strength of his competency and managerial capabilities realising value of clean and clear examination system framed 05 member Committee to monitor the activities of staff on Exam Duty vide No: CEO/D/38924-32 dated: 14.02.2025 comprising of DEPO Doda, Ajay Kumar, Mohd Akhter, Muzaffer Iqbal and Umer Ali.

It is of noteworthy that several Exam Superintendents / Dy. Superintendent during 2024 were blamed for unfair means during exam duty were summoned by JKBOSE Vide No: F (UFM-B) JD/2024/38 dated: 8.6.2024. Civil society of Doda has appreciated the daring step of Chief Education Officer Doda for fighting at multiple fronts in the interest of students and society.

## Balbir Ram presents portrait of Guru Ravidass to Anurag Thakur

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

In a heartfelt gesture honouring the legacy of Guru Ravidass, Balbir Ram Rattan, pre-sented a portrait of the revered saint Guru Ravidass to MP & former Union Minister Anurag Thakur, in presence of Jammu and Kashmir BJP President Sat Sharma CA.



Balbir Ram Rattan, Guru Ravidass Vishwa Mahapeeth General Secretary, also Indian Chapter General Secretary of British Ravidasia Heritage Foundation and Member, Begampura Vishwa Mahasabha, while presenting the portrait to Anurag Thakur, shared his association with

various social organisations of the country and abroad, which are working to spread the teachings of Guru Ravidass.

Anurag Thakur, on this occasion, said that the lives of great Indian saints teach us equality, brother-hood and respect for all faiths and sections. He expressed his deep respect for Guru Ravidass and appreciated the effort to prepare and present

the portrait. He also highlighted the importance of pre-serving and promoting the values championed by Guru Ravidass.

Sat Sharma CA said that Guru Ravidass was a social reformer whose message of equality and humanity continues to inspire millions. He advocated for a casteless, harmonious society. His teachings emphasised love, unity, and devotion to God,

making him a guiding force for people seeking spiritual and so-cial upliftment.

wisdom and compassion, symbolizing his enduring influence on society.

Balbir Ram Rattan said that the portrait presented to the MP captures the essence of Guru Ravidass's wisdom and compassion, symbolizing his enduring influence on society.

Balbir stated that Guru Ravidass's philosophy has always been a guiding light in his life, and this portrait was a token of his devotion and respect. Through this portrait, I paid homage to Guru Ravidass and ensure that his teachings continue to reach people," he said.

## UT status to J&K is an insult of public opinion, warn protest on March 3



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Shiv Sena UBT Jammu-Kashmir unit, in solidarity with all elected representatives of the ruling and opposition parties, on the delay in restoration of state status, protested in the House on the first day of the upcoming assembly session and exposed the public sentiment to give a strong message to the central government.

In a press conference held today at the party's state central office, state chief Manish Sahni said that the erstwhile state of Jammu-Kashmir remaining a Union Territory (UT) is an insult to public opinion, the Lieutenant Governor, Chief Minister, all ministers and MLAs are enjoying their personal facilities to the fullest, but public issues are being sidelined and people are being crushed in the mill of dual power system, the

era of accountability is almost coming to an end.

He said that the BJP government at the centre has maintained silence in fulfilling the promise of restoration of statehood, while Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his ministers are not able to move beyond verbal protest.

Sahni said that all parties should rise above their political and personal interests and put pressure on the central government to restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir with unity. Sahni has warned of protests outside the House on the first day of the Assembly session starting on March 3. Along with this, he has demanded from the MLAs to protest unitedly inside the House and send a strong message to the Central Government. On this occasion Gen Secretary Vikas Bakshi was also present.

## Indian Army conducts Medical Patrol at Thanna, Rajouri



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The Indian Army conducted a medical patrol in Thanna, Rajouri District, providing free medical aid and treatment to 29 beneficiaries, including 12 males, 7 females, and 10 children. The medical patrol was held at Mathiyangala, where Indian army medical personnel offered essential medical services to villagers in need. This initiative is part of the Indian Army's ongoing efforts to reach out to remote areas and provide medical assistance to local communities. By doing so, the Indian Army aims to build trust and strengthen its bond with the locals, while ensuring their health and well-being.

The medical patrol is a testament to the Indian Army's commitment to serving the nation and supporting local communities, particularly in remote and underprivileged areas. The Indian Army's efforts to provide essential medical services have been well-received by the local population, who appreciate the Indian Army's dedication to their welfare. By conducting medical patrols, the Indian Army is not only providing medical aid but also promoting health awareness and education among the local population. This initiative has helped to foster a sense of goodwill and cooperation between the Indian Army and the local community, while also ensuring the overall well-being of the people.

## Dy CM attends Shivratri festivities at Rajouri, Jammu

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today attended several festivities held to mark Maha Shivratri celebrations at various places in Rajouri district.

At the main function held at Bhambala, the Deputy Chief Minister prayed for peace and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that these festivals are a strong projector to the composite culture of the region in which people from all communities participate since ages.

"We should work together for strengthening the mutual brotherhood and our composite culture and syncretic traditions, which is the need of the hour", the Deputy Chief Minister maintained.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated several public utilities. He also attended Shivratri festivities at Kameshwar Mandir Akhnoor.

While interacting with the devotees there, the Deputy Chief Minister reiterated Government's resolve for ensuring quality deliverance of essential services. He said that requisite instructions stand passed to the concerned and the implementation is also being closely monitored.

## BGSBU on the Move: Expanding new academic programs

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, FEB 26

Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) is undergoing a transformative phase, expanding its academic landscape and strengthening its position as a premier institution of higher education. Under the new and visionary leadership of Prof. Jawaid Iqbal, Vice Chancellor; Prof. M J Warsi, Dean Academic Affairs; and Mr. Abhishek Sharma, IAS, Registrar, the University is setting new benchmarks in academic excellence, research, and innovation.

