

Kashmir Convener



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Wiping tears from every eye should be our life motto: LG Sinha

● Pays tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his Punya Tithi



KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid tributes to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his Punya Tithi, today. "The principles and values of truth and non-violence to which Gandhiji was always

committed are beyond time and place. They are as relevant today as they were during his lifetime. He has guided us for peaceful resolution of differences and well-being of every Indian," the Lieutenant Governor said. Attending

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CM Omar Champions J&K's Tourism Growth

Mumbai OTM

KC NEWS NETWORK

MUMBAI: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today visited the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Pavilion at the Outbound Travel Mart (OTM) 2025, Asia's largest travel trade show, being held at the Jio World Convention Centre here.

The event, which runs from January 30 to February 1, has brought together exhibitors and buyers from across the globe, providing a platform for destinations to showcase their unique offerings.

This year, Jammu and Kashmir has made a strong impression with the participation of 120 tourism trade and travel operators, highlighting the region's



unparalleled tourism potential. From its breathtaking landscapes to its rich cultural heritage, the pavilion showcased

why Jammu and Kashmir is a must-visit destination for travelers worldwide.

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Army foils infiltration bid in Poonch

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Army on Thursday foiled an infiltration bid by a group of heavily-armed terrorists along the Line of Control (LoC) in



Jammu's Poonch district. "Alert Army troops picked up the movement of the terrorists trying to sneak into this side from across the LoC in Khari Karmara area, leading to a gunfight between the two sides," the officials said, adding, "Soldiers fired after observing suspicious movement along the Line of Control in the Poonch sector. Terrorist movement detected in Poonch sector along the Line of Control. Alert troops opened fire leading to a heavy exchange of fire. Operations are underway." Indian Army's White Knight Corps posted on X.

However, there is no clarity on casualties but reliable sources said that "at least two terrorists were hit by the bullets in the Army firing but it was not immediately known whether they were dead or injured." Reinforcements have rushed to the scene with thick foliage and a

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LG Summons Assembly from March 03



Mubashir Aalam Wani

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has summoned the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly from March 03 for the first budget to be presented by the National Conference-led government.

According to a notice from the Legislative Assembly secretariat, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the LG has summoned the Assembly

from March 03.

"I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Section 18(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, do hereby summon the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly to meet at Jammu on Monday, the 3rd day of March, 2025 at

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J&K Budget 2025-26

Will Omar-led Govt deliver on election Manifesto?

Govt to seek Rs 20,000 Cr special package from Centre

Yogesh

SRINAGAR: As the forthcoming 2025-26 budget session is set to commence from March 3 this year, the million dollar question remains that whether the Omar Abdullah led dispensation will fulfill its poll-pledges—topping among them is 200 units of free electricity and creation of more than

three lac government jobs for the youth here.

As per the inputs received by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is expected to hold discussions with key stakeholders, while the government is set to prioritize electoral guarantees

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Life returning to normal in Badhaal after 17 mysterious deaths

● 54 days on, govt yet to ascertain causes of deaths;

Jahangeer Ganaie

SRINAGAR: After 54 days of uncertainty, life in Badhaal, Rajouri is finally returning to normal following a mysterious illness that claimed 17 lives.

Over the last seven days, no new cases have been reported, and most of the previously admitted patients have recovered, which has brought some relief to the fear-stricken community.

Locals speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that though delayed, the government's preventive measures have helped in containing the crisis. However, they demand urgent answers regarding the exact cause of the deaths so that proper safety measures can be put in place and that the residents can

resume normal life without fear.

The first death in Badhaal was reported on December 8, and since then, more than 50 days have passed



without the government being able to determine the cause.

Locals expressed frustration over the slow pace of the investigation, saying the issue should have been treated as a health emergency and resolved on priority.

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J&K incomplete without statehood: Minister Satish Sharma

Waris Fayaz

SRINAGAR: Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma on Thursday said that Jammu and Kashmir is incomplete without statehood.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inaugural function of two-day All India Inter-University Winter Games by the Central University of Kashmir (CUK), the Minister said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given assurance that J&K's statehood will be restored.



We will get it back. It may get delayed by a few months, but it will be restored. It was taken from us, and we are incomplete without it."

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BJP J&K unit mislead Centre on statehood restoration: NC

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: A senior National Conference leader on Thursday accused BJP leadership in Jammu and Kashmir of misleading the Centre on the issue of statehood restoration and said "such deceptive tactics

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Identify Vulnerable Groups For TB: Minister Sakeena Itoo

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today asked the Deputy Commissioners to identify vulnerable groups in their respective districts and conduct regular testing at these places for early detection of Tuberculosis (TB).

The Minister passed on these directions while chairing a high-level meeting held to review progress on implementation of 100-Day Tuberculosis

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5 IAS Officers Transferred

● Nitish Rajora is new Director Info

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday ordered the transfer and posting of five senior IAS officials in the interest of administration.

As per an order, Jatin Kishore (IAS, AGMUT:2020), Additional Secretary in the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat and holding additional charge as Director, Information J&K, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal.

Shishir Gupta (IAS, AGMUT:2020), Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Shopian. Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar (JKAS), whom he replaces, will report to the General Administration Department for further posting.

Nitish Rajora (IAS, AGMUT:2021), Sub-



Divisional Magistrate, Jammu (North), has been transferred and posted as Director, Information J&K.

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537 PACS computerised in J&K : Javed Dar

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: As the United Nations Organization (UNO) has declared 2025 as the international year of Cooperatives under the theme 'Cooperatives build a better world', Minister for Cooperative, Agriculture Production and Rural Development departments, Javed Ahmad Dar, today said that the Jammu and Kashmir has made significant strides in strengthening Cooperative sector for welfare and progress of farmers and rural communities.

He said that special focus is being given on the cooperative sector globally and J&K is also keenly focusing on promotion of the sector and all serious efforts shall be made



under the theme, decided by UNO. The Minister said that computerisation of 537 Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) at a cost of Rs. 1746.27 lakh has significantly strengthened

cooperative sector in Jammu and Kashmir. Highlighting the importance of digitization of PACS, the Minister said that it

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Dr. APJ Kalam Memorial Lecture Series DIPR Hosts 2nd Edition

KC NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Department of Information & Public Relations, Jammu & Kashmir organized the second edition of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Memorial Lecture Series today here at the Convention Center.

The event brought together eminent scientists who delivered insightful lectures on various topics, paying tribute to the visionary legacy of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India and a pioneer in space and missile technology.

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Govt Orders Transfer Of Several IPS Officers

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered the transfer and posting of several senior IPS officers.

According to an order, Vijay Kumar (IPS, AGMUT:1997), ADGP has been relieved from Jammu and Kashmir to take up a new assignment in the Delhi segment of the AGMUT Cadre.

S.J.M. Gillani (IPS), Director General of Police (DGP) and Managing Director of Police Housing Corporation, will now hold the



additional charge of Commandant General, Home Guards, Civil Defence & SDRF, J&K, until further orders. Anand Jain (IPS), ADGP Jammu Zone, has

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BJP said those facing graft charges will be jailed, but they were inducted in cabinet: Raj Thackeray

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray on Thursday attacked the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, stating the party once said the leaders involved in a multi-crore scam would be put behind bars, but they were instead inducted into the state cabinet.

Speaking at an MNS gathering here, he also expressed doubt over the outcome of the last year's Maharashtra assembly elections, and asked how Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) won 42 seats just months after it bagged only one seat in the Lok Sabha polls.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that those involved in a Rs 70,000 crore scam would be put behind bars. But where did they put them? In the cabinet," Thackeray said.

He was referring to PM Modi's speech made in 2023 in Madhya Pradesh, where he raised the issue of alleged irrigation scam in Maharashtra. The BJP targeted Ajit Pawar, who was then the leader of opposition, for his alleged involvement in the scam. However, Pawar later joined the Eknath Shinde-led government in the state and was made deputy chief minister in July 2023.

Thackeray said the BJP once accused many leaders of indulging in corruption, but later joined hands with them and made them chief ministers and ministers.

He referred to the induction of West Bengal leader Mukul Roy into



the BJP (before his return to TMC), B S Yediyurappa's rejoining of BJP in Karnataka, and the party's alliances with leaders like Omar Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

In Maharashtra, Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, Harshvardhan Patil and Narayan Rane, who were once with the Congress, later joined the BJP, Thackeray said.

"BJP leader Kirit Somaiya had made allegations against several leaders, but now these very people are in the cabinet," he said.

On the criticism over his frequent meetings with BJP leaders, Thackeray said, "Many say I should not meet BJP leaders...I meet people, but I do not sell myself. My Marathi identity remains

intact."

Talking about the outcome of the Maharashtra assembly elections, where the Mahayuti alliance secured a thumping victory while the MNS and opposition parties suffered setbacks, he said he remained silent for some time as he was analysing the results.

"On the day of the results, there was an unusual silence across Maharashtra. The kind of celebrations that should have happened did not take place. Even some people from the RSS I spoke to were surprised. One of them jokingly asked me - 'Why is there so much silence? Someone must have won, right?' So what did that silence indicate?" he said.

He asked how Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) won

42 seats in the assembly polls, while Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) won only 10.

"Congress secured the most Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra and Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) won 8 seats in the parliamentary polls, but managed to win only 10 assembly seats. On the other hand, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP had won only one Lok Sabha seat, but bagged 42 assembly seats. How is that possible?" he wondered.

Thackeray also cast doubt over certain election results. "MNS had fielded sitting MLA Raju Patil from Kalyan Rural constituency in Thane district. There are around 1,400 voters in Patil's village, he has always received votes from there. But this time, he did not get even a single vote. How is that possible?" he sought to know.

Speaking about allegations against him that he frequently changes his political stand, Thackeray said, "People say I change my stand, but do they even understand what that means? Look at how others have changed sides for their own benefit. The current cabinet mostly comprises leaders who were earlier with Shiv Sena and Congress. They will not be questioned, but you will keep hearing that Raj Thackeray changes his stance."

He also hinted at making internal changes in the MNS, saying a new code of conduct would be introduced to instill

discipline - right from the top leadership to grassroots workers.

Encouraging his supporters not to get discouraged, he said, "I have seen many victories and defeats. But I have never been disheartened by a defeat or got carried away by a victory. I do not want to lead people who are demoralised. If you want to stand with me, then stand strong. Whatever we have to do for Maharashtra and Marathi people, we will do it. If not today, then tomorrow, but it will definitely happen. That is certain."

On the controversy surrounding a scene in an upcoming film "Chhava", in which Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj is seen playing 'lezim', Thackeray said the film's director, Laxman Utkar, recently met him to discuss the issue.

"Lezim is Maharashtra's traditional dance. Sambhaji Maharaj may have picked up a lezim at some point, who knows? Even if it is not in the history books,

it could be in our imagination. But I asked the director whether the song in question was crucial to the film's narrative or just a celebration song. He said it was only to show celebration. So, I asked him if it was necessary to risk the entire film for one song," he said.

After meeting Thackeray, the film director announced that the lezim dance scene would be dropped from the movie.

Nobody above law in country: SC in matrimonial case

NEW DELHI: Nobody is above the law in this country, the Supreme Court on Thursday observed in a dispute between a man and his estranged wife, an IPS officer.

Justices B R Gavai, Augustine George Masih and K Vinod Chandran made the remark after the man's counsel raised an apprehension that he would be made to suffer all his life for the estranged wife was an IPS officer.



The bench said the parties should settle their disputes in the interest of justice.

"She is an IPS officer. You are a businessman. Rather than wasting your time in the court, you should settle it. We are here to protect you if there is any victimisation," the bench told the counsel.

"Nobody is above the law in this country," it added.

The counsel said his client and his father were jailed in connection with the cases lodged by the woman.

The counsel alleged the estranged wife gave a wrong declaration that no FIR was registered against her but she faced two FIRs on the day she filed a form at the time of joining the police service.

"You are more interested in ensuring that she loses her job," the bench said.

The counsel said it was for the home ministry to take action if she had made any wrong declaration in her form.

"You are not interested in saving your life. You are interested in ensuring that her career goes. Ultimately, in the process of ruining her life, you will also ruin your life," said the court.

The bench observed it was "very clear" the man wasn't interested in settlement and said, "You are not interested in living your life happily. But you are only interested to ruin somebody else's life. It is more than clear to us." The bench noted it couldn't force a settlement on the parties if they were unwilling and suggested they settle the disputes.

"If you have any apprehensions, we will take care of that in our order," it added.

