

Kashmir Convener



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Sigh of relief: Fresh wet spell reduces rainfall deficiency to 69%

More rain, snow for two days to further reduce deficiency

Owais Gul

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

Major precipitation has been recorded at Kargil station in Ladakh as well as Rajouri and Poonch districts in Jammu division over the last one week. After zero rainfall in the first 50 days of this year, Kargil recorded 16.4 mm rainfall against the normal precipitation of 25 mm in the last 57 days of 2025.

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

In the entire Jammu and Kashmir, the deficit rainfall has reduced to 69 per cent compared to 83 per cent last week. According to data, against the normal precipitation of 215.5mm, the region recorded a rainfall of 65.8 mm from January 01, 2025, to February 26, 225.



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

The data reveals a deficiency of 60 to 84 per cent in other districts of Jammu and Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer

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Temperature plummets amid snow, rains in Kashmir

Owais Gul

SRINAGAR: Amidst the forecast of wet spell, the fresh snowfall occurred at multiple places across Kashmir while the intermittent rains continued for the second consecutive day on Wednesday.

The fresh snowfall, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was recorded at Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort and other places today, which led to temperatures plummeting in the Valley.

As per the details shared by an Independent Weather Forecaster, Aadil Maqbool, Sadhna Top and Zojila Pass recorded a snow depth of 2 feet. Z Gali, Gurez, Sinthan Top and Gulmarg recorded a snow depth of one foot each till this evening while

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Cong-NC ties 'workable for now': Tariq Karra

Mubashir Alam Wani

SRINAGAR: Reiterating the demand for a coordination committee between the two coalition partners to streamline governance and address key policy



matters, J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief Tariq Hameed Karra on Wednesday described the current Congress-National Conference relation as 'workable and functional.'

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

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

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PM Modi Likely To Visit Russia

KC News Network

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Russia for the May 9 parade at Moscow's Red Square to mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, Russian news agency



TASS reported on Wednesday, citing a source in military circles.

As per the military source cited by TASS, the visit by the PM has a "high probability".

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is planning a visit to the May 9 parade in Moscow. It is highly

likely that it will take place," the agency's source said, TASS reported.

As per the military source cited by TASS, it was noted, "The issue of participation in the parade on Red Square of a ceremonial unit of the Indian armed forces, which should arrive at least a month [before the parade] for rehearsals, is also being worked out."

Notably, the source mentioned issues concerning delivery of Indian military personnel are currently being discussed.

TASS reported that earlier Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated that many invited countries confirmed their participation in the upcoming events in Moscow on May 9 to mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

As per TASS, the press secretary of the Russian President Dmitry Peskov noted that foreign leaders from different countries, not only the CIS, will be invited to Moscow to participate in the celebration of May 9.

He indicated that the Russian side will be glad to see all foreign guests who understand the significance of Victory Day in Moscow.

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"I Am Not a Marshal, Just Following Rules": Speaker J&K Asseembly

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather has asserted that legislators cannot publicize bills, resolutions, or questions before



they are officially admitted by the Speaker, dismissing opposition claims that such restrictions are unfair.

Speaking to KNS exclusively ahead of the upcoming Budget Session of the J&K Assembly, which is set to begin on March 3 and continue until April 11,

Rather made it clear that following parliamentary procedure is not a matter of personal discretion but an institutional norm.

Clarifying his stance on the issue, he stated, "I don't want to be a marshal, nor do I wish to impose rules arbitrarily. I am simply following parliamentary procedure. What Mehbooba Ji is saying is against the rules." His response came after criticism from PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti, who argued that legislators should have the freedom to discuss bills with the media before they are officially admitted.

Rather explained that Rule 368 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the J&K Assembly explicitly states that no member or any other person shall publicize a notice for a bill, resolution, or question until it has been admitted by the Speaker and circulated among the members. Until this process is complete, it remains confidential. He further pointed out that similar restrictions exist in the Lok Sabha under Rule 334A, reinforcing that such rules are standard parliamentary

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J&K Budget Will Lay Strong Foundation For Public Relief And Development: NC

KC News Network

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

"The government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is by the people and for the people and providing relief to the people is the first priority of the government

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MP Jugal Kishore Led Delegation, Others Call On LG

KC News Network

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

The delegation comprises of Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Development Council Reasi; Baldev Raj Sharma and Kuldeep Raj Dubey- Members of Legislative Assembly, submitted a memorandum of demands pertaining to development of Shiv Khori Shrine, promotion



of tourism potential areas and upgradation of Tourism, Water, Power and Health infrastructure, and various other public important issues of Reasi District.