With a renewed focus on Multidisciplinary Studies, BGSBU has established new departments and introduced several postgraduate and undergraduate programs to cater to evolving academic and professional demands. The newly established departments include Department of Sanskrit, History, Political Science and International Relations, Sociology, Linguistics and Mechanical Engineering.

In addition, the university has introduced cutting-edge undergraduate engineering programs

to equip students with the latest technological advancements and industry-relevant skills, including B.Tech in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Electronics and Computer Engineering and Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

Recognizing the growing importance of advanced studies in engineering and technology, BGSBU has also launched M.Tech programs, namely M.Tech in Computer Science and Engineering, Power and Energy Systems, Electronics & Communication and Water Resource Engineering.

Speaking on this academic transformation, Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. Jawaid Iqbal, stated, "BGSBU is committed to academic excellence and holistic development. Our focus is on creating a knowledge-driven ecosystem that empowers students and faculty to contribute meaningfully to society. With innovative programs, research initiatives, and a forward-thinking approach, we aim to place BGSBU among the leading institutions in the country."

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Jawaid Iqbal further added

that "The introduction of these programs reflects the essence of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which promotes interdisciplinary teaching and re-search while contributing to the larger benefit of society. By integrating traditional wisdom with modern advancements, BGSBU aims to nurture a holistic academic environment that fosters innovation, inclusivity, and societal growth."

The Vice Chancellor further emphasized that the new programs have been introduced as per the demand of the local people and will provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete at the Union Territory (UT) and National level tests.

Prof. M. J. Warsi, the new Dean of Academic Affairs at BGSBU, added, "These academic initiatives will enhance the career prospects of our students and contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the region. The introduction of programs in humanities and social sciences has long been a demand of the local community, and we are pleased to address it."

## Rajeev Kapur unveils 'Mission Save Lives' – A 13-Point Plan at Morocco Summit



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

In a landmark move towards global road safety, Rajeev Kapur, Managing Director of Steelbird Helmets, presented the 'Mission Save Lives' 13-point roadmap at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Morocco.

Invited as a helmet expert by the UN-WHO, Rajeev's initiative aligns with the UN's 'Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-2030)', aiming to reduce global road accidents by 50% by 2030.

The plan advocates for a universal helmet safety standard for all developing nations, eliminating the need for manufacturers to comply with multiple regulations. UN/WHO-accredited helmet testing laboratories in every country are proposed to combat the sale of fake helmets, ensuring quality and safety.

Key recommendations include mandating two certified helmets with every new two-wheeler, enforcing a 'No Helmet, No Fuel' policy, and making lightweight bicycle helmets compulsory for children under four years old. A nationwide crackdown on counterfeit helmets and a traceability system for defective helmet components are

also crucial aspects of the initiative.

To encourage helmet affordability, Kapur calls for the elimination of import duties and taxes on helmets in countries lacking manufacturing facilities. He also urges governments to allocate 25% of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets to road safety initiatives, such as distributing subsidized helmets and launching awareness campaigns.

In addition, the plan stresses the importance of mandatory ISO certification for helmet manufacturers, fully equipped in-house testing laboratories, and helmet sensors in two-wheelers to remind riders to wear helmets. Delivery and ride-sharing companies must also test their helmets at certified labs in Europe and the U.S.

With this ambitious strategy, Rajeev Kapur calls for global collaboration among policymakers, manufacturers, and governments to enhance road safety. By enforcing helmet regulations, eliminating fake products, and increasing public awareness, the 'Mission Save Lives' roadmap aims to make roads safer worldwide and significantly reduce traffic fatalities by 2030.

## Vijay Bhardwaj organizes Health Awareness Camp at Smailpur



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

On the eve of Mahashivratri a day long health cum awareness camp was organised at Shiv Mandir Smailpur in Vijay Bhardwaj (BR Medical) and in which more than 200 patients were examined and were given medicines free of cost.

Dr Anil Kumar Sharma MD, DM Consultant Cardiologist at SSH GMC Jammu apprised the public about

common heart ailments and their remedies. He stressed upon risk factors like HTN, Diabetes, Dyslipidemia, Smoking and Tobacco chewing and controlling these risk factors makes a big difference in preventing heart diseases.

Others who were part of camp include Dr Kanit Bhardwaj, Dev Bhardwaj, Ashok Bhardwaj, Dr Arun Sharma, Suraj Prakash Sharma, Omkar Dutt Sharma, Parshotam Sharma.

## Maha Shivratri celebrated with religious fervor at Om Shanti Centre, Vasuki Nag Dham

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
KATHUA, FEB 26

Maha Shivratri was celebrated with great religious fervor and enthusiasm at the Om Shanti Ishwariya Centre (Brahma Kumari Ashram) in Basohli and Vasuki Nag Dham at Mahali (Plakh). The celebrations commenced at Om Shanti Ishwariya Centre with an enlightening discourse by Behan Kamlesh Kumari on the significance of Maha Shivratri and the glory of Lord Shiva. More than 500 devotees affiliated with the center participated in the spiritual gathering.

Among the prominent invitees was Col Mahan Singh (Retd.), DDC Chairman Kathua, who graced the occasion and lauded the efforts of the Ishwariya Centre, Basohli, in serving the community and fostering spiritual growth in the region. He also flagged off the Rath



Yatra organized as part of the celebrations, further adding to the devotional spirit of the event.

Simultaneously, another grand Maha Shivratri celebration was held at Basuki Nag Dham Temple in Mahali (Plakh), which witnessed a large turnout of devotees. The newly constructed temple, adorned with magnificent black stone idols, became the center of devotion and festivity. The rituals included Jal Abhishek, Bhajan-Kirtan, and a Langar (commu-

nity feast), which was attended by people from all walks of life, including elderly devotees, women, and children.