The lawyers appearing for both sides said the parties would sit together and try to find an amicable solution to the disputes.

The bench posted the hearing after two weeks.

One of the pleas filed by the woman in the top court challenged the Allahabad High Court's June 2022 verdict.

The high court discharged the parents of the man in a criminal case lodged by the woman.

Oppn Seeks Discussion On Kumbh Tragedy; BAC To Decide Agenda Of Budget Session, Says Govt

NEW DELHI: Opposition parties at an all-party meeting on Thursday called for a discussion in Parliament on the Maha

on those issues. The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) will decide which issues will be taken up for discussion," Rijju said.



Kumbh tragedy and the UP government's alleged focus on VIPs rather than the common pilgrims,

as Union minister Kiren Rijju asserted that the Business Advisory Committee will decide on the agenda of the Budget Session starting from January 31.

Rijju described the meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh as constructive and sought cooperation from opposition parties

, adding that the customary discussions on the President's address to parliamentarians and the Union Budget are the main priorities in the Budget Session.

"Party leaders raised some issues and demanded discussion

The Session will commence with President Droupadi Murmu addressing the joint sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Union Budget will be presented on February 1.

The first part of the session will conclude on February 13 and the second part will start on March 10. The session will conclude on April 4.

The Session's legislative agenda has 16 bills, including the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and the Immigration and Foreigners Bill.

Asked about the opposition's demand for a discussion on the stampede at the Maha Kumbh which claimed 30 lives, the minister said the decision will be taken by the BAC.

"There are many important issues... the Kumbh was also mentioned," Rijju said.

Sources said Rajnath Singh noted that the Uttar Pradesh government is probing the Maha Kumbh tragedy when opposition parties, such as the Congress and Samajwadi Party, raised the issue.

Congress leader Pramod Tiwari told reporters that the opposition leaders have decided that the INDIA bloc will raise all issues together during the Session.

Many INDIA bloc parties have been critical of the Congress since the main opposition party's defeat in some key states.

Emerging from the all-party meeting convened by the government on the eve of the Session, Tiwari also slammed the "politicisation of the Kumbh", saying the VIP movement during the event was creating difficulties for the common man.

Samajwadi Party MP Ram Gopal Yadav echoed the criticism and slammed the ruling BJP for patronising VIPs at the grand religious congregation at the cost of the convenience of crores of pilgrims.

"Rising" unemployment and farmers' "plight" will also be raised during the Session, several opposition leaders said.

Hearing In Rahul Gandhi Defamation Case Deferred To Feb 11

SULTANPUR (UP): Proceedings in a defamation case involving Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, scheduled to take place Thursday, were deferred after the Congress leader's lawyer fell sick. Special Judge Shubham Verma scheduled the next hearing for February 11.

"The delay came after Rahul Gandhi's lawyer, Kashi Prasad Shukla, submitted a medical certificate stating that he was unwell and unable to attend the court proceedings. In response, Judge Verma set the new date for the hearing," Santosh Kumar Pandey, the advocate of Vijay Mishra, who has filed the case against Gandhi, said.

Mishra, a BJP leader from Hanumanganj, filed his petition in 2018 accusing Gandhi of making "derogatory" remarks during the Karnataka elections. Mishra claimed the remarks were offensive and caused him personal harm.

After Gandhi failed to appear in court, a warrant was issued against him in December 2023.

He surrendered in the court in February 2024, and recorded his statement on July 26. He was granted bail on two sureties of Rs 25,000 each.

The former Congress president has consistently maintained that the case is part of a political conspiracy against him.

BJP defeats AAP in Chandigarh Mayor poll; Cong gets senior deputy Mayor, deputy Mayor posts

CHANDIGARH: The BJP on Thursday won the post of mayor while AAP-backed Congress candidates registered victory in the poll for the senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor posts in the high-stakes Chandigarh mayoral elections that took place here.

The contest for the mayoral polls was between the BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-Congress combine. AAP was fighting for the post of mayor while the Congress was contesting for the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor.

In a jolt to the AAP-Congress combine, BJP's Harpreet Kaur Babla was elected as the new mayor of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation after she defeated AAP nominee Prem Lata. Babla secured 19 votes while

Lata got 17 votes. No vote was found to be invalid.

The result for the post of mayor was announced by presiding officer Ramneek Singh Bedi.

Congress candidate Jasbir Singh Bunty won the post of senior deputy mayor after defeating BJP's Bimla Dubey. Bunty polled 19 while Dubey got 17 votes.

Congress nominee Taruna Mehta was elected as deputy mayor after defeating BJP contestant Lakhbir Singh Billu. Mehta got 19 while Billu secured 17 votes.

The shock defeat of the AAP-Congress combine in the poll for the mayor's post came despite both parties having 20 votes in the 35-member house of the



Chandigarh MC. A total of 19 votes are required to win the poll.

The victory of the BJP candidate in the elections for the post of mayor indicated that cross-voting took place during polling. In the 35-member house of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation, AAP has 13 councillors and its ally Congress

has six councillors. The BJP has a strength of 16 councillors.

Besides, the Chandigarh MP also has a voting right as an ex-officio member of the 35-member municipal corporation. Manish Tewari is the sitting MP of the Congress.

After Babla's name was announced as the new mayor,

the BJP councillors congratulated her for her victory.

After the election of the mayor, polling for the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor took place.

Reacting to the outcome of the polling for the mayor post, Chandigarh BJP president Jitender Pal Malhotra said they were confident that their party would register victory.

Former Chandigarh BJP president Arun Sood lashed out at the AAP-Congress combine, calling it an "unholy alliance".

Union minister Ranvneet Singh Bittu said the BJP's victory in the election for the post of Chandigarh mayor underscored the "public rejection of AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal and Congress' politics of convenience".

Modi, Yogi must take responsibility for stampede at Kumbh and quit: Congress

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Congress head Nana Patole on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath should resign, taking moral responsibility for the stampede tragedy at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj.



There is so much of "event baazi" and only banners of PM Modi and Adityanath are seen at the Kumbh, he claimed.

At least 30 persons died and 60 others were injured in the pre-dawn stampede on Wednesday in Sangam area of the Maha Kumbh at Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, as millions of pilgrims jostled for space to take a holy dip on the occasion of 'Mauni Amavasya'.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir (U T)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

Machinery Division Kashmir, Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Department, Kashmir.

Fax No: 0194-2497093 email: xenmds@gmail.com website: www.medkashmir.org

Corrigendum 04 For Date Extension.

Name of work: - SITC & ITC of sprinkler irrigation System including HDPE pipe/LLDPE pipeline /DG Set including allied fittings for Saffron Crop cultivated area at Bore well No. 106 under implementation of National Mission on Saffron
Reference: This office e-NIT No: - MDSK/TS /2024-25/87 Date:21-12-2024 (Tender ID: 2024_PWDJK_268664_1)

S.No.	Description	Previous Dates	Extended Dates
01.	Last date of downloading/ submission of bids	29-01-2025 upto 06:55	08-02-2025 upto 06:55
02.	Date of opening of bids online	30-01-2025 at 02:00PM	10-02-2025 at 02:00PM

No: MDSK/TS/5965-69
Date: 30-01-2025.

DIPK-11394/24

Sd/
Technical Officer with
Executive Engineer
Machinery Division,
Kashmir.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir (U T)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

Machinery Division Kashmir, Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Department, Kashmir

Fax No: 0194-2497093 email: xenmds@gmail.com website: www.medkashmir.org

Corrigendum 04 For Date Extension.

Name of work: - SITC & ITC of sprinkler irrigation System including HDPE pipe/LLDPE pipeline /DG Set including allied fittings for Saffron Crop cultivated area at Bore well No. 107 under implementation of National Mission on Saffron
Reference: This office e-NIT No: - MDSK/TS /2024-25/88 Date:23-12-2024 (Tender ID: 2024_PWDJK_268754_1)
Due to no response, the critical dates of the above referred e-NIT are hereby extended again as under:

S.No.	Description	Previous Dates	Extended Dates
01.	Last date of downloading/ submission of bids	29-01-2025 upto 06:55	07-02-2025 upto 06:55
02	Date of opening of bids online	30-01-2025 at 02:00PM	08-02-2025 at 02:00PM

No: MDSK/TS/5970-74
Date: 30-01-2025.

DIPK-11396/24

Sd/ Technical Officer
with Executive Engineer
Machinery Division,
Kashmir.

DC Bandipora Inspects JNV Brar Construction, Calls for Timely Completion

BANDIPORA: The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Thursday visited the site of the under-construction Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) at Brar to review the ongoing construction



activities and took stock of the progress made in the construction work and ensuring that the project is completed within stipulated time.

Principal JNV Bandipora Mohammad Parvaiz briefed the Deputy Commissioner regards various ongoing works and issues pertaining to JNV.

During the visit, Deputy Commissioner inspected various sections of the site and emphasized the importance of adhering to quality standards and timelines to ensure the timely completion of the educational facility.

M.A. Qadri further instructed the concerned to expedite the work and ensure that all safety protocols are followed at the construction site besides directed regular monitoring to ensure the quality and timely completion.

During the visit the Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Maqbool Lone, Executive Engineer R&B Mohammad Hussain and other officials.

Sainik School Nagrota Clinches Best Band Trophy at 76th Republic Day Celebrations



Jammu, January 30: Sainik School Nagrota has once again made history by securing the Best Band Trophy (Boys) at the 76th Republic Day Parade held at Maulana Azad Stadium, Jammu.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha presented the prestigious trophy to Lt Col Amit Selot, Officiating Principal, and Cadet Uday Kumar, Band Contingent Captain, during the Beating Retreat Ceremony on January 29, 2025. The school band, trained under the expert guidance of Ex-Hav Showkat Ahmed Khan, delivered a mesmerizing performance, captivating the audience with their synchronized move-

ments and melodious tunes. Their discipline and precision earned them top honors at the grand event. Expressing immense pride, Capt (Indian Navy) Shibu Devasia, Principal of Sainik School Nagrota, stated, "This is a moment of great honor for all Nagrotians. The dedication and hard work of our cadets have once again placed our institution at the pinnacle of excellence."

This achievement further strengthens the legacy of Sainik School Nagrota, reaffirming its commitment to discipline, excellence, and holistic development.

PG College Rajouri Bids Farewell to Principal Mussaraf Hussain Shah

RAJOURI: PG College Rajouri bade farewell to its Principal, Mussaraf Hussain Shah, in the last week of January, recognizing his years of dedicated and distinguished service to the institution.

The students and other staff members were filled with a mix of emotions—gratitude for his unwavering dedication, admiration for their leadership, and sadness at the thought of saying goodbye. Shah attained superannuation as Principal on 22 January 2025.

Born in 1965 in the village of Banola in Mendhar Tehsil, Poonch district, Shah began his educational journey at High School Chhatral, where he completed his matriculation in 1980 with first division. He then pursued higher studies at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), earning master's degrees in Chemistry and Sociology. Later, he moved to Hyderabad to complete a master's in English before returning to Jammu, where he obtained his Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) from the University of Jammu.

Over the years, Professor Shah has served as more than just an administra-

tor, holding the position of Principal in several colleges, including Government Degree College Poonch, Government



Degree College Surankote, Government Degree College Darhal, and Government Degree College Mandi.

"Shah sir has been a mentor, a guide,

and a pillar of strength for students and staff alike," said a student from GDC Mandi.

Under his leadership, these colleges have flourished in countless ways—be it academic achievements, infrastructure development, or fostering a culture of inclusivity and excellence. His visionary approach has left an indelible mark on the institutions, setting a standard of integrity and innovation that will continue to inspire many students.

Shah has also been a member of the Divisional level NAAC Committee for Jammu division Colleges. He is also the President, Pir Panjal Foundation for peace and Communal harmony—an organization that promotes peace, Communal harmony and national integration. He was also a member International society of development, Japan

Over the years Shah participated in a number of national, International Seminars and presented papers on over a dozen topics in National and International Conferences.

Handicrafts & Handloom Dept bids adieu to G. R. Ahanger on retirement

SRINAGAR: The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir,

today bid adieu to its National Awardee employee in the School of Designs, Ghulam Rasool Ahanger, who retired as Assistant Craftsmen after putting in 28 years of exemplary service.

In a felicitation function, Director Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Mussarat Islam, lauded the efforts of

the official, who had gained great expertise in the field of wood carving. "His retirement has left a deep void in the department and his absence shall be severely missed," he stated.