The Lieutenant Governor assured the members of the

delegation that appropriate action will be taken for redressal of the issues projected by them. A delegation of Swarankar Sangh Jammu City called on Lieutenant Governor.

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'Soan Meeras'

Dal Lake comes alive with vibrant Shikara rally

Rehan Qayoom Mir

SRINAGAR: The world-famous Dal Lake came alive on Wednesday as the ongoing Srinagar Heritage Festival—Soan Meeras featured a vibrant Shikara rally, showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage.

The function held in and around Ghat No. 18 of Dal Lake, featured traditional performances and floating markets, drawing a large number of visitors and artists.



As per details collected by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the festival aimed

at preserving Kashmir's heritage, witnessed

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Javed Rana calls for innovative measures to protect endangered species

KC News Network

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

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

Wildlife Protection (Poonch-Rajouri) had last year captured Brandt's Hedgehog from Nowshera and Shachera. They were released into the natural habitat after taking proper sampling and completing all other studies. They had also confirmed the presence of smooth



coated Otter from Ghambir Mughlian, Rajouri in October 2024 and critically endangered Pangolin in January 2025 from Nowshera.

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

"We need to take conservation

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

He called upon the officers to evaluate the activities that threaten the biodiversity and research possible solutions that

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3 schools from Kashmir, Ladakh awarded at Wipro Earthian Award ceremony

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: In a significant development, three schools from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh were awarded during the 14th edition of Wipro Earthian Awards for the year-2024.

The event was held at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru by Wipro Limited, a leading technology services and consulting company.

The award ceremony was held during the annual program designed to foster integrated sustainability education and recognize Indian schools and colleges that actively promote sustainable action and thinking.

At the occasion, Government Boys Higher Secondary school, Manigam, produced an award-winning submission on solid



waste. "The struggle to manage the growing issue of solid waste was well represented and documented by the students. The difference between linear disposal of waste, and circular recycling/reuse management was well represented by them," the handout reads.

The students developed a good understanding of the solid waste journey in the local area.

Also, the team from Lamdon

School (Tsang Chu), Ladakh brought in a different perspective on water management in the cold desert environment of Ladakh. "Similar to hot deserts, water is in short supply there. However, the requirement is less, due to the low temperatures. Water management remains an issue. Challenges of storage and distribution were highlighted by the team," the handout reads.

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Militants fire at army vehicle near LoC in Rajouri

KC NEWS NETWORK

RAJOURI: An army vehicle came under fire from suspected militants in a forward village near the Line of Control in Jammu



and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said. Jammu and Kashmir travel guide There were no immediate reports of any casualties in the brief firing near Phal village in the Sunderbani sector, they said.

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SC Stays Order Asking Centre To Procure Drugs For Patient With Rare Disorder

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has stayed in the interim a Kerala High Court order directing the Centre to provide an additional Rs 18 lakh worth of medicines to a patient suffering from spinal muscular atrophy, beyond its Rs 50 lakh cap.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar on February 24 issued notice to the respondents on Centre's plea.

"Issue notice returnable in the week commencing April 17, 2025... till the next date of hearing, there will be a stay of the order of the impugned judgment." Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a rare genetic disorder characterised by progressive muscle weakness and wasting, affecting the nerve cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscle movement.

Under the policy, Centre can provide Rs 50 lakh for treatment to a needy patient.

The high court on February 6 instructed that the SMA drug Risdiplam should be provided as a one-time measure to ensure continued treatment for 24-year-old Seba



PA till the matter over its high pricing was addressed by a single-judge bench — a process expected to take at least a month.

Seba's plea before the high court highlighted the exorbitant cost of Risdiplam, priced at Rs 6.2 lakh a bottle.