DDC Chairman Col Mahan Singh actively participated in the celebrations at Basuki Nag Dham, where he warmly received devotees, interacted with them, and took part in seva (service) organized by the Adhinarishwar Sanskrit & Vedic Sansthan Trust, of which he is the President.

Speaking on the occasion, Col Mahan Singh

emphasized the significance of Maha Shivratri as a festival that symbolizes the triumph of devotion, self-discipline, and righteousness. He further stated that such religious events play a crucial role in preserving Sanatan traditions and strengthening the moral fabric of society.

Encouraging the devotees to imbibe the teachings of Lord Shiva in their daily lives, he reiterated his commitment to supporting initiatives that foster spiritual and cultural harmony in the region.

## Indian Army procures Critical CBRN Defence Equipment



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Indian Army has signed a contract on 25 February 2025 for procurement of 223 Automatic Chemical Agent Detection and Alarm (ACADA) systems with M/s L&T Ltd at a cost of Rs 80.43 Cr, under the Buy Indian (IDDM) category. This will give a significant boost to the Gol's Atamnirbharta drive since more than 80% of the components and sub-systems of the equipment will be sourced locally.

ACADA has been designed and developed by DRDO's Defence Research and Development Establishment, Gwalior and marks a significant milestone in the

nation's indigenisation initiative in the niche CBRN domain.

The ACADA system is used to detect chemical warfare agents (CWA) and programmed toxic industrial chemicals (TICs) by sampling the air from the environment. It works on the principle of Ion Mobility Spectrometry (IMS) and contains two highly sensitive IMS cells for continuous detection and simultaneous monitoring of harmful/toxic substances. Induction of ACADA in the field units will substantially enhance Indian Army's defensive CBRN capability for operations, as also for peacetime, especially for responding to disaster relief situations related to industrial accidents.

## IIM Jammu concludes Authors Workshop on Academic Writing for HE in Indian Languages (Dogri) in Collaboration with BBS

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, in collaboration with the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti under the aegis UGC, New Delhi, Ministry of Education, Government of India, concluded the Authors Workshop on Academic Writing for Higher Education in Indian Languages (Dogri) on 25th Feb 2025 at Vedanta MDP Block, Jagti. This initiative, aligned with NEP 2020, aims to enhance academic content in Bharatiya languages and improve accessibility to quality education.

The valedictory ceremony graced by Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Profes-



sor, IIM Jammu, along with Dr. Purnendu from Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, New Delhi. The workshop featured sessions on NEP 2020 insights, textbook writing principles, quality assurance, terminology standardization, interdisciplinary development, and a panel discussion on future action plans.

Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, IIM Jammu invited feedback from participants and discussed the roadmap for moving forward, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts in strengthening academic writing in Bharatiya languages.

Shri Purnendu Debnath, Bharatiya Bhasha

Samiti, New Delhi, interacted with participants and encouraged them to share their requirements, ensuring they could be effectively addressed and put forward.

The workshop concluded with a valedictory ceremony followed by certificate distribution recognizing participants'

contributions, marking a significant step in promoting Bharatiya languages in academic writing, research, and higher education.

The workshop includes sessions on insights from NEP 2020, textbook writing principles, quality assurance, terminology standardization, interdis-

ciplinary textbook development, and a panel discussion on future action plans. The workshop aimed at promoting academic writing in Dogri and strengthening higher education in Indian languages. Experts and scholars engaged in insightful discussions and hands-on sessions to enhance academic writing skills. The initiative aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasizing the promotion of regional languages in higher education. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation, reflecting a strong commitment to fostering linguistic diversity and academic excellence.

## Yudhvir, Priya pay obeisance at Peer Kho Temple on Maha Shivratri

### Say Maha Shivratri symbolizes divine power of Lord Shiva



JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

BJP leader and MLA East Constituency, Yudhvir Sethi, along with former Minister and senior BJP leader Priya Sethi today paid obeisance at the ancient Peer Kho Temple on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri. The duo participated in the special prayers and sought blessings from Lord Shiva for peace, prosperity, and harmony in Jammu and Kashmir.

While speaking on the occasion, Yudhvir Sethi emphasized the spiritual and cultural significance of Ma-ha Shivratri, calling it a festival that symbolizes the divine power of Lord Shiva. He highlighted the importance of preserving and promoting the rich heritage of ancient temples like Peer Kho, which serve as pillars of faith and devotion for countless devotees.

Priya Sethi, while addressing the gathering,

extended her heartfelt greetings to the people on Maha Shivratri and stressed the need to uphold the values of unity, devotion, and righteousness. She acknowledged the efforts of the temple management in organizing the grand celebrations and ensuring smooth arrangements for the devotees.

A large number of devotees thronged the Peer Kho Temple to offer prayers and perform Rudra Ab-hishek on this pious occasion. The temple premises reverberated with chants of 'Har Har Mahadev' and 'Om Namah Shivaya' as devotees immersed themselves in religious fervor.

Both leaders reiterated their commitment to promoting the spiritual and cultural legacy of Jammu and appreciated the administration for facilitating seamless arrangements at religious places during the festival.

## Improved law & order conditions reflect Modi Govt's unwavering commitment to J&K's progress: Kavinder

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta, reaffirmed that normalcy has been fully restored in Kashmir, attributing this transformation to the decisive policies of the Modi government. He emphasized that post the abrogation of Article 370, the region has witnessed unprecedented peace, development, and a secure environment conducive to economic and social progress. The fear-driven narrative that once gripped Kashmir has been replaced by a renewed sense of stability, paving the way for large-scale investments and an improved quality of life for its residents.

He was speaking to media persons after offering prayers at several temples in the Gandhi Nagar constituency on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri in Jammu.