Handicrafts and Handloom Department wished Ghulam Rasool Ahanger a very happy post-retirement life.

NC Social Media Advisor Removed Over Misleading Post on SPOs Honorarium

SRINAGAR: The National Conference has removed one of its social media handlers from his role as Social Media Advisor after he uploaded an erroneous and misleading post regarding the honorarium of Special Police Officers (SPOs), an official spokesperson said on Thursday.

The controversial post, which featured a photograph of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, claimed that the party had successfully secured a hike in the honorarium for SPOs with the caption: "Another promise fulfilled."

The misleading nature of the post sparked an immediate backlash from netizens, who criticized the party for spreading misinformation and allegedly playing with the sentiments of SPOs. The erroneous post was subsequently removed from various National Conference-affiliated social media handles, but not before it had drawn significant attention and criticism online.

In response to the controversy, the National Conference issued a clarification, acknowledging the mistake and emphasizing that the claim made in the post was unverified. The party stated, "A recent post concerning SPOs honorarium was put out from various handles connected to the party and

the Chief Minister. This post should not have been put out and was done without any attempt to verify or cross-check the information. While we have been strongly advocating for an increase in the honorarium and we are making every effort to see this done, it hasn't



happened till now."

To address the issue, the party took strict action against the individual responsible for the misleading post, stating that the concerned person has been "taken to task" and relieved of his responsibilities as Social Media Advisor to the Vice President of JKNC.

The episode has reignited discussions about the responsible use of social media by political entities and the potential consequences of misinformation in public discourse.

DC Bandipora Chairs Rent Assessment Meeting, Approves 15 Cases

BANDIPORA: The Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Thursday chaired the District Rent Assessment Committee (DRAC) meeting here in the VC room, Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

The Committee discussed the fixation of rent of various structures in which various government offices are functioning across the district.

On the occasion, a total of 18 cases were presented before the committee out of which 15 case pertaining to various Departments including Defence, Education, Health, besides others were approved by the committee.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Mohammad Maqbool Lone, DSWO Sahir Majeed, CEO Kishore Kumar, Tehsildar Bandipora Firdous Ahmad Qadri, Tehsildar Ajas Abdul Wasi Deva, Executive Engineer R&B Bandipora, Officers from Defence and other concerned.

Bandipora Police Holds Thana Diwas to Address Public Grievances

BANDIPORA: As a part of the Public outreach programme and an initiative of the Government of UT J&K, Bandipora Police Thursday organized Thana Diwas at all Police Stations /Police Posts of the District.

An official spokesperson said the events were chaired by respective jurisdictional Police Officers who met the people, listened their grievances for early redressal.

Spokesperson said the officers recorded the grievances for redressal and assured people that their genuine issues pertaining to local Police would be sorted out at the earliest. "Issues pertaining to higher offices would be forwarded for early redressal".

During the events, officers also highlighted Three New Criminal Laws, their applicability and their importance in modern-day policing.

The participants were requested to cooperate with local Police in maintaining law and order in the area and identify anti-national and anti-social elements especially those who are doing Narcotics-smuggling in the area

Spokesperson said the general public appreciated the efforts of Bandipora Police in ensuring a peaceful environment and requested more such meetings in future where participants can express their opinions freely.

Aga Muntazir Mehdi Condemns JPC Recommendations on Waqf Amendment Bill

SRINAGAR : Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi has strongly condemned the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Waqf Amendment Bill, calling them unconstitutional and an attack on the rights of Muslims.

In a statement, Aga Muntazir said that the JPC has disregarded the sentiments of millions of people and rejected proposals from the community's leadership. He argued that the amendments pose a serious threat to the autonomy of Muslim endowments by allowing government interference in their management, violating Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution.

"This is not merely a legal reform but a systematic, deliberate effort to dismantle religious pluralism," he said, urging strong resistance against such measures. Aga Muntazir called for collective action to oppose the amendments, emphasizing that protecting constitutional rights and religious freedom is crucial.

REC Limited Deploys Rs 4.29 Crore for Mobile Medical Units in Punjab

Punjab: REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, under its flagship CSR initiative Mobile Medical Units has committed Rs 4.29 crore for the procurement and deployment of four Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) in 4 districts of Punjab.



In a statement issued to Kashmir Convener, these units, handed over to the Indian Red Cross Society, Punjab, were flagged off by Governor Gulab Chand Kataria Ji at Punjab Raj Bhawan.

Serving as a lifeline for deprived communities, the MMUs will provide essential healthcare across four districts. "REC Foundation continues to expand its CSR footprint, with various

Mobile Medical units already operational across PAN India," spokesperson said in the statement.

During the event, the Governor of Punjab praised REC's initiative for bringing doorstep healthcare services to the deprived and other under privileged beneficiaries.

The flag-off ceremony at Raj Bhawan, Chandigarh, was attended by Shri K. Siva Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary to the Hon'ble Governor, Shri V.P. Singh, Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Governor, Shri S. Dhillon, CEO of IRCs Punjab, and other senior state officials. Also present were Shri Pradeep Fellows, ED (CSR), REC and Shri M.A. Ali, Senior CPM, REC Panchkula.

REC Foundation has supported over 400 projects in healthcare, sanitation, clean water access, education and skill development, women empowerment, sports and environmental sustainability. With over Rs. 1,300 Crore disbursed in CSR funds, REC's cumulative commitment to CSR activities exceeds Rs. 2,000 Crore till now.

After Massive Revamp Of City Infra, Admin Continues To Fail Controlling Footpath Encroachments

Bhat Nasir

SRINAGAR: Newly constructed footpaths across Srinagar are being brazenly encroached upon by shopkeepers and erring vehicle owners, turning pedestrian walkways into personal parking spaces.

This growing menace is evident in areas such as Old City, Babademb, Batamalo, Hazratbal, Nowhatta and Khanyar, where pedestrians are increasingly forced to walk on busy roads, risking their lives.

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has acknowledged the issue and assured strict action against encroachments.

Speaking to the correspondent of Associated News Bureau, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) Idrees Aqail Mir of SMC said, "We are conducting continuous drives against footpath encroachments.

Despite significant investments in urban infrastructure, including the construction of footpaths to ensure safer movement for pedestrians, many of these walkways are now occupied by vendors, shopkeepers, scrap dealers, and car

dealers, particularly in Babademb.

The encroachment has not only disrupted pedestrian movement but also led to frequent traffic congestion, making everyday commuting



a nightmare for residents.

Residents and commuters have voiced their frustration over the issue, calling for strict action against the violators.

Abdul Ahad, a resident of Batamalo said, "We were happy when the government built proper footpaths, but now they are of no use. Shopkeepers and vendors have taken them over, leaving no space for pedestrians."

In Babademb, the situation is even worse, with scrap dealers and car dealers occupying large sections of footpaths, forcing pedestrians onto the road. Many elderly citizens and children

find it particularly difficult to navigate through these encroached spaces, increasing the chances of accidents.

"Walking to college has become dangerous. We have to navigate through parked vehicles and roadside vendors. Authorities need to take strict action before an unfortunate accident occurs," said Zahid Ahmed Dar, a student.

In fact, in 2024 alone, we have recovered fines amounting to Rs. 2.5 lakh from those who have illegally occupied footpaths. Additionally, we have seized goods from violators."

However, despite these measures, encroachments continue to resurface, indicating that fines and temporary crackdowns might not be enough to deter habitual offenders. The SMC official further stated that operations against encroachers would be intensified in the coming days.

Beyond enforcement, the lack of civic sense among a section of the public remains a pressing concern. While authorities can remove illegal structures and fine violators, sustainable change can only be achieved when people understand the importance of keeping footpaths free for pedestrians.

Ways of Seeing: A Critical Analysis of John Berger's Insights on Art and Perception

Aasif Ahmad Shah

John Berger's seminal work, *Ways of Seeing*, profoundly reshapes one's perspectives on art and cognition. Having read this pivotal book briefly, I found its insights refreshing and empowering, fostering newfound confidence in my understanding of the world. Berger's exploration of how we perceive and interpret art is a crucial validation of my experiences and perceptions, leading me to appreciate the multi-layered constructs that shape our everyday lives.

The idea that seeing precedes verbal expression is at the heart of Berger's thesis. This concept implies that our initial, raw observations are then shaped by learned language and psychological frameworks. He argues that viewing the world is more potent than articulating balanced thoughts, suggesting that deep, solitary reflection can yield richer fruits than impulsive reactions. Those who engage in keen observation—not burdened by relentless external influences—are less susceptible to being swayed by dominant narratives. In contrast, individuals overwhelmed by persuasive ideas may succumb to anxiety and frustration. Thus, a mindful approach to perception, where observation precedes judgment, is critical and a path to heightened awareness and consciousness.

Berger also introduces the dichotomy of production versus reproduction in art. An artist's original creation is often a unique reflection of their perception and perspective, whereas reproductions—be it photographs or digital copies—can dilute the essence of the artwork. While the original holds intrinsic value, reproductions diminish its market worth. As technology evolves, art is increasingly commodified, leading to a situation where authenticity is often sacrificed for accessibility. For instance, films that compile various artworks aggravate this dilution, as they compel viewers to engage with multiple pieces collectively, overshadowing the individual significance of any single work. The relentless reproduction of art has resulted in a loss of appreciation for its unique historical and contextual significance, a fact that should make us all feel regretful and reflective.

In the second chapter, Berger meticulously examines gender inequalities reflected in art historically and contemporaneously. Traditional artworks frequently depict women as objects of desire, conditioned by societal expectations placed upon them. This lens highlights the male-dominated narratives that have historically subjugated women's identities and expressions. For instance, the portrayal of nakedness often embodies the male gaze, a term coined by feminist film critic Laura Mulvey, which refers to how visual arts and literature depict the world and women from a masculine point of view, reinforcing the notion that women exist predominantly for male pleasure. Such representations dehumanise women, reducing them to mere vessels of sexual gratification.

Berger's analysis of homosexuality also reveals how perceptions have evolved—or regressed—through time. Some con-

temporaries still view it as a deviation from the norm, while others embrace it as a natural variation of human sexuality. This perception is further complicated by entrenched societal and religious beliefs that perpetuate discrimination and stigma. Even with advancements in understanding, those with rigid preconceptions may resist the acceptance of homosexuality as an inherent aspect of human diversity.

A key aspect of Berger's analysis involves the abstraction present in the representation of women in art. The various body parts depicted in a single painting often amalgamate multiple

to those entrenched in traditional power structures. Thus, art has historically functioned as a medium of protest, seeking to convey themes of equality and empowerment, often inciting backlash from ruling classes resistant to change.

Berger also emphasises the commodification of art in capitalist societies. The commodification of art refers to the process of turning art into a commodity, where its value is often dictated by the ruling class, creating barriers for artists from lower socio-economic backgrounds who wish to express their narratives and critiques. This economic stratification in the art

themes explored in Tariq Ali's 'The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad'. Ali critiques the American political landscape, illustrating how mass perception is manipulated through a well-orchestrated narrative. Americans believe they operate within a free and progressive society, unaware of the significant constriction imposed by political and media entities. The relentless routine of daily life fosters a detachment from global realities, leading to a narrow understanding of international relations and conflicts.

Tariq Ali elaborates on how the government frames military interventions such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan as efforts to establish stability. Yet, they ultimately inflict suffering and chaos on the invaded regions. The American public's perception—shaped by propaganda—creates a dichotomy between the benevolent intentions purported by their government and the destructive consequences of military actions. This contrast illustrates how the same events can be viewed through vastly different lenses, highlighting the importance of context in shaping societal understanding.