Patients weighing up to 20 kilogram require one bottle a month whereas heavier patients may need up to three bottles, making long-term treatment financially unfeasible.

The Centre argued while the high court had clarified its ruling was not a binding precedent, granting individual exceptions could set one by default.

"There are more than 3,000 patients across India with varying facts and circumstances and if each case were considered unique, it could create an unsustainable financial burden," it added.

The Centre's counsel said the government policy set a firm cap at Rs

50 lakh for all patients, regardless of available resources.

Senior advocate Anand Grover, appearing for Seba, said the government could have taken steps to reduce the cost of SMA treatment by either negotiating with the drug manufacturer or invoking provisions under the Patents Act, 1970.

Grover said countries like China and Pakistan had successfully negotiated with the manufacturer to lower the price of SMA treatment and questioned why India had not taken similar steps.

The bench, however, suggested that the Indian government might be refraining from such measures due to "international ramifications". "Why would the Indian government not be interested? They will be very much interested. It's easy to be critical on that. They would have tried their level best to get the prices down," the bench said. The bench asked the Centre to explore the possibility of approving expenditures beyond Rs 50 lakh on a case-by-case basis.

India's approach to Africa based on mutually-beneficial ties, unlike 'extractive' models: EAM

NEW DELHI: India's approach towards Africa has been guided by a deep-rooted commitment to build mutually-beneficial partnerships, unlike "extractive" models of engagement, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday, amid China's relentless attempts to expand influence in the continent.

India and Japan, with their complementary strengths, are well-positioned to support Africa's development in a sustainable and inclusive manner, he said.

The external affairs minister was delivering a lecture at the Japan-India-Africa Business Forum.

"India's approach to Africa has always been guided by a deep-rooted commitment to building long-term, mutually-beneficial partnerships," he said.

"Unlike extractive models of engagement, India believes in capacity-building, skill development and technology transfer, ensuring that African countries not only benefit from investments but also develop self-sustaining growth ecosystems," he added.

India is Africa's fourth-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching nearly USD 100 billion and growing steadily, Jaishankar noted.

India has also made significant commitment to Africa's connectivity and infrastructure development, with more than USD 12 billion in concessional credit and over 200 completed projects spread across the continent in areas such as railways, power generation, agriculture,

and water supply, he said.

Jaishankar said India's development projects sectors such as power plants, transmission lines, cement, sugar and textile factories, technology parks and railway infrastructure generated local employment and changed lives in Africa.



India's deep and longstanding engagement with Africa can make it a natural bridge, whether geographically or in the industrial value chain, he argued.

"With India set for continued rapid economic growth, it serves as an ideal hub for Japanese companies seeking to expand into Africa and the Middle East," he said. "Japanese investments, India's solid industrial base and digital capacities and Africa's talent and consumption can come together to create beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders," he added.

Rescuers Managed To Reach Accident Location, But Unable To Locate Trapped

Telangana Tunnel Accident

NAGARKURNOOL: In a significant development, a team of experts engaged in rescuing the eight persons who have remained trapped for the past five days in the partially collapsed SLBC tunnel were able to reach the end of the tunnel and return, a senior police official said on Wednesday.

The teams so far were able to reach up to 50 meters before the end of the tunnel only due to muck and debris.

"A 20 member team comprising NDRF, SDRF and Rat Miners were able to reach the last points of the (tunnel). But there was a lot of debris. They are working out how to go about," Nagarkurnool Superintendent of Police Vaibhav Gaikwad told PTI.

"One day before they were



able to reach up to 40 meters (before the end of the tunnel). Yesterday they reached (crossed) that 40 meters also," the official further said.

Gaikwad further said the team searched at the location but could not find anything last night.

Replying to a query, he said

threat to the lives of rescuers' with the continuous flow of silt and water, are set to continue their operations on Wednesday.

Addressing media persons, Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday cited experts, who described this as the most complex and difficult tunnel rescue operation in the world or at least in India as there is only one entry or exit to the SLBC tunnel.

There was no contact with the trapped persons though oxygen is being pumped into the tunnel continuously, the minister had said.