Kavinder lauded the Central Government for extending the package of concessions and in-



centives for Central Government employees serving in Kashmir for another three years. Terming it a significant step, he said such measures would enhance the welfare and security of employees posted in the region while strengthening governance and administrative efficiency.

The senior BJP leader asserted that the Modi government has completely transformed Jammu and Kashmir by implementing developmental policies and ensuring the integration of the Union Territory with the national mainstream. He pointed out that infrastructural projects, tourism revival, and improved law and order conditions reflect the government's unwavering commitment to the region's progress.

Extending his greetings on Maha Shivratri, he prayed for peace, prosperity, and the well-being of all citizens. He emphasized that the festival symbolizes unity and spiritual enlightenment, urging people to uphold the rich cultural traditions that define India's diverse heritage.

"The Central Government has once again demonstrated its dedication to the people of Jammu and Kashmir by ensuring that the employees working in the Valley receive the necessary financial and logistical support. This decision will further instill confidence among government servants and reaffirm the government's resolve to strengthen governance in the region," he said.

## Randhawa conducts tour of ward-47, takes stock of public issues

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 26

Senior BJP leader and MLA Bahu constituency, Vikram Randhawa today conducted an extensive tour of Ward No. 47 in the Bahu Fort area to assess the issues faced by local residents. During his visit, he interacted with the people, listened to their grievances.

Accompanied by JMC XEN Lokesh Gupta, AEE Shamsher Singh, JE Pranav Shivgotra, Ward Supervisor Sonu, former MC Councillor Sharda Ji, Mandal President Surjeet Singh, and several local residents, Randhawa inspected various areas and took note of the pressing civic concerns. The residents highlighted issues related to drainage, water supply, sanitation, street lighting, and road maintenance.

Addressing the gath-



ing, MLA Randhawa emphasized the BJP's commitment to public welfare and assured that all grievances would be addressed at the earliest. He directed the JMC officials to expedite necessary repairs and ensure timely implementation of development projects. "My priority has always been to work for the welfare of the people and ensure that basic civic amenities reach every house-

hold. The BJP government is dedicated to delivering good governance and efficient services," he stated.

The MLA also inspected the sanitation condition in the ward and urged JMC officials to enhance cleanliness drives in the area. He instructed concerned departments to resolve the drainage issues that have been troubling residents for a long time. Additionally, he assured the public that streetlights and road repairs would be taken up on priority.

The senior BJP leader reaffirmed his commitment to the development of the Bahu Fort area and urged the people to remain vigilant about the execution of government schemes. He assured that similar tours would be conducted frequently to ensure proper monitoring of developmental works and public issues.

## Seminar on Tourism transformation in Kashmir held at KU

JI NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26

To promote collaboration between academia, industry, and policymakers in shaping the future of tourism in Jammu & Kashmir, the Department of Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure Studies (DTHLS), University of Kashmir (KU), organised a one-day national seminar on 'Infrastructure, Industry and Academia: Driving Tourism Transformation in Kashmir.'

The seminar aimed to discuss strategies for improving tourism infrastructure, enhancing visitor experiences, and promoting sustainable tourism practices in Kashmir. It provided a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on challenges, explore innovative solutions, and strengthen the link between academic research and industry needs.

Speaking at the inaugural event, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her presidential address, highlighted the university's commitment to con-



tributing to the tourism sector through research, innovation, and industry collaboration.

"Tourism is a vital part of our economy and through interdisciplinary partnerships, we can enhance visitor experiences while ensuring sustainable growth," she said.

Guest of honor, Mr. Farooq Ahmad Shah, MLA Gulmarg J&K, appreciated the department's efforts in engaging with stakeholders to drive tourism development in the region.

"It is our responsibility to ensure that Jammu & Kashmir reaches its full potential as a world-class tourist destination through proper planning, infrastructure enhancement, and quality experiences for visitors," he stated.

Keynote speaker, Mr. Sandeep Raturi, Vice-President, Distinct Destinations, Delhi, stressed on the importance of integrating cultural experiences with tourism, stating that Kashmir's rich culture has the potential to enhance the overall visitor experience. He noted that strategic planning and innovative approaches are essential for the sustainable growth of the hospitality sector.

Mr. Mohammad Saleem Beigh, Convener INTACH, and former Director General, Tourism J&K, highlighted the need to adapt tourism strategies in response to changing customer preferences and evolving with current trends while ensuring that environmental sustainability remains a priority.

## KU hosts international conference on trans-himalayan borderlands



JI NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26

To promote academic discussions on the evolving cultural, economic, and social landscape of the Trans-Himalayan region, the Centre of Central Asian Studies (CCAS), University of Kashmir (KU), hosted a two-day international conference on "Trans-Himalayan Borderlands: Dynamics of Connectivity, Culture, and Change."

Scholars and academicians from prestigious institutions in India, including JNU, Pondicherry University, and Jamia Millia Islamia participated, besides International experts and academics from France, Australia, and Italy who joined the conference in online mode. Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, who was the chief guest at

the inaugural session, highlighted the strategic significance of trans-himalayan borderlands in shaping regional histories, trade networks, and sociopolitical dynamics.

"Conferences like these help us deepen our understanding of the intricate connections that have historically defined the Himalayan region and its neighboring cultures," she said. Keynote speaker, Prof. Parth Chauhan, Head, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IISER Mohali, provided a detailed analysis of pre-historic migrations, technological advancements, and environmental interactions in Kashmir and the trans-himalayas.

Director, India Central Asia Foundation and Head, MERI Centre of International Studies, New Delhi, Prof. Ramak-

ant Dwivedi, in his special remarks, underscored the historical trade and cultural exchanges between South and Central Asia, emphasizing their relevance in contemporary times. A special lecture by Prof. Vijay Sathé, Deccan College, Pune, explored palaeontology, horticulture, and human evolution in the Himalayan borderlands, and shed light on the ecological and anthropological aspects of the region.