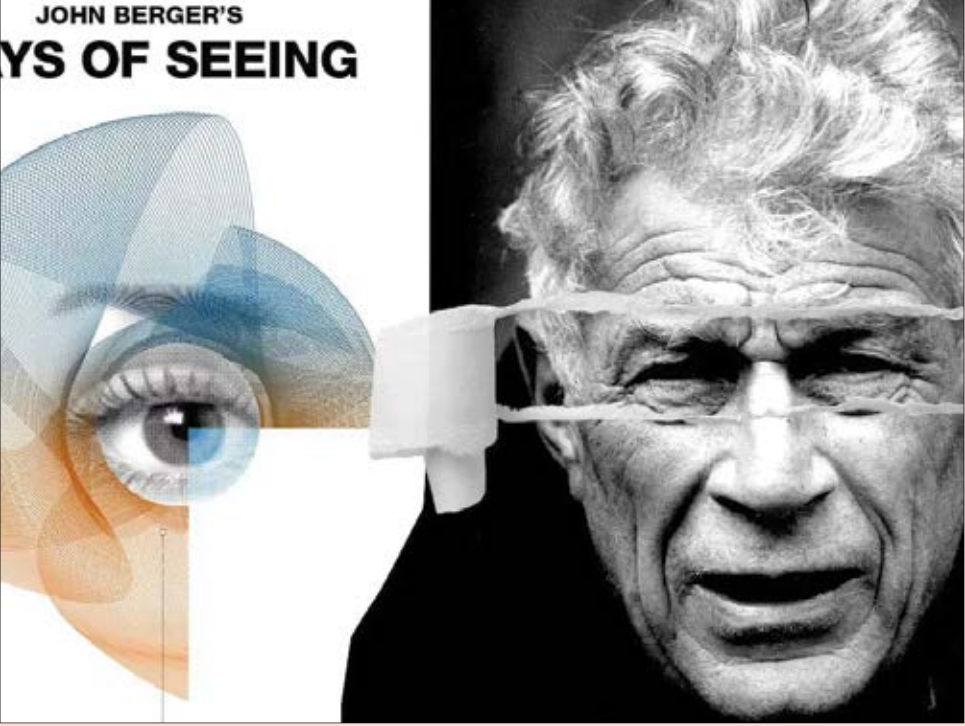
The cover of Ali's book, *The Obama Syndrome: Surrender at Home, War Abroad*, serves as a visual cue for navigating these complex issues. It emphasises the interplay between art, politics, and perception, suggesting that to grasp the implications of modern governance and societal structures truly, one must engage critically with one's observations and the narratives presented to them.

In conclusion, art remains a potent tool for understanding and interpreting societal constructs. However, its accessibility and relevance are often confined to the privileged classes. The narratives embedded within artistic expressions highlight the ongoing struggles against oppression and inequity, yet they are frequently overlooked or misunderstood. The current state of art necessitates a more profound, holistic comprehension. As we navigate the complexities of modern governance and capitalist societies,

it becomes imperative to leverage art as a means of advocacy, employing its power to illuminate the realities and challenges marginalised communities face. Art transcends mere aesthetic appreciation; it serves as a vehicle for fostering empathy, understanding, and social change.

By re-examining both Berger's and Ali's arguments, we can reshape our perceptions, prompting a shift in the collective consciousness towards a more inclusive and equitable society. Art can galvanise action and resist oppression, urging us to confront the structures constraining our understanding and experiences of the world.

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women's experiences and struggles rather than representing one individual. This abstraction serves to highlight the collective plight of women in patriarchal societies, illuminating their suffering within the rigid confines of social norms. Men's perceptions of women are often coloured by utilitarian views—valuing women for their domestic roles, physical attractiveness, or compliance with societal expectations. The multitude of experiences represented within a single work of art can serve as a powerful commentary on the societal structures that govern women's lives.

The reaction against art from certain religious and conservative groups, such as the 'Mullahs,' underscores the tension between artistic expression and societal norms. The 'Mullahs' are spiritual leaders in Islamic communities who often interpret and enforce strict religious laws. Art's potential to challenge male dominance and question established norms poses a threat

world reveals a broader societal pattern where access to cultural capital is limited to the affluent. As a result, the art produced often aligns more closely with the desires and tastes of the elite than with the lived experiences of marginalised communities.

Moreover, Berger's exploration of the relationship between art and publicity unveils how consumer culture influences perceptions. Publicity shapes aspirations and consumer identities, weaving narratives that compel individuals to associate personal fulfilment with material possessions. Such messages often mislead consumers, fostering dissatisfaction with their present circumstances while promoting an unattainable ideal rooted in Consumerism. Publicity operates on inherent human desires, creating illusions of choice largely contingent on one's economic capacity.

This notion of commodification intersects starkly with the

Drawing parallels between DeepSeek and Huawei

Jahangir Raina

So DeepSeek has triggered a trillion dollar rethink. Folks are questioning whether we really need tonnes of GPUs and energy to run the infra for AI.

I am especially curious about the sentiment around that \$500 billion AI investment announced a few days ago with authority and swagger. The investment is based on the hypotheses that we will need lots of computing power and electricity.

Billions have been invested on those hypotheses which could potentially be wrong. DeepSeek is therefore a significant moment in the AI trajectory.

Despite the urge to politicise the tech rivalry between China and the US, China hasn't actually produced many tech companies with dominant market share at global level.

There are Baidu, ByteDance, Alibaba, Xiaomi, SenseTime: Major players in their own right but we are not talking any serious challenge to US competitors as yet. Perhaps DeepSeek is the moment. Or perhaps it is too early to draw conclusions.

I want to draw some parallels between DeepSeek and another Chinese success story from the past and highlight what a cost advantage can potentially achieve if executed with experience.

Among the tech competitors emerging from China, telecom industry is familiar with the story of Huawei. Not quite a 'Sputnik moment' or a thunderous entry but a more sustainable impact that the telecom industry has adjusted to.

Let me talk about Huawei a bit.

Huawei has been around since the 80s, started outreach out of China in late nineties, and within a decade thereafter established itself as one of the incumbent telecom vendors internationally.

Huawei started as a PBX manufacturer and had its first US partnership deal with 3Com (later acquired by HP) for datacom products. That was the first time that telecom companies outside China actually heard about Huawei.

As Huawei was scaling its business, China was getting ready for the WTO entry. China was about to open its telecom market and before it did so it went wild with network expansion building as much footprint as possible before the expected foreign investors made entry into its domestic market. The expansion was government driven and created entrepreneurship opportunities on the equipment side as well. Huawei was encouraged and grew as a result.

That growth at Huawei fuelled international ambitions. We started to see the vendor developing carrier grade communications equipment. For the voice equipment market the announcement of high tier softswitch by Huawei was a wake up call.

Like DeepSeek, the USP of Huawei was its cost advantage, an advantage it openly flaunted. Prices per telecom port/line came crashing down from \$30 to \$3. Competitors had to bite the dust. Lucent and Nortel fell in the US. Alcatel and Marconi in Europe. Ericsson and Nokia survived by

to Huawei era. However the experience of companies from preceding tech generation can potentially complement the strengths of new AI startup ecosystem in China.

Chinese AI companies are challenged by the lack of access to AI optimised chips till the ecosystem evolves

can help bridge the AI divide.

Another area in telecom where DeepSeek might have an impact is Voice AI. The company has not announced voice mode or speech recognition features yet. Once it does, the Voice AI industry will celebrate, I am sure.



virtue of their focus on wireless. If you ask those surviving vendors today, Huawei would be the competitor that keeps them up at night.

The Huawei generation of Chinese tech companies were rightly challenged for being actively promoted by the Chinese government support in scaling their business. But one cannot say the same about DeepSeek generation startups. There is no government subsidy or support to speak of.

To achieve a substantially low cost foundation model that rivals OpenAI is truly a wake up call with a much bigger impact than that achieved by a generation of companies belonging

domestically. Huawei is one of the companies that has a chip offering – optimised for the telecom apps. DeepSeek actually already runs inference on Huawei chips. What are the odds of two challengers to global incumbents from two different generations collaborating on technology?

DeepSeek can significantly lower down the development and operational costs for conversational AI apps developed in telecoms. As in other industry use cases, telcos will have more choice in terms of LLM partnerships. Where the customer scale does not exist – such as the scenarios involving local languages of smaller population groups – low cost models

The emergence of DeepSeek upon the AI landscape echoes the trajectory of Huawei in the telecom industry, underscoring the transformative power of cost efficiency in challenging established global players.

Just as Huawei disrupted the telecom market by slashing costs, DeepSeek seems poised to redefine the AI industry by demonstrating that AI models can be developed and deployed without huge amounts of computing power or energy consumption.

(Article has been published by ai@telecom Newsletter)

Minister Javed Rana Discusses Tribal Issues with Army Chief

DELHI: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Rana, today held detailed discussions with Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Upendra Dwivedi, on wide ranging issues affecting the residents of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly those living along the Line of Control (LoC).

During the meeting, focused discussions were held on mitigating the adverse effects of LoC fencing on tribal livelihoods, especially the Gujjar-Bakerwal community.

The discussions aimed at finding solutions to minimise the impact on their daily lives especially emergency movements from and to the villages across LoC fencing.

With an aim to facilitate smooth and unhindered movement and livelihood activities of Gujjar-Bakerwals, Rana emphasised on easing restrictions on traditional migration routes and access to grazing lands.

During the meeting, threadbare discussion was also held on improving connectivity and easing the movement of people. The maintenance and upgradation of all BRO roads in areas along the LoC and Pir Panjal Region was also discussed.



The meeting emphasised the importance of mainstreaming

the role of Gujjar-Bakerwals and other tribes in maintaining peace and stability in J&K.

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of local communities, the meeting also delved on de-mining of areas along the LoC inhabited or frequently visited by people, besides establishing an advanced information system in the event of any emergency situation.

The Minister also proposed a recruitment drive/camps in far-flung districts of J&K and establishment of a Gujjar Regiment to facilitate recruitment of Gujjar youth into the Territorial Army.

To promote equitable development in the region, Rana also proposed collaboration in construction of a Sports Stadium at Sagra Village and Helipad at Dhana Shastar, Mendhar.

During the meeting, adequate arrangements for unhindered movement of individuals with lands across the LoC fencing and providing educational support, enhancing livelihoods and opportunities was also discussed.

These discussions demonstrate the government's commitment in addressing the concerns of LoC residents, promoting peace and stability besides facilitating development in the region.

National Anti-Leprosy Day observed at Shopian

Shopian: National Anti-Leprosy Day was observed with great fervor at the Meeting Hall, Mini Secretariat Shopian today. The event was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Shopian Dr. Arshad Hussain Tak and District Nodal Officer Leprosy Dr. Mohammad Yousuf Naikoo delivered an enlightening presentation on leprosy awareness. The event was attended by a diverse group of medical professionals, including Community Health Officers (CHOs), Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), ASHA Coordinators, and other health experts to reaffirm their commitment to eradicating leprosy. On the occasion, free blankets, footwear, and other essential items were distributed to leprosy patients to address their immediate needs. The participants underscored the importance of continued awareness and support for leprosy patients and need of collective effort of the healthcare community in Shopian to combat this disease.



Dr. Mushtaq Rather Among 11 Doctors Invited to President's 'At Home Reception'

Srinagar: Dr. Mushtaq Rather, former Director of Health Services Kashmir, was among 11 distinguished doctors from across India invited to the Rashtrapati Bhavan for the prestigious 'At Home Reception' on January 26.

The event, hosted by the President of India, serves as a platform to recognize individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their respective fields.

During his tenure as Director of Health Services Kashmir, he played a pivotal role in strengthening public health infrastructure, enhancing emergency medical services, and spearheading initiatives to improve healthcare accessibility in remote areas. His leadership was particularly instrumental in managing the COVID-19 crisis in the region, ensuring efficient vaccination drives, and bolstering hospital preparedness during the pandemic.

One of Dr. Rather's most innovative initiatives—the "Pony Ambulance Service" during the annual "Amarnath Yatra"—was widely appreciated. The service, designed to provide swift medical assistance to pilgrims in the challenging mountainous terrain, significantly improved emergency response along the yatra



route. The initiative ensured that injured or ill devotees received timely medical aid, reducing fatalities and enhancing overall healthcare support during the pilgrimage.

Apart from his administrative leadership, Dr. Rather has been actively involved in medical education, advocating for advanced training programs for doctors and paramedics. His efforts in promoting digital health initiatives and modernizing healthcare facilities have left a lasting impact on the region's medical landscape.

The 'At Home Reception' is an exclusive gathering of eminent personalities, including top government officials, defense personnel, and distinguished civilians. Dr. Rather's inclusion in this select group highlights national recognition of his work and contributions to the healthcare sector. Expressing his gratitude for the honor, Dr. Rather stated that the recognition motivates him to continue working towards strengthening healthcare systems and ensuring quality medical services for all.

Dy CM lays foundation stone for development works at Nowshera

NOWSHERA, (RAJOURI): Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today laid foundation stone for upgradation of Conference Hall at PWD Dak Bungalow, Nowshera, and remodelling of Palaash Nowshera.