Eight personnel working on the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel project were trapped after a portion of the tunnel collapsed on February 22.

CBSE Says Punjabi Language Will Be Added Next Year As Regional Language In Two Boards Exams Scheme



Earlier Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains strongly criticised the Central Board of Secondary Education for dropping the 'Punjabi' language from its draft scheme for a twice-a-year board exam format in accordance with the new education policy.

Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains alleged that

CBSE is planning to remove the 'Punjabi' language as the second language from the board exams for Classes 10 and 12.

"We strongly object to CBSE's new exam pattern scheme, which attempts to erase Punjabi! Punjabi must be designated as the main language in Punjab and further be included as a regional language in CBSE for rest of the nation, as it is

spoken and read across multiple states," Bains said. Akali Dal leader Parambans Romana also hit out at the centre and alleged that there was a conspiracy to wipe out the Punjabi language. "Why have you left out Punjabi in the new curriculum is this part of a conspiracy, I want to ask the BJP leaders of the BJP are you part of this conspiracy. This is an extremely troubling fact that you can't fight for your own mother tongue? Look at the way Tamil Nadu CM is fighting against the NEP," he said. The notification issued by CBSE include Rai, Urung, Tamang, Sherpa, Sanskrit, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Manipuri, Tibetat, Bhoti, Telugum Bodo, Tangkhul, Bhutia, Kashmiri, Mizo and Thai but drops Punjabi from the list of regional languages.

Highway connecting all districts of Arunachal to be completed soon: Rijiju

ITANAGAR: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday said that the Trans-Arunachal Highway, which will connect all 26 district headquarters of the state, is nearing completion.

The Union parliamentary affairs and minority affairs minister was addressing a programme on the occasion of Nyokum Yullo, a festival of the Nyishi tribe, at Boasimla in Kamle district. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar was also present at the event.

"The Trans-Arunachal Highway, which is nearing completion, will seamlessly connect all district headquarters of the state, enhancing accessibility and boosting development," Rijiju said.

Underscoring the Centre's commitment to Arunachal Pradesh, the minister said that the government has sanctioned the Rs 42,000 crore Frontier Highway project, a landmark initiative and the first of its kind in India at such a large scale.

Rijiju last week said that the Arunachal Frontier Highway, which will connect 12 districts along the India-China boundary, will be a "game changer" for the border areas of the northeastern state. He credited this ambitious project to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rijiju said that history will remember the visit of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar to Boasimla, a small town situated along the national highway. "The arrival of the second citizen of the country in Boasimla is a moment of immense pride for the people of Arunachal Pradesh. It is an honour to have the Vice President among us as we celebrate Nyokum Yullo," he said. The minister added that the Centre's continued focus on the state would foster connectivity, progress, and cultural recognition on a national stage.

UP one of most investor-friendly states in the country: Yogi Adityanath

LUCKNOW: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said that today Uttar Pradesh has become one of the most favourable states in the country for investment as the state government has made several reforms to attract investors and make it the country's leading investment destination.

In his address in the Legislative Council, the CM said that investment is now being approved only through NOC in the state, due to which investors do not need to make rounds of offices. "The government has ensured that all facilities are easily available to the investors and they get the benefit of incentive schemes without any kind of human hindrance," he said.

He highlighted the state government's efforts to promote 'Ease of Doing Business' by introducing several policy reforms. "The land bank has been expanded and new policies have been implemented across various sectors, making it easier for industries to grow," he said. Yogi said that the government has also ensured transparency in the investment process, leading to the setting up of large-scale industrial units. "As a result, UP has emerged as a top destination for business and investment in the country," he said. Talking about 'Ease of Living', he described the government's initiatives as milestones in improving people's quality of life. "Over 2.61 crore toilets have been built, enhancing sanitation and health conditions. More than 56 lakh poor families have received housing, while 1.86 crore households have benefited from free LPG connections under the Ujjwala Scheme.

Besides, 1.56 lakh underprivileged families have been provided with free electricity connections, significantly improving the standard of living,

especially in rural areas," he said. The CM said that the UP government is dedicated to creating new job opportunities for young people. "