Earlier Director CCAS KU Prof. Tabasum Firdous who is also Convener of the conference welcomed the participants and highlighted the aims and objectives of the program.

Dr. Mohammad Ajmal Shah, Coordinator of the Conference and faculty at CCAS KU delivered the formal vote of thanks at the inaugural session.

## Srinagar Police arrests highway robbers impersonating police commandos



JI NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26

Srinagar Police has apprehended a gang of robbers who were posing as Police Commandos to loot trucks during nighttime. The operation led to the recovery of dummy guns, a vehicle, black uniforms, and other incriminating materials used in the crime.

On February 22, 2025, Police Station Shalteng received a complaint from Chanchal Singh, son of Sher Singh, a resident of Haryana, stating that during the night hours, unidentified individuals stopped his vehicle at Maloora, Shalteng, and robbed him of cash and valuables at gunpoint. Based on this complaint, an FIR (No. 15 U/S 307, 126(2), 3(5)) was registered, and an investigation was launched.

Acting swiftly, Srinagar Police formed multiple teams and conducted an extensive search operation. Within days, 04 accused persons were identified and arrested from different areas of the city. They have been identified as:

Sahil Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-u-Din Sheikh, resident of Narakh Budgam

Aqib Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-u-Din Sheikh, resident of Narkarah Budgam

Arbaz Ahmad Wani, son of Hilal Ahmad Wani, resident of SD Colony Batmaloo

Faisal Ahmad Shah, son of Azad Ahmad Shah, resident of Nowhatta

The investigation led to the seizure of two dummy guns, nine mobile phones, a Swift vehicle, ATM cards, cash, and black commando uniforms used in the crime.

The accused specifically targeted trucks with registration numbers from outside the Union Territory, choosing desolate highway stretches during nighttime to execute their crimes. They intimidated drivers using dummy guns while dressed in black commando uniforms before robbing them of cash, ATM cards, and other valuables.

Pertinently, the arrested individuals are history-sheeters with multiple cases registered against them in various police stations across Jammu & Kashmir.

## Sunil Verma constitutes JKNC Kissan Cell in Udhampur to empower farmers



**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 26

In a significant move to strengthen the voice of farmers and address their concerns, Sunil Verma, District President of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) Udhampur, today reconstituted the JKNC Kissan Cell in Udhampur. The cell aims to work closely with the farming community, ensuring that government schemes and policies for their welfare reach the grassroots level effectively.

The formation of the JKNC Kissan Cell took place in the presence of senior party leaders, including District Vice President Javed Iqbal, Adv. KD Sharma, Amar Nath (Retd. Principal), Om Prakash (City President), Akash Verma (District President YNC Udhampur), Mehboob Iqbal, and Attar Chand (Retd. SDM). The leadership expressed confidence that the newly formed body would serve as a bridge between the farmers and the government, working towards their empowerment and prosperity.

Mehboob Khan Qazi (Retd. Tehsildar), has been appointed as the District President of JKNC Kissan

Cell, with Haleem Khan as Senior Vice President and Tirath Singh as Vice President. Romesh Chander Sharma will serve as District Secretary, while Mohd. Kavir has been given the responsibility of Additional District Secretary. Nazar Hussain Rahella has been assigned the role of Joint Secretary, Jeet Singh (Nyb Sarpanch) as Chief Organizer, and Leason Din (Gordi) as Organizer. The financial matters of the cell will be managed by Cashier Shakil Khokhar, while Sunil Kumar SC will oversee media outreach as Press and Publicity Secretary. Satish Rana has also been appointed as Joint Secretary, with Parvez Sebal as an Organizer. Several other members have been inducted into the District Working Committee, including Abdul Quime, Baldev Chand, Jagdish Kumar, Mohd. Rashid (Nyb Sarpanch), Ch. Shokat Ali, Gian Chand (Nagolta), and Arif (Tent House, Nyb Sarpanch, Nagolta).

Speaking on the occasion, Sunil Verma emphasized that the present NC government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, is deeply committed to the upliftment of farmers. He highlighted that the gov-

ernment has introduced several welfare schemes, financial assistance programs, and modern agricultural techniques to help farmers improve their productivity and economic stability. He urged party workers to actively engage with the farming community and spread awareness about these initiatives so that they can avail the benefits.

He further stated that the newly formed JKNC Kissan Cell would play a pivotal role in addressing the challenges faced by farmers, including issues related to irrigation, subsidies, market access, and agricultural reforms. He assured the gathering that the party is determined to protect the rights of farmers and work towards their betterment.

The event concluded with a strong commitment from all members to work tirelessly in ensuring that the concerns of farmers are heard and addressed at the highest levels of governance.

Sunil Verma reaffirmed that NC government will continue to be the voice of the farmers and work for their rightful demands, ensuring a prosperous future for the agricultural community in Jammu and Kashmir.

Let us Pledge to Make Bharat Viksit

## Pathania inaugurates 29th Mahashivratri Mela at Shri Apshambhu Temple Khoon

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
MAJALTA, FEB 26

As part of the annual celebration of Maha Shivratri, a grand mela was organized, showcasing stalls from various departments with the aim of encouraging public participation and promoting awareness in different spheres of life. This vibrant event took place at the AapShambhu Temple Khoon, where thousands of devotees gathered to seek the blessings of Lord Shiva. Various stalls were set up to inform people about key government schemes, including PM Vishwakarma, PMAY (G) (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin), and other initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission, Ayushman Bharat, and Ujjwala Yojana. Later, Mr. Pathania also paid obeisance and became part of grand celebrations at Apshambhu Temple Matt, Manwal, Shiv Temple Meneh, Shiv Temple Seen Tharkran,



shiv temple Lehnu, Battal and shiv temple Mand.