The upgradation of the conference hall, to be raised with a sanctioned cost of Rs 249.39 lakh, aims to improve conference and meeting facilities in the region. Speaking on the occasion, Surinder Choudhary emphasised the government's commitment towards strengthening infrastructure to facilitate efficient governance and better service delivery. He highlighted that the upgraded conference hall will serve as a modern venue for official meetings, public interactions and



other important deliberations. Additionally, the Remodelling work on Palaash Nowshera, to be done with an estimated cost of Rs 107.48 lakh, was also launched by the Deputy Chief Minister. The project aims to provide a better environment for the residents. Officials from the Public Works Department (PWD), local administration and public representatives were present at the event. They reiterated their

dedication towards ensuring the timely completion of both projects with high-quality standards. These infrastructure development initiatives are part of the broader agenda of present administration to improve public service facilities and urban amenities in Nowshera, reinforcing the government's focus on holistic regional development.

Dairy cows distributed among beneficiaries under ABDP in Anantnag

Anantnag: The Department of Animal Husbandry, Anantnag, distributed 11 dairy cows to beneficiaries under the Aspirational Block Development Programme (ABDP) at the Veterinary Hospital in Mehndikadal.

The event aimed to enhance dairy farming in the region and promote sustainable livelihoods for local farmers.

Dr. Javaid, the Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO) of Anantnag, addressed the gathering on the occasion, highlighting the significance of the initiative in improving dairy production and providing economic support to the farming community.

He emphasized the department's commitment to strengthening the agricultural sector by providing quality livestock and support to local farmers.

The distribution of the cows is expected to help increase milk production, improve the livelihoods of dairy farmers, and contribute to the overall development of the region's rural economy.

Farmers who received the cows expressed



their gratitude, recognizing the potential of this program in boosting their dairy businesses.

This initiative is part of a larger effort by the Department of Animal Husbandry to improve animal husbandry practices and promote the growth of the dairy industry in Anantnag and surrounding areas.

District Legal Services Authority Ganderbal organises awareness prog on Sexual Harassment of Women at workplace

GANDERBAL: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Ganderbal in collaboration with District Administration, Ganderbal organized a legal awareness program on the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) (POSH) Act, 2013 today, at Tehsil Office Complex Wakura. The event was held



under the supervision of Abdul Nasir, Chairman, DLSA (Pr. District & Sessions Judge), Ganderbal and guidance of Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal, aimed to provide safe and secure environment for women at workplace. Advocate Sajid Irfan, Deputy Legal Defense Counsel Ganderbal, delivered an insightful speech, elaborated on the legal framework

of Act and also highlighted the object of POSH Act.

He said the Act is applicable to all women irrespective of their age or employment status, working in organised or unorganised sector and the Act casts an obligation upon every employer to create an environment which is free from sexual harassment.

He explained the procedure for filing complaints under the POSH Act in detail, empowering participants to take action against sexual harassment.

Advocate, Asif Mustafa, emphasized the importance of the POSH Act in creating a safe and equitable work environment for women and encouraged proactive measures for its implementation. He added that POSH act has undoubtedly laid a strong foundation for workplace safety. He emphasized the need for participants to spread awareness about the POSH Act among their colleagues, promoting a culture of respect and safety in the workplace and added that the Ministry has developed an online complaint management system titled the Sexual Harassment electronic-Box (SHe-Box, www.shebox.nic.in) for registering complaints related to sexual harassment of women at workplace.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary holds Public Outreach Program at Seri



SERI, (RAJOURI): Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, conducted a public outreach program at Seri to take stock of issues and concerns of local residents besides reviewing development works there.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from the public, who raised various developmental concerns and sought immediate intervention from the administration in redressal of the same.

Among the key issues highlighted by the people included construction of multi-storey building for government offices, upgradation of schools, acute

shortage of teaching and medical staff in schools and Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Seri.

Additionally, the public demanded deployment of technical staff, installation of an X-ray machine and laboratory facilities, provision of a dental chair and establishment of new veterinary centres at Kalal and Sail.

Other pressing concerns included pending Administrative Approval (AAA) for a grid station, requisition of electricity poles and wires, installation of new transformers and upgradation of existing ones in various panchayats.

The people also sought expeditious

execution of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) works, bifurcation of panchayats and construction of check dams.

The Dy CM issued directions for prompt action and redressal of grievance of general public on priority basis.

He instructed for rationalisation of staff in schools and health institutions to address the deficiencies.

He emphasised that the work under Jeevan Mission (JJM) must be executed as per guidelines to ensure water supply reaches every panchayat.

He asked the officers not to solely rely on feedback from field staff but to personally visit each panchayat and assess the ground situation.

The Dy CM reiterated that corruption would not be tolerated and firmly stated that the "commission culture" must end. He asked the concerned departments to ensure availability of essential public amenities.

The Dy CM ordered a strict ban on mining activities near water sources to prevent environmental degradation and safeguard drinking water supply.

Unified Call for Dignity & Healing: GMC Srinagar marks World Leprosy Day

SRINAGAR: The Postgraduate Department of Dermatology, Venereology & Leprosy, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, in collaboration with the Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists & Leprologists (IADVL) J&K branch organized a Continuing Medical Education (CME) program to mark World Leprosy Day.

The event, themed 'Unified Call for Dignity & Healing', aimed to raise awareness, update medical professionals on recent advancements in leprosy management, and reinforce the commitment to eliminating the disease.

The theme emphasizes the importance of a unified approach to address leprosy, promote dignity, and ensure healing of affected persons.

The CME was attended by dermatologists, medical faculty, postgraduate students, and healthcare professionals.

During the event, renowned experts delivered insightful lectures on epidemiology, early diagnosis, leprosy reactions, treatment modalities, and stigma associated with leprosy.

Principal GMC Srinagar, Prof. Dr. Ifat Hassan while speaking in the CME, reaffirmed the GMC Srinagar's commitment to leprosy control initiatives and appreciated the efforts of the Dermatology Department in organizing the CME.

She urged everyone to reaffirm commitment to leprosy control and asked for working together to promote awareness, education, and community engagement. She emphasized to strive to provide compassionate and patient-centered care to those affected by leprosy.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Yasmeen Jabeen, Head of the Department of Dermatology & President IADVL J&K, emphasized the importance of continued education and awareness in eradicating leprosy.

DC Budgam inspects progress of work on Multipurpose Community Hall, Sheikhpora Pandit Colony

Budgam: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Akshay Labroo today visited the construction site of Multipurpose Community Hall at Pandit Colony, Sheikhpora Budgam to assess the progress of ongoing work.

He was accompanied by CPO Budgam Irfan Giri, Executive Engineer R&B Budgam, AEE R&B Budgam, senior officials and engineers.

While inspecting the ongoing construction work, he directed the officials and engineers to ensure high standards of quality and workmanship.

While emphasizing the importance of timely completion, he directed the concerned departments to ensure that the project is completed within the stipulated timeframe.

He also stressed the need for strict adherence to construction guidelines and the optimal use of resources.

DC stressed that the Multipurpose Community Hall shall serve as a key social & community infrastructure for the PM package employees & their families residing within the Transit Accommodation at Sheikhpora, Budgam, and instructed the concerned departments accordingly to ensure its completion on time for the use of people.

DLSA Srinagar conducts inspection of Psychiatric Hospital, Prison Legal Aid Clinic

Srinagar: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Prison Legal Aid Clinic at Central Jail, Srinagar, and the Legal Aid Clinic at Psychiatric Hospital, Rainawari.

The event was held under the chairmanship of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman DLSA Srinagar/Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and was supervised by Ms. Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary DLSA Srinagar.

Secretary DLSA Srinagar, carried out the inspection of the Prison Legal Aid Clinic in presence of Shahbaz Hussainin, DYsp, Central Jail Srinagar, in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

The objective of the inspection was to assess the accessibility and quality of legal aid services provided to prisoners, ensuring that they receive timely legal representation and support.

During the visit, she closely monitored the functioning of the legal aid services in the prison and interacted with the jail para-legal volunteers (PLVs) to evaluate their role in assisting inmates with legal aid and awareness.

Meanwhile, an awareness programme was also organized for jail inmates, where Saad Ganaie, Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, along with Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsels, Urba Rashid and Sehar Nazir, served as resource persons.

They educated the inmates about their legal rights and the availability of free legal aid services.

Emphasis was placed on how prisoners can access these legal services, ensuring that they are not deprived of legal representation due to financial constraints.

The session aimed at empowering inmates with knowledge about their rights and the legal avenues available for their defense and rehabilitation.

In addition to the prison inspection, Secretary DLSA also inspected the Legal Aid Clinic at Psychiatric Hospital, Rainawari.

The objective was to review the operation of the clinic and assess the performance and effectiveness of para-legal volunteers in delivering legal services to patients undergoing psychiatric treatment.

The inspection focused on ensuring that individuals receiving treatment at the hospital have access to necessary legal assistance, particularly in matters related to mental health rights, legal representation, and other welfare concerns.



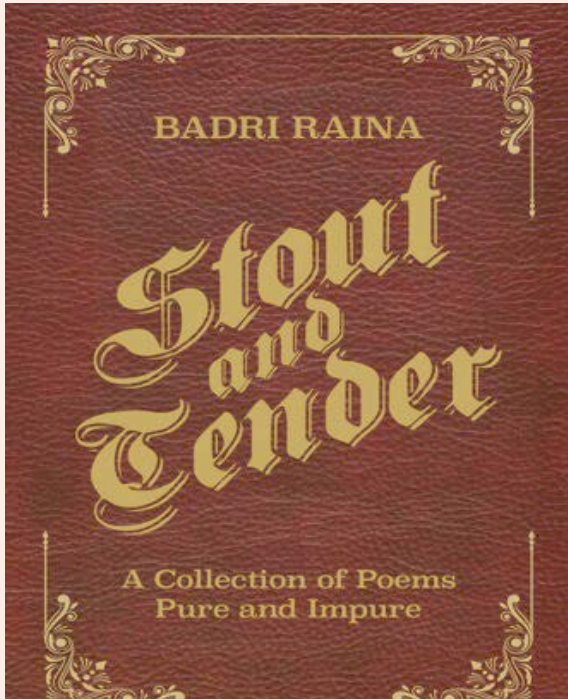
Stout And Tender: Symphonies Of Poetic Realities, Paradoxes, And The Human Condition



Shabeer Ahmad Lone

"Poetry distills thought and emotion into a transformative force-naming the unnameable, unveiling hidden beauty, and resisting oblivion. Both minstrel and rebel, the poet turns silence into voice, sorrow into strength, and fleeting moments into eternal echoes, where paradox births wisdom and injustice meets its reckoning."

A revered scholar, commentator, public intellectual, author, columnist, teacher, political activist, poet with philosophical reflections and emotional depth, infused with Kashmiri ethos as autobiographical undertones makes Prof. Badri Raina's poetic odyssey "Stout and Tender" poems Pure and Impure an exceptionally brilliant , authentic, profound, evocative, universal and relatable. Raina's collection is an extraordinary confluence of poetic depth, philosophical inquiry, and socio-political critique, embodying a rare blend of intellectual rigor, lyrical elegance, and Kashmiri ethos. This collection transcends mere poetic expression, emerging as a transformative meditation on the paradoxes that define existence-strength and fragility, purity and impurity, the personal and the collective, resistance and surrender. Raina's poetic voice resonates with timeless universality, seamlessly weaving autobiographical nuances with the larger historical and ideological currents that shape human destiny. Through his masterful fusion of evocative imagery, biting irony, and profound philosophical inquiry, he reimagines poetry as a space of both personal revelation and collective reckoning, engaging with the burdens



of history, the contradictions of modernity, and the fragile yet enduring hope for justice and renewal. His work is deeply rooted in the mystical, cultural, and intellectual traditions of Kashmir, drawing on its natural rhythms, spiritual heritage, and political upheavals to create a symphony of poetic realities that transcend time, geography, and ideology.

Rooted in the cultural, mystical, and philosophical landscapes of Kashmir, his poetry evokes the transient rhythms of nature-rivers, mountains, shifting seasons-juxtaposed against the disorienting turbulence of modernity. This interplay not only anchors his reflections in the timeless but also serves as a poignant commentary on history, memory, and displacement, blending the serene with the disruptive. Each poem is a microcosm of historical consciousness and existential vulnerability, unmasking the tensions between ideological extremities and the quiet defiance of individual resilience.

Beyond its artistic finesse, Raina's collection serves as a critical lens on the socio-political forces shaping contemporary reality, where economic disparities, political disillusionment, and moral contradictions unfold with piercing clarity. His poetry functions both as personal catharsis and political resistance, exposing the frailties of human existence while championing the pursuit of justice, dignity, and truth. In doing so, he crafts a literary dialectic that is at once deeply personal and universally resonant, a bridge between tradition and transformation.