The occasion, marked by joyous celebrations, also serves as a platform to inform the public about critical developmental schemes. Pathania, in his address, emphasized the significance of such events, stating that they are not just about spiritual observances but also about progressing towards a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India)

by 2047. "This is a time to realize our 'Sankalp Pe Siddhi'—to ensure our goals for a prosperous and progressive future are met. In the coming years, India is poised to become an economic superpower, ranking in the top three globally. The goals of doubling farmers' income, providing insurance for all, and fostering inclusive growth will be achieved in the near future," he added.

Furthermore, Pathania spoke about the importance of Maha Shivratri as a time for spiritual growth and rejuvenation. "Such festivals symbolize not just our devotion but our commitment to national development. They are reminders of the unity and strength of our nation, showing that together we can reach new heights of progress. The mela is a perfect example of how

culture and development can go hand in hand, educating citizens about the government's initiatives while celebrating the rich heritage of our nation."

Each year, the mela is organized as a feature of Maha Shivratri by DAHWA, led by its chairman Surat Singh, who also manages the proceedings center.

Mr. Kripal Singh, Ramesh Chander Gupta, Ved Sharma, Sudesh Sharma, and other prominent local residents were present, contributing to the festive spirit and the shared goal of advancing the community's welfare.

Such events not only help to raise awareness about government schemes but also foster community spirit, making them essential in building a strong, informed, and empowered society. The congregation of local residents at this mela reflects a growing collective commitment to development and well-being for all.

## Three-Day Maha Shivratri Mahotsav Concludes with Devotional Fervor and Artistic Brilliance at Panjvaktra Mahadev Mandir



**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The grand Maha Shivratri Mahotsav 2025, held at the revered Panjvaktra Mahadev Mandir, concluded today, leaving behind a legacy of profound spiritual experiences and artistic excellence. The event, organized in collaboration with Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, and the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, drew thousands of devotees and art enthusiasts from across the region.

The final day was marked by a captivating blend of sacred rituals and cultural performances. The day began with melodious Light Bhajans by the Milan Cultural Society. This was followed by a deeply moving traditional devotional performance by Veer Bhan & Party,

whose soulful renditions resonated with the audience, invoking a sense of deep devotion.

A significant highlight of the day was the sacred Mahadev Abhishek & Aarti, where devotees participated in elaborate rituals, offering prayers to Lord Shiva. Later, renowned classical singer Dr. Rakesh Kalotra captivated the audience with his semi-classical bhajans, accompanied by the masterful musicianship of Shri Rakesh Anand on the flute, Guru Parshotam Kumar on Pakhawaj, Dr Vinay on Tabla and Er. Amarjeet Singh on the violin.

Adding to the spiritual ambiance, the students of the Panjvaktra Mahadev Ved Pathshala performed sacred Vedic recitations. The Ved Pathshala, operating as a tradi-

tional Gurukul within the temple premises, not only imparts Vedic knowledge but also focuses on holistic development through yoga and ancient traditional art forms.

Demonstrating their versatility, the students of the Ved Pathshala, under the expert guidance of Chhau exponent Shivan Gupta, showcased the vibrant Chhau art form. This performance highlighted the students' remarkable transformation from Vedic scholars to skilled practitioners of traditional art, showcasing the comprehensive education they receive.

Bringing a touch of classical elegance to the celebrations, the Nriyaji group, under the guidance of Dr. Priya Dutta, presented a mesmerizing Kathak performance. The dancers beautifully

depicted the divine narratives associated with Lord Shiva through intricate footwork and graceful expressions. A special segment of the performance paid tribute to the life of Ahilya Bai Holkar, portraying her devotion and contributions through expressive movements and storytelling. Additionally, the group performed a captivating piece in Dogri, celebrating the region's rich cultural heritage and deep spiritual traditions.

The Mahotsav culminated with the auspicious Shiv Vivah ceremony, performed by the Jangam community, recreating the celestial wedding of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati with great reverence and enthusiasm.

"The Maha Shivratri Mahotsav 2025 has been a resounding success, thanks to the unwavering

support of the Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, and the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages," said Suresh Kumar Sharma, Receiver of Panjvaktra Mahadev temple. "We are immensely grateful to all the artists, devotees, and volunteers who contributed to making this event a memorable and spiritually enriching experience. The participation of the Ved Pathshala students, showcasing their Vedic knowledge and Chhau art skills, added a unique and invaluable dimension to the Mahotsav."

The Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, and J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages played a crucial role in ensuring the smooth execution of the event, highlighting their commitment to promoting cultural and religious tourism in the region.

## Indian Army holds Awareness Lecture on Drug at Sangiot Poonch

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 26

The Indian Army conducted an awareness lecture on Drug Abuse at Government high school, Sangiot. The primary objective of the awareness lecture was to educate the local population especially the youth and students about the dangers of drug addiction and its far-reaching consequences. The session emphasized the importance of a drug-free society and highlighted preventive measures to curb substance abuse. The lecture covered crucial topics such as the psychological



and physiological impact of drug abuse, social and legal repercussions, and the role of families in rehabilitation and prevention.

Real-life examples and interactive discussions helped in effectively conveying the message. Participants expressed their appreciation for the initia-

tive, acknowledging the Indian Army's continuous efforts in addressing social challenges and guiding the youth towards a healthier future. The villagers also pledged their support in spreading awareness and ensuring a safer environment for future generations.

## Indian Army organizes Volleyball Competition with Locals at Kijai, Kishtwar

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
KISHTWAR : 26 FEB 2025

As part of its continued efforts to engage with youth and nurturing their sports talent. Indian Army, organised Volleyball Competition for the local youth at Kijai, District Kishtwar. The competition aimed to build a bond between youth and the Indian Army while fostering a spirit of healthy competition. A total of five teams participated and four matches were played. The final match was held between Kundal Vs Himalayan team in which Himalayan emerged victorious. More



than 60 locals participated and witnessed the competition. The competition culminated with felicitation of the winners

and runner-up teams. All the participants thanked the Army for organising the event and expressed their heartfelt gratitude.