This collection does not merely reflect the world-it interrogates, disrupts, and reimagines it. It is a critical dialogue with history demanding an active engagement with the intricacies of human consciousness and the socio-political structures that define our age. Each poem functions as a prism through which historical consciousness, existential dilemmas, and moral ambiguity are refracted, compelling readers to question, mourn, resist, and hope in equal measure. Raina's poetry stands at the intersection of literature and activism, philosophy and aesthetics, memory and prophecy, making Stout and Tender an indispensable contribution to contemporary poetic discourse. In a world increasingly fragmented by ideological divides, historical amnesia, and existential uncertainty, his compositions serve as an enduring testimony to the resilience of the human spirit. This collection is not merely a body of work; it is a literary legacy, a defiant affirmation of poetry's role as both an ethical responsibility and a transformative

force-one that speaks not just to the present moment but to the eternal truths that define our shared human experience.

A beautifully designed book spans 432 pages, published by Paranjoy facilitated by Authors Upfront (late 2024) with its elegantly adorned hardcover with golden inscriptions bestows radiating glance and turns it into artifact beauty invites admiration. The glowing commendations from distinguished luminaries are both compelling, deeply engaging while as A Preliminary Word is soulful. The title itself encapsulates the essence of the collection, suggesting a duality that permeates not only the poems but also the human condition. "Stout" signifies resilience, strength, and a forthright confrontation with life's challenges, while "Tender" alludes to vulnerability, compassion, and the delicate nuances of human emotions. Raina's ability to navigate these opposing forces with poetic finesse is a hallmark of his craft.

The collection of 251 poems in "Stout and Tender" are thoughtfully organised under 12 insightful subheadings, each hosting nearly 25 or fewer poems. These sections, titled Stabs To The Quick; Truth To Power; Fear, Fig leaves and Freedom;

Part-I

Our Children ,Our Babu Our Land; Home: Remembering the Unforgettable; Soul, Breathe, Break Through; Freeze Not, Flow; Wonders in the World: And the Birds Sing: When The Virus Ruled; Adieu, Speculations encompass poems with themes that pierce to the core, speak truth to power, and explore fear, hope, uncertainty, openness , meditative wonder, freedom, and the human spirit with compelling depth and brilliance.

The title itself, Stout and Tender, encapsulates the dualities that underpin human life as a poetic enquiry into the contrasts and co-existence of seemingly opposite forces. Raina's poetry juxtaposes fortitude with sensitivity, demonstrating how resilience often emerges through fragility and how tenderness thrives amidst adversity. Each poem unfolds as a microcosm of contradictions, compelling the reader to reflect on the inherent tensions within themselves and the world around them. These dualities serve not as opposites but as complementary forces, creating a dialectical framework that challenges binary thinking. In doing so, the collection echoes the philosophical inquiries of great thinkers and poets who have grappled with the complexities of existence, from Rumi's mystical unity to Blake's songs of innocence and experience and others who refuse to settle for simplistic answers. His work compels us to confront our prejudices, question power structures, and strive for a more inclusive, compassionate and authentic world.

"Pure and Impure" is a lens to explore poetry's transformative power- where the dualities sacred/profane, immanent/transcendent, human/divine intertwined, creating a timeless dialogue that mirrors the complexities of human existence with parallel portrayals of interplay in earthly mystical poetry of Rumi, Tagore, Rilke, Iqbal, Dante's Divine comedy; exaltation of sublime in Wordsworth, reconciling with T.S Eliot's Waste land or Peblu Neruda's earthly love, merges the personal with political/ social justice/human rights/ hollow rituals of modernity like Faiz, W.H Audin, Aroundadity Roy, Amrita Pritam, Adonis, pain of exile and displacement akin to Agha Shahid Ali, Mahmoud Darwish, Derek Walcott, Love and Longing like Mirza Ghalib, Kamla Das, Nizar Qabbani, shares memory and loss with with Sylvia Plath, Elizabeth Bishop, Seamus Heaney etc offer profound insights into human existence transcending cultural and geographical boundaries.

Raina's exploration of the dichotomy between purity and impurity is particularly striking. His poetry critiques the socially constructed notions of purity, which have historically been used as tools of exclusion and oppression. Whether addressing caste hierarchies, gender biases, or racial prejudices, Raina dismantles these constructs with a sharp yet empathetic pen, revealing their arbitrariness and their role in perpetuating inequality. His approach aligns relatively with postcolonial and feminist critiques, as seen in the works of Audre Lorde, Kamala Das, and Chinua Achebe, who similarly used literature to question oppressive structures. Through his embrace of impurity, Raina celebrates diversity and individuality, urging readers to see beyond societal labels and recognize the beauty of the pluralistic human experience.

The opening poem of the collection, Pure Poet, is a masterstroke of intellectual clarity and emotional resonance, distilling poetry's transformative essence into a universal message. It reaffirms poetry as both a mirror and remedy, capable of bridging thought and action, introspection and social engagement. Through a critique of art that lacks purpose, symbolized by the "vase of filigree fine," the poem echoes the legacies of poets like Lal Ded, Rumi, Audre Lorde, and Agha Shahid Ali, who saw poetry as a force for activism and healing. The self-reflective lines challenge the detachment of "purity" and advocate for poetry that is grounded in the realities of human suffering and hope. The poem explores the dualities of beauty and utility, introspection and action, aligning with global traditions of engaged art, from Brecht's political theater to Darwish's resistance poetry. Pure Poet calls for an art that transcends abstraction, reminding us that poetry, when infused with empathy, can illuminate despair, inspire resilience, and guide humanity toward justice. Through its reflections on paradox, the poem encapsulates the complexity of the human experience, offering a space for discovery and reimagining, and reaffirming the timeless power of poetry to challenge conventions and transform the world.

Transformative Poetic Reflection on Human condition through Serendipitous selections

Poetry, in its truest form, is neither a fragile artifact nor an escape-it is fire, water, and breath. "Pure Poet" rejects poetry as a mere "vase of filigree fine," demanding instead a voice that burns, that bleeds into the veins of history, that does not turn away from suffering. This echoes the defiance of Lal Ded, Rumi, and Neruda, whose words were not ornaments but urgent awakenings. Poetry, here, is a rebellion against silence, against the indifference that lets sorrow dissolve unnoticed. The poet does not seek refuge in beauty but wields it as a blade, carving meaning from a world teetering between ruin and revelation.

The land itself breathes in "Mauji Kasheer" and "Land of My Birth," where memory is not nostalgia but resistance. The "simmer of oozing pinewood," the "frozen river by willow's edge," are not mere landscapes but sentient presences, carrying the weight of longing. Like Shahid Ali's snow or Darwish's olive trees, these images hold exile within them, turning geography into a ghost that follows the displaced. Death is not an ending but a homecoming, where the poet's last breath dissolves into the valley's pulse, a reunion beyond time. Kashmir, here, is both wound and womb, an eternal invocation.

Yet time is no gentle river; it erodes. "Those Were the Days" stands at the threshold of a world that has unraveled. The tomato vendor, once the "czar of giving," is reduced to a relic of generosity in a market of vanishing kindness. This elegy for human connection echoes Brecht's lament for a world where even memory is commodified. In "Live and Learn," wisdom bows to "glittering thinness," the Faustian hunger for possession swallowing depth itself. These are not merely critiques of modernity but existential griefs, where human warmth is battered away for illusions of progress.

Mysticism rises like a flame in "The Mystics and Their Lyrics," For Neeraj Mattoo where Lal Ded, Habba Khatoon, and Rupa Bhawani are not spectral voices of the past but fire-walkers who defied the limits of their age. Their verses, forged in defiance, echo the untamed wisdom of Farukh Zardari and Adrienne Rich-women whose words did not beg for space but seized it. Similarly, "Remembering Raj Begum" conjures a voice that refuses to fade, like Keats's nightingale, eternal yet aching with the weight of remembrance.

The world's fevered madness erupts in "Fatal Choice," where noise drowns reason, where hysteria swallows dissent. Orwell's shadow looms, as does Brecht's bitter prophecy-truth is the first to fall when power hungers. This moral disintegration deepens in "Man," where civilization stands like a crumbling edifice, haunted by the ghosts of its own undoing. In "Asifa, My Child," the temple, meant to be sacred, becomes an altar of horror-faith turned into a shroud. The poet refuses to let memory be erased; grief here is resistance, an unyielding pulse against oblivion. The same defiant sorrow runs through "Palestine," where survival itself is an act of war, where an "invincible spine" stands unbowed amidst destruction.

Nature, however, offers its quiet defiance. "A Brook" whispers the wisdom of flowing forward, adapting, while "Cactus" speaks of resilience in barren landscapes. These are not just natural metaphors but spiritual philosophies-endurance shaped by water and stone. "Give Me Back That Spring" juxtaposes human violence with the silent, cyclic wisdom of nature. The Chinar, the swallows, the wrinkled elders-they witness history, but unlike men, they do not betray it. In "My Bulbul Calls," the poet seeks dissolution, longing to "melt into the hills," to become one with the song of existence. This is surrender not to defeat but to something vaster, a mystical absorption akin to Rumi's ecstatic vanishing. Yet, in "Fixing the Problem," the poet's gaze is sharp, dissecting the machinery of oppression, where "fixers" manufacture order at the cost of truth. This is no mere observation but an unmasking of power's brutal choreography. In I just built my paradise, a paradise of the mind, where "inebriate air" blurs reality and crystalline waters gleam with untouched clarity. Intoxication and lucidity entwine, a sanctuary both liberating and disorienting-born of thought, boundless yet fleeting.

At The End poem Raina's verse finds transcendence in the Chinar-his final steeple-where nature and the sacred converge. This rooted symbol of endurance becomes his sanctuary, not in distant heavens but amidst the ordinary. The apostles,

veiled as common people, dissolve the divide between the divine and the mundane, echoing a Sufi-like wisdom where holiness breathes in unnoticed encounters. The poem's quiet profundity lies in this realization: true communion is not sought in grandeur but in the silent witness of nature and the wisdom hidden in everyday lives.

These poems, woven together, form an intricate constellation-flames of grief, rivers of remembrance, stones of defiance, echoes of forgotten endurance, nature and mystical wisdom voices. Here, poetry is not a passive witness but a force of reckoning, a luminous scar on time's skin. The poet does not merely write-he inscribes existence itself, refusing to let the world forget what it wishes to erase. Brilliant in insight, rich in paradox, and uncompromising in truth, Raina's poetry is a luminous symphony-bridging thought and action, despair and hope, resistance and renewal. Where worldly and sacred intersect. In the spirit of Brecht, Darwish, and Lorde, his verses illuminate, challenge, and transform, proving that poetry is not mere reflection but a force capable of reshaping the world.

Some Key Transformative and Essential Defining Qualities

1"Raina's poetry seamlessly blends the personal and the political, critiquing the socio-political turbulence of our time while celebrating human resilience and connection. Through evocative verses in Land of My Birth and Kashmir: October 31, 2019, Raina poignantly reflects the anguish of displacement and cultural loss, while as The Lighting of a Lamp, he uplifts the redemptive force of human connection and knowledge, resonating with the reflective optimism of thinkers like Albert Einstein, who spoke of the power of education, and Martin Luther King Jr., who emphasized the power of connection in the face of adversity. Poems like Palestine, Gaza 2023, Palestine Yet Again, and Immigrants echo global struggles for justice, drawing parallels with the works of Frantz Fanon and Edward Said in their exploration of exile, resistance, and decolonization. In Hope in Times of Digital Wonder, Raina critiques the isolating effects of technology, aligning with Sherry Turkle's observations on the erosion of human connection in the digital age, while The Birds Are Back and Terrorist or Patriot? challenge perceptions of identity, conflict, and belonging, reminding readers of the works of Judith Butler and Arundhati Roy, whose writing exposes the complexities of nationalism and the formation of collective identities. Through these works, Raina masterfully weaves socio-political commentary with the enduring power of personal resilience, echoing the timeless reflections of poets like Rumi and Iqbal, urging readers to confront paradoxes of justice, humanity, and existence. Each poem resonates with a sense of urgency and timeless relevance, urging a critical rethinking of both personal identity and collective responsibility.

2" Raina's work resonates through the vibrant paradoxes that define life. His poems act as a lens through which we can observe the contradictions within our own identities and the world around us. Badri Raina's poetry distills paradox-hope and despair, struggle and surrender-into a lyrical resistance. In Hope is an Uphill Task, the snake, both threat and promise, recalls Blake's contraries, Faiz's defiant optimism, and Eliot's modern wasteland. The Beating of Drums and Democracy expose political ironies, echoing Orwell, Brecht, and Darwish, while Fascism and The Farmers and the Sangh resonate with Neruda's anti-tyranny fervor and Fanon's decolonial urgency. Paradise Lost and Skinning the Skinner dissect ideological entrapment, invoking Voltaire and Arendt, as The Changing Course of Blood traces cyclical violence, reminiscent of Spivak's subaltern struggles. Yet, The Peace that Passeth Understanding lingers in Rumi's divine yearning and Whitman's boundless faith, while The Good Samaritans and Restitution affirm human resilience in Mandela's and King's moral courage. In Hope in Times of Digital Wonder and The Letting Go, faith, knowledge, and resistance demand reinvention. Like Darwish's exile, Faiz's defiance, and Lorde's radical hope, Raina's poetry insists-despite disillusionment, the human spirit sings.

3"The collection as a whole moves between contradictory states, from the "stout" and "tender" figures of strength and vulnerability to the exploration of the purity and impurity of human intentions. These paradoxes are not merely rhetorical but are deeply embedded within the socio-political contexts Raina addresses. His ability to dissect the conditions that shape human behavior-be it political corruption, societal inequalities, or personal betrayal-is both compassionate and critical. Raina's poetry distills paradoxes-strength and vulnerability, purity and corruption-into a symphony of resistance and reflection. Onion transforms a humble object into a metaphor for deprivation and political manipulation, echoing Brecht's critique of systemic inequality and Neruda's celebration of the everyday. The Changing Course of Blood and A Hint of Spring reveal how survival itself becomes political, mirroring Arendt's exploration of power and Foucault's structures of control. Raina's irony in Onion and Democracy dismantles the illusions of equality, recalling Orwell's totalitarian critique and Darwish's poetic defiance. The Beating of Drums exposes hollow patriotism, resonating with Yeats' warnings of faltering democracies. Fascism and The Fire and the Hurricane dissect ideological domination, aligning with Fanon's decolonial urgency and Zizek's critique of manufactured consent. Yet, Raina's defiance breathes through Hope in Times of Digital Wonder and The Winged Horse, where technology and transcendence coalesce, invoking Tagore's spiritual modernity and Rumi's longing for the infinite. The Letting Go and Retrieving the Lost Paradise embody resilience, reflecting Camus' defiant hope and Whitman's boundless embrace of existence. Through contradictions, Raina composes a vision both unsettling and illuminating, forcing the reader to wrestle with the dualities that define our existence-where despair and hope, oppression and resistance, loss and renewal eternally entwine.

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Wiping tears

the Shanti Doot Sammelan, organised by Gandhi Global Family, the Lieutenant Governor honoured the family members of the army brave-hearts, and also paid homage to all the leaders, fighters, and martyrs who devoted themselves towards India's freedom.

"The world, that we live in today, is witnessing conflicts. In many parts of the globe, societies are facing disruption because of ongoing aggression. In such a scenario, the need for peace and non-violence is deeply felt. I am confident in this situation Bapu's ideals will show the right path to humanity," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon every section of the society to rededicate themselves to the ideals and values of Mahatma Gandhi and come together for the cause of empowerment of poor, youth, women and farmers and make their valuable contribution to realise the vision of Viksit Bharat.

"Pujya Bapu had once said that the mission of his life was to wipe tears from every eye. It should be our life motto. Welfare of the deprived section should be the government's topmost priority and society's collective strength must bring the poorest of poor to the mainstream of development," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the Gandhi Global Family J&K, for its constant endeavours to promote Gandhian values and spreading the noble message of Truth, Non-Violence and Social Harmony.

Responding to the demand put forth by the President of Gandhi Global Family J&K, Padma Shri Dr S.P. Varma, Lieutenant Governor assured that the month-long Gandhi Jayanti celebrations will continue across J&K as per the past practice. He said that the humanity can achieve the right path and goal of peace, harmony and development in Jammu Kashmir, the country and the world only by following the ideals of Bapu.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor was honoured with Shanti Doot Samman by the Gandhi Global Family.

Padma Shri Awardees including Dr. S.P. Varma, Prof. Vishwa Murti Shastri, Dr. Jitendra Udhampuri, and Romalo Ram; meritorious students and Youth were also felicitated by the Lieutenant Governor with Gandhi Doot Samman.

A two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to the Father of the Nation and the martyrs who made supreme sacrifice in the struggle for India's freedom. A pledge was also administered to uphold and promote Gandhi ji's vision, ideals and philosophies.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Anand Jain, ADGP Jammu; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; retired and serving officials of Civil Administration, Police and Security Forces; members of Gandhi Global Family; family members of martyrs and freedom fighters, representatives of various social organizations and students in large numbers were present.

Yudhvir Sethi, Member of Legislative Assembly, Jammu East; Arjun Singh Raju, Member of Legislative Assembly, Ramban and prominent citizens were also present on the occasion.

CM Omar

During his visit, the Chief Minister interacted with stakeholders, including travel operators, artisans and tourism officials and inquired about the arrangements in place for their participation. He also conducted a detailed inspection of the pavilion, appreciating the efforts to present Jammu and Kashmir's diverse offerings creatively.

The Chief Minister emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to tourism promotion, stating that Tourism is a top priority for his government and are dedicated to positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a global tourism hotspot. "Our participation in events like OTM is a step toward achieving this vision", Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said.

He directed the Tourism Department to ensure maximum outreach by actively engaging in major travel marts across the country and internationally.

The Chief Minister reiterated that his government is committed to supporting the tourism industry and ensuring that Jammu and Kashmir continues to shine on the global stage.

During his visit, chief minister was accompanied by Advisor to CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to CM Dheeraj Gupta, Director Tourism Kashmir and MD JKTDCC.

On the occasion, the stakeholders expressed optimism about forging new collaborations and attracting more visitors to Jammu and Kashmir.

Army foils

search operation is underway, the officials said, adding further details are awaited.

Life returning

A government official informed KNO that most patients admitted at Government Medical College

(GMC) Rajouri have recovered, though they remain under observation. He said that antidotes given to the affected patients have been effective, but authorities still lack conclusive evidence about the cause of the deaths and are awaiting Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) reports.

MLA Budhal Javed Iqbal Choudhary, speaking to KNO, criticised the delayed investigation and expressed concern that no official FSL or test reports have been released even after nearly two months. The situation remains in the realm of 'guesswork', with no confirmed scientific findings, he said.

The MLA accused GMC Jammu of negligence, holding them responsible for the deaths of 12 children. He vowed to push for a full-fledged investigation. "There must be a swift inquiry process," he said, adding that authorities must prioritise finding the root cause of these deaths.

LG Summons Assembly

10:00 AM," reads the order issued by the LG. The session will start with the LG's address to the MLAs on the same day at 10:00 AM.

"I, Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, under the provisions of Section 21(1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, call upon the Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir to assemble in the Legislative Assembly Complex at Jammu on Monday, the 3rd day of March, 2025 at 10:00 AM to hear my address," reads another order from the LG.

The cabinet led by Omar Abdullah last week recommended the LG to summon the assembly in the first week of March, something which was objected to by Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone, citing the holy month of Ramadhan.

According to the Legislative Assembly secretariat, each MLA cannot submit more than ten starred and ten un-starred questions by or before February 10, 2025. The MLAs also cannot submit more than three bills by or before February 10, 2025. They can submit a maximum of four resolutions by or before February 16, 2025

Will Omar-led

in the upcoming budget.

According to official sources, the budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is proposed to commence on March 3- the first annual budget presentation for the region in six years.

A proposal to convene the session was recently approved in a cabinet meeting and sent to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. The final duration of the session will be determined by Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather, following consultations with the Business Advisory Committee.

For the first time as Finance Minister, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will present the state budget in the assembly.

During his previous tenure as Chief Minister, Abdullah oversaw the Home, General Administration, and other departments but had not directly handled finance. The budget must be approved before March 31, and while Union Territories typically have shorter budget sessions than states, this session may extend for several weeks.

Currently, the Jammu and Kashmir government consists of six ministers, including the Chief Minister. The Business Advisory Committee will decide on time allocations for key legislative activities, including: Debate on the motion of thanks to the Lieutenant Governor's address, discussions on budgets and grants of various ministries, debates on private members' resolutions and bills and other government business

The last budget for Jammu and Kashmir as a state was presented in January 2018 by then Finance Minister Dr. Haseeb Drabu, amounting to Rs 80,313 crore for FY 2018-19. However, following the dissolution of the assembly in June 2018, the State Administrative Council (SAC) adopted a budget of Rs 88,911 crore for FY 2019-20. From 2020-21 to 2024-25, budgets were presented and passed in Parliament in the absence of an elected assembly. The 2024-25 budget, passed by Parliament, stood at Rs 1,18,728 crore, a slight increase from the Rs 1,18,500 crore budget of 2023-24.

The Omar Abdullah-led government is expected to focus on fulfilling key electoral promises, including 200 units of free electricity for eligible households, Rs 5,000 per month for economically weaker women, 12 free LPG cylinders per year, Expanded ration distribution, Job creation (3 lakh government jobs), Boosting agriculture and horticulture, Promoting tourism and industrial growth.

These guarantees are likely to be key priorities in the budget, and the NC led dispensation will ensure their inclusion in government expenditure plans.

According to sources, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has requested a 20,000 crore special package from the Union Government in a recent meeting with the

Union Finance Minister and other central ministers. If approved, this package may be included under a specific budget component.

Additionally, the Jammu and Kashmir Finance Department has instructed Administrative Secretaries to cut down on unnecessary expenses while preparing budget proposals. This move aims to curb wasteful government spending and promote fiscal discipline

J&K incomplete

The Minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) also reassured that every promise made in their election manifesto would be fulfilled. "It has been just 105 days. You will hear a happy announcement in a few days, then another in three months. There's a lot to happen—this is our time," he said.

Taking a pledge to put J&K in top three sports destinations, Sharma said that there is a need for regular and year-round sporting events in the Union Territory. "Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is keen to empower J&K's youth to compete at the global level," he added.

The Minister said that the government wants to hold sports activities in J&K all throughout the year. "We won't deter. I am a soldier's son and remain dedicated to my words. We will bring Jammu and Kashmir among the top three regions in sports."

To engage the youth in constructive activities, Sharma highlighted efforts to curb drug abuse and mobile addiction by bringing youngsters to playgrounds.

Additionally, he announced that 225 youth will soon be employed, with orders set to be issued shortly.

"For IT parks alone, at least 20,000 to 30,000 youth will be recruited soon, by God's grace," he said, adding that the government was committed to creating job avenues for the youth.

With Khelo India Winter Games approaching, Sharma assured that preparations were in full swing. Pertinently, All India Inter-University Winter Games commenced today at Gulmarg, with participation from 27 universities across the country.

A total of 169 athletes, along with their coaches and support staff, will compete in the event, being hosted by the Central University of Kashmir.

BJP J&K unit

are a betrayal of the people's mandate and a disservice to the aspirations of local residents".

NC provincial president, Jammu, Rattan Lal Gupta, said despite repeated assurances, the BJP-led government has failed to restore the statehood, pushing the region further into developmental stagnation.

"J-K is already lagging behind in terms of infrastructure, employment, and economic growth compared to other states, and the local BJP's misleading approach has only worsened the situation," Gupta said in a statement issued here.

He said people of J-K overwhelmingly demand early restoration of statehood, but the BJP is placing its "vested political interests" above the welfare of the masses.

"The BJP leadership here is acting as a mere mouthpiece of the Centre, rather than standing up for the genuine concerns of the people. Instead of amplifying the voices of J-K citizens, they continue to peddle misleading narratives to the Union Government, which has delayed statehood," he said.

Gupta pointed out that the dual governance system, with the Lt Governor's administration running affairs with an elected government, has only deepened the crisis.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that Electricity Agreement Bearing Consumer ID No: 0216010063570, which is Registered in the name of my Father Namely Nazir Ahmad Bhat, S/O Ab Aziz Bhat. Now i want to apply for Change this Electricity Agreement in the name of Mohd Mudasar Bhat, S/O Nazir Ahmad Bhat, in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Executive Engineer Electricity Sub Division Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Mohd Mudasar Bhat.
S/O Nazir Ahmad Bhat.
R/O Plan Bandipora Ward NO: 02.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that in my Driving licence bearing Registration No JK05 20090009111, my name and Address has been Mistakenly Mentioned as Feroz Ahmad Denthoo, R/O Bandipora, while as my Actual and correct name and Address as per my Aadhaar Card is, Ferooz Ahmad Denthoo, R/O Nowpore Bandipora, ward NO: 01. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Regional Transport Office Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Ferooz Ahmad Denthoo.
S/O Ab Rahim Denthoo.
R/O Nowpore , Bandipora
ward NO : 01.