## Shopian girl wins bronze medal in National Winter Biathlon Championship

**JJ NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, FEB 26 (KNO)

A young girl from South Kashmir's Shopian district has won a bronze medal in National Winter Biathlon Championship—2025 held in Gulmarg.

Saima Jan (24), daughter of Ahmad Sheikh of Chotipora area of Shopian district, won a gold medal in the National Curling

Championship last month. Speaking to the news agency, Saima said that she was interested in sports activities since her childhood and used to take part in sports activities at the local level.

She won a gold medal in the National Curling Championship last month followed by a bronze medal in the National Biathlon Champion-

ship—2025.

Saima emphasized the importance of engaging youth in sports activities to prevent drug use and antisocial behavior. She highlighted that sports provide a positive outlet, build self-esteem, promote healthy habits, foster a sense of community, and teach valuable life skills like teamwork and discipline, serving as

a protective factor against negative influences.

In her message to the youth of J&K, she encouraged them to showcase their talents by actively participating in various events, particularly in school-level games.

She urged them to take advantage of initiatives like Khelo India Mission, which provides opportunities for young athletes,

helping them stay away from drug addiction and safeguard their families from its harmful effects.

Saima said that though sports infrastructure in J&K needs to be upgraded, the government has been working to upgrade sports infrastructure in J&K and encouraged youth to make the most of the opportunities available to them. KNO

# JKSSAAT holds second governing body meet, reviews future roadmap

JNEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 25

The Jammu and Kashmir Society for Social Audit Accountability & Transparency (JKSSAAT) held its second governing body meeting under the chairmanship of its Chairperson, Ravi Kesar (former IFS). The meeting was aimed to review the performance, address key issues and strategise future initiatives of the social audit unit.

The meeting was attended by Principal Accountant General (PAG), J&K, K.P. Yadaw; Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad; Director Finance, Umar Khan; Additional Secretary, Waseem Raja; former Director General, Accounts and Treasuries, J&K, Dr. Mohammad Ishaq Wani; Former State Information Commissioner J&K, Professor Sudesh Kumar Sharma; Head of Centre for Rural Development & PR, IMPARD, J&K, Dr. Reva Sharma and representatives of School Education and Social Welfare Departments.

The governing body discussed the ongoing activities and future plans of JKSSAAT, including performance of the Social Audit Unit in auditing various



government schemes such as MGNREGA, PMAY(G), SBM(G) and PMAY(U). It appreciated the Social Audit Unit, J&K, for achieving complete coverage of Gram Panchayats (GPs) for the fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24, earning the Union Territory a top rank nationally.

The agenda also covered issues reported under MGNREGA including financial discipline, adherence to scheme guidelines and grievances. The governing body reviewed the progress in financial recoveries with a focus on transparency and accountability in implementation of various government initiatives.

Chairman, JKSSAAT, Ravi Kesar, appreciated the Social Audit Unit's dedication, noting that they delivered outstanding results despite facing a manpower crunch.

Secretary RDD, Aijaz Asad, appreciated the

progress saying that by conducting thorough audits and engaging the community, the Social Audit Unit has enhanced the efficiency of public programs.

Assuring full support to SAU established under the scheme guidelines, he remarked that positive impact of the Social Audit Unit's work is evident in better policy implementation and increased public trust in government initiatives.

Principal Accountant General (PAG), J&K, K.P. Yadaw, emphasized the need to prioritize and clear the oldest social audit cases. He called for hiring additional manpower to support the unit's growing responsibilities.

Director, Social Audit Unit, J&K, Shafia Naqshbandi, while presenting the performance overview of the unit, highlighted the key achievements and milestones for the current

financial year.

One of the major highlights of the presentation was the Social Audit Unit's achievement of 100% Gram Panchayat (GP) coverage in the fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

The SSAAT was informed that in order to strengthen the capacity of social audits, approximately 600 Village Resource Persons (VRPs) have been trained over the years across 20 districts.

The meeting also discussed issues such as the staff structure of JKSAU, the proposed budget for FY 2025-26 and plans to extend the scope of social audits to centrally sponsored schemes being implemented by other departments.

The approval of a new project proposal for social audits, including the District Capex Plan and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, was also a key highlight of the meeting.

# Javed Rana reviews functioning of Jal Shakti, Forest departments in Pir Panjal

JNEWS SERVICE

POONCH, FEBRUARY 26

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, today emphasised efficient service delivery and timely implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Pir Panjal region.

He made these remarks during his visit to the region conducted to assess the progress on developmental activities including JJM in Pir Panjal region.

Rana emphasised the need for expediting the water supply schemes in Pir Panjal region and set strict timelines for their completion to ensure safe drinking water for all. He directed the officials to work on a war footing basis, regularly monitor progress while highlighting the need for adherence to laid-down parameters.

He also reviewed the measures to maintain continuous supply of water in remote areas and called for proactive initiatives, including a robust complaint redressal mechanism, to address public



importance to addressing the challenges of climate change. He also laid stress on forest fire prevention and management mechanisms that have gained added significance due to the adverse climatic conditions and mitigation measures need to be taken beforehand.

He directed the officers for optimum utilisation of available resources for revenue generation and sustainable livelihoods created through eco-tourism and forest recreation.

During his tour, the Minister also visited Kotli Kalaban in Rajouri, Harni and Galotha villages in Mendhar and interacted with local inhabitants there.

The delegations highlighted pressing issues such as water, forest rights, road connectivity, tribal issues rural infrastructure and healthcare services. The Minister assured the delegations of government's commitment towards resolving their concerns in a time bound manner, emphasising inclusive and sustainable development.

grievances effectively.