"This arrangement has alienated the people and led to policy paralysis. Restoration of statehood is the only solution to end this chaos and bring back accountable governance," he said.

Urging the BJP to stop betraying the trust of the people, the NC leader demanded that the Centre immediately fulfill its promise of restoring full statehood as the Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as the Home Minister Amit Shah have committed for the restoration of statehood to J-K.

"Only a democratically elected government can ensure justice, development, and prosperity for J-K, and the National Conference will continue its fight until the constitutional rights of the people are restored," he said.

Identify Vulnerable

(TB) Elimination Campaign across Jammu and Kashmir.

Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah; Mission Director, National Health Mission; Deputy Commissioners of all districts; Director Finance Health and Medical Education; Director Health Services Jammu/Kashmir; Director Coordination New Medical Colleges; Principals of all Government Medical Colleges; CMOs of all districts and other concerned officers also attended the meeting, either in person or through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Minister impressed upon the concerned Deputy Commissioners and respective CMOs to intensify testing and early detection activities, particularly in Gold Zone districts so that they also can achieve the status of TB free districts. She also instructed the health officials and district administrators to increase the frequency of screenings, conduct aggressive outreach programs and enhance community participation to curb spread of the disease effectively.

"Involve PRIs, ULBs and local religious preachers into the campaign as they have maximum reach to far off areas as well", Sakeena said.

The Minister further called for identifying vulnerable groups in all districts, whether TB free or not. She also called for regular screening in TB free declared districts so that the TB is not relapsing there. "Continuous testing and active surveillance are essential to prevent re-emergence and ensure the long-term success of elimination efforts", she mentioned.

5 IAS Officers

Rakesh Kumar (IAS, AGMUT:2021), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Hiranagar, has been transferred and posted as Additional Deputy Commissioner, Jammu. Shubhankar Pratyush Pathak (IAS, AGMUT:2022), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Akhnoor, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate,

Uri, Baramulla. He replaces Javid Ahmad Rather (JKAS), who will report to the General Administration Department for further posting

Govt Orders

been transferred and posted as ADGP Armed, J&K. Bhim Sen Tuti (IPS), IGP (POS), PHQ, who was holding additional charge of IGP (Hqrs) PHQ, IGP (Technical Services), and IGP (Telecom), has been transferred and posted as IGP Jammu Zone.

Suleman Choudhary (IPS), IGP Traffic, J&K, will now hold additional charge of IGP (POS) PHQ, IGP (Hqrs) PHQ, IGP (Technical Services), and IGP (Telecom) until further orders

DIPR Hosts

The theme of the Lecture Series for the second edition was, "The Power of Dreams: How big ideas can transform the world."

The lecture series featured two distinguished speakers who shared their expertise and inspired the audience with their thought-provoking presentations.

Dr. Vellanki Seshagiri Rao, a former Distinguished Scientist, Associate Director at ISRO, and former Satish Dhawan Professor at ISRO, delivered a lecture on the theme: "From Classroom to Cosmos – The Inspirational Journey of Science and Technology in Space Exploration."

Dr. Rao's lecture highlighted Dr. Kalam's belief that knowledge and innovation, when nurtured in classrooms, can propel humanity to unimaginable heights, even to the cosmos.

537 PACS

has enhanced operational efficiency, improved transparency and promoted financial inclusion, ensuring better service delivery for farmers and rural communities.

Under the Central Ministry, a series of transformative initiatives including UT level Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), have been implemented to modernize and expand cooperative institutions across the region. Improving healthcare access to the people,

establishment of 46 Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendras (PMJAKs) through PACS have been established, making quality medicines available at affordable rates and reducing healthcare costs for rural populations.

The Minister added that the Cooperative network has been further strengthened with the launch of 144 Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samridhhi Kendras (PMKSKs), which act as one-stop agricultural service hubs.

"These centers provide farmers with high-quality seeds, fertilizers and expert advisory services to boost agricultural productivity and sustainability and empower farmers with the necessary resources and knowledge," asserted the Minister.

Food Supplies Employees Association Hosts Farewell For Retiring Employees In Shopian

SHOPIAN: The Food and Supplies Employees Association of Shopian organized a heartfelt farewell ceremony to honor three esteemed employees of the Department of Food Supplies—TSO Sirajuddin Shah, Manzoor Ahmad Gattoo, and Mohammad Haneef Naiko—who retired after decades of dedicated service.

The event, held in an atmosphere of gratitude and camaraderie, saw the participation of senior officials, colleagues, and well-wishers who gathered to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the retiring employees. A significant highlight of the ceremony was the official handover of pension sanction authority papers, ensuring a smooth transition into their post-retirement phase.

The retirees were commended for their relentless efforts in ensuring the uninterrupted distribution of essential supplies to the people of Shopian.

Their dedication to public service was widely appreciated, with officials and employees also recognizing the instrumental leadership of AD Food, Tajemul

Yousef, and SO Syed Mudasar Ahmad in maintaining efficiency and transparency within the department.

admiration for their work ethic, integrity, and commitment to service.

The farewell ceremony



Addressing the gathering, officials underscored the pivotal role played by the retirees in strengthening the public distribution system. Fellow colleagues expressed deep

concluded on an emotional yet celebratory note, with warm wishes extended to the retirees as they embark on a new chapter of life after years of selfless service.

BJP's Aijaz Hussain Facilitates Resumption of Traditional Sand Mining in Jhelum

SRINAGAR: Er Aijaz Hussain, District Development Council (DDC) member for Lalchowk and senior BJP leader, Thursday successfully facilitated the resumption of traditional sand mining in the River Jhelum, addressing a long-standing issue that has impacted hundreds of local miners since operations were halted in 2019.

The party said that through persistent efforts, Er Aijaz Hussain played a key role in identifying six crucial sites along the river where traditional mining can resume, ensuring a sustainable and structured approach to the practice. This move is expected to provide a significant economic boost to the local community reliant on the industry.

To mark the occasion, Er Aijaz Hussain personally oversaw the dispatch of the first boat carrying sand from Padshahibagh, symbolizing the official restart of mining operations. The development was met with widespread appreciation from the local community, which had long awaited the revival of this economic activity.

Er Aijaz Hussain extended his gratitude to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin, Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control, Director of Geology and Mining Department, DMO Srinagar, and other relevant departments for their efforts in making this initiative a reality. He highlighted the collective role of the administration in overcoming the challenges faced by local miners.

Er Aijaz Hussain underscored the importance of reviving the industry while ensuring environmental sustainability. He acknowledged the vital role of traditional mining in supporting livelihoods in Srinagar and reaffirmed his commitment to advocating for initiatives that foster economic growth and responsible resource management.

"This initiative has been a long time coming, and I am proud to have played a part in ensuring that our traditional mining practices are not only revived but also managed in a way that supports both our people and the environment," said Er Aijaz Hussain.

2010 T20 WC final loss made me determined to win ICC trophy for 'White Ferns': Amelia Kerr

Coming from a cricketers' family, the sport is in her DNA but it was New Zealand's loss in T20 World Cup final in 2010 against Australia that made Amelia Kerr want to be a White Fern and win an ICC trophy for her country.

Fourteen years later, she realised her goal of winning an ICC trophy by lifting the women's T20 World Cup in 2024. She also became the first New Zealander to win the ICC Women's Player of the Year award for her splendid show in 2024.

"I was about 11 or 12 when our Tawa college boys team won a tournament in Wellington and I was the captain and the only girl of the team. That was pretty special and then I used to watch White Ferns play on TV," Kerr told a select media in an interaction felicitated by the ICC.

"We lost the T20 WC final in 2010 and from that moment I wanted to become a White Fern and change as much as I can and try to achieve that," said Kerr, who was also chosen the ICC T20 Women Cricketer of the Year 2024.

In the 2024 Women's T20 World Cup final against South Africa, her 43 off 38 and 3/24 played a big role in her side's maiden triumph and she was the Player of the Match in the finals.

"It is a very special feeling. As players we don't think about awards too much...but if I look back and reflect, the T20 WC win comes to mind, it was too special," said the 24-year-old

who picked 15 wickets in the T20 World Cup -- the most by any bowler in a single edition of the tournament.



Coming from a family of sportspersons, Kerr started playing at a young age. She feels that playing cricket with boys has helped her immensely.

"As a kid I just loved playing any sport, not just cricket. I wanted to be the best. I played boys' cricket and that really helped me improve my game," said the leg-spin all-rounder who scored 387 runs and took 29 wickets in 18 T20 matches in 2024.

Asked how she manages to remain calm in tense situations, she gave the credit to her upbringing.

"I have been like that since I was young. I think a lot of that comes from my family and the messaging we had growing up. My dad said to me once that if I turn to the ground and walking off the field from that day I don't want to know from your reaction if you got a hundred or a golden duck," she said.

Born to former Wellington players Robbie and Jo, Kerr's cricketing pedigree goes as far back as her maternal grandfather, Bruce Mur-

ray, the former New Zealand Test batter. Her elder sister Jess, who plays for Wellington, was named in New Zealand's national cricket squad against South Africa in 2020.

"My role models are within my family and they are very liberal. Cricket is such a fickle game and there would be ups and downs, you have to take the good with the bad. It is so much more than the individual game."

She hopes that the ICC award and the World Cup inspire youngsters in her small country to look at cricket as a career option.

Asked if she tweaked anything in her game, she replied in negative.

"For me, nothing has changed in my game or the process. Sometimes things go your way and sometimes they don't. I have worked on a few things in my bowling," she said.

"I want to keep improving. The accuracy in my bowling is potentially developing. I am having more confidence in my bowling to mix up pace as well. In batting, I am looking to improve power and find different ways to score boundaries."

A strong advocate of players' mental health well-being, Kerr feels the players should know that they are human beings first.

"It is so important to look after yourself. You never know what's happening in someone's life. It's important to be patient and kind, to know that we are human beings first," said the stalwart who took a seven-month break from the game in 2021.

No captain's event or photoshoot before Champions Trophy

There will be no official ICC captain's meet or photoshoot ahead of Champions Trophy 2025. The event has traditionally taken place in the host country of an ICC tournament, but it will not be part of the build-up to the Champions Trophy in Pakistan, the first ICC tournament in the country since 1996.

There was no opening ceremony in the build-up to the most recent Champions Trophy - in the United Kingdom in 2017 - though there was a captain's event and official



photoshoot. The PCB said neither the ICC nor the cricket board had ever announced an opening ceremony this time. However, the PCB will host an event in Lahore on February 16, three days out from the first game, to mark the start of the tournament.

A PCB official told ESPNcricinfo the event would be "supported by the ICC" and expected ICC officials present in Lahore at the time would be in attendance.

The PCB said the absence of a captain's press conference and photoshoot was down to logistical concerns. With the tournament being held across four different venues in two countries, and with scheduling clashes for several sides in the build-up to the tournament, the PCB said teams were slated to arrive in Pakistan for the Champions Trophy close to the start of the tournament. Australia do not get to Pakistan until February 19, the day of the opening match.

Incidentally, the ICC did not organise a captains event ahead of the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup, which was played across the Caribbean and the USA. With teams playing warm-up matches in several countries, the ICC instead opted to do the official launch via a lighting projection show that featured all 20 captains beamed onto New York City's Rockefeller Center building.

The development resolves the question of India captain Rohit Sharma's potential presence in Pakistan. Had there been a formal captain's press conference or photoshoot, it would have required Rohit to be present.

Until last week, the BCCI told ESPNcricinfo the issue of Rohit travelling to Pakistan had "not yet been discussed" and was "not on the agenda". As the Indian government had not given permission for their cricket team to travel to Pakistan for the tournament, it was unclear whether they would have done so for Rohit for any captains' event.

"We lost the T20 WC final in 2010 and from that moment I wanted to become a White Fern and change as much as I can and try to achieve that," said Kerr, who was also chosen the ICC T20 Women Cricketer of the Year 2024.



Khyber Cement Ka Zarra Zarra Dil Se Bana Hai