While reviewing the working of forest department, Javed Rana called for effective strategies that lead to sustainable development while taking into consideration environmental concerns along with economic prosperity.

Rana expressed hope that the forest fraternity shall work in tandem with communities to conserve and protect forests and environment. He exhorted upon the officers to work with dedication and sincerity to solve public issues and concerns. He further said that there is a need to attach high

importance to addressing the challenges of climate change. He also laid stress on forest fire prevention and management mechanisms that have gained added significance due to the adverse climatic conditions and mitigation measures need to be taken beforehand.

## NDF&DC offers concessional Home, Vehicle loan scheme to PwD govt employees

JNEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 26

The National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDF&DC) an organization under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs/Divyangjan), Ministry of Justice & Empowerment, GoI pro-

vides concessional financial assistance up to Rs 50 Lakh to persons with disabilities to support their economic rehabilitation.

NDFC extends loan for home & vehicular purchases to PwD government employees at nominal interest rates. The loans are available through network of implementing agencies.

## Ruhana Kouser qualifies UGC NET in English

JNEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, FEB 26

Ruhana Kouser, D/o Mohd Farooq & Suriya Begum from Dist. Samba, has achieved a remarkable feat by qualifying UGC NET in English for the post of Assistant Professor & Ph.D admission in the prestigious National Testing Agency (NTA) exam.

Her achievement reflects her hardwork



work & perseverance & paves the way for a promising academic & research career.

## MD KPDCL reviews revenue realization, RDSS progress, PM Surya Ghar scheme

JNEWS SERVICE

ANANTNAG, SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 26

The Managing Director (MD) of Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), accompanied by the Superintending Engineer of South Circle Bijbehara and concerned Executive Engineers and other officials, visited South Kashmir to assess the ongoing revenue realization efforts, progress under the RDSS (Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme), the PM Surya Ghar Yojana, and measures taken to ensure a reliable power supply during the Holy month of Ramzan.

During the visit, MD conducted a detailed review of the revenue realized in comparison to set targets, directing concerned officials to expedite the disconnection of consumers with outstanding arrears.

He emphasized the



importance of achieving the revenue targets in full and underscored the continued need for rigorous inspections to curb power pilferage and theft.

MD commended the dedicated efforts of the field staff and engineers who have been working tirelessly to improve revenue realization and restore power supply despite several challenges.

He also reviewed the

progress made under the RDSS scheme in the region, urging officials from the Project Wing and the Project Implementing Agency, Powergrid Energy Services Ltd (PESL) to accelerate work and ensure timely completion of approved projects.

While reviewing PM Surya Ghar Yojana, he highlighted the need to increase awareness about the scheme and to encour-

age more consumers to avail themselves of the government subsidy. He called for focused efforts to cover the maximum number of beneficiaries under the scheme.

As part of his visit, the MD toured the Receiving Station Sangam and directed all Sub-Transmission and Distribution level officers to strictly adhere to the curtailment program.

He stressed the importance of efficient power supply management to ensure seamless and reliable power during Ramzan particularly during Sehri and Iftaar.

With adverse weather conditions expected towards the end of the month, the MD advised all officers to remain vigilant & prepared and instructed them to have personnel and materials ready to respond swiftly to any outages and ensure timely restoration of power.

## Religious Fervour marks Maha Shivratri Celebration across Ramban

JNEWS SERVICE

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 26

The holy festival of Maha Shivratri was celebrated with religious enthusiasm and traditional gaiety across Ramban district.

Maha Shivratri, known as the 'Great Night of Shiva,' holds immense significance in Hindu tradition and is observed on the new moon day in the month of Maagha as per the Hindu calendar.

On this auspicious occasion, temples across the district were beautifully decorated and witnessed a massive influx of devotees since early morning.

A grand Shiv Shobha Yatra was also taken out amid participation of members of the Maha Shivratri Celebration Committee, including Neelam Langhe, Kunal Magotra, Gopal Raina, and Raju Sharma, along with numerous religious and political leaders and prominent citizens.

The Yatra commenced from Pracheen Shiv



Mandir, Maitra, passing through Govind Pura Maitra, Boli Bazaar, and Main Bazaar, before culminating at Raghunath Mandir.

The district and police administration had made elaborate security and logistical arrangements

to ensure a smooth and peaceful celebration. People from different communities, including men, women, and children, stood alongside the procession route, welcoming the Yatra with great devotion.

To mark the occasion,

Langars were organized at Maitra by Sanatan Dharm Sabha and at Ramban by local residents, offering Prasad to devotees. The festival witnessed widespread participation, reflecting the spirit of unity and devotion among the people of Ramban.

## Mission Yuva Project

# DC discusses creation of institutional business support mechanism in Udhampur

JNEWS SERVICE

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 26

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai convened a meeting with Small Business Development Units (SBDU) and Business Help Desk (BHD) members to discuss their strategic role and responsibilities in implementing the Institutional business support mechanism under the Mission Yuva project to leverage self-employment potential in the district.

At the outset, Priyanka Gupta, AD Employment delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation, elaborating on the specific roles and responsibilities assigned to each Commit-



tee member.

Stress was laid on creating a dependable system to support potential entrepreneurs, create new jobs and micro-enterprises and drive economic growth by creating self-employment opportunities.

The DC informed the participants that a Com-

mittee has been constituted to oversee the successful implementation of the project, ensuring that all stakeholders clearly understand their individual responsibilities. She emphasized that every member must have a clear understanding of their individual responsibilities

to enhance coordination, improve efficiency and ensure smooth execution of the Yuva project in the District.

The DC added that each Yuva Doot will be identified only after completing the necessary selection formalities as per the Yuva Doot Document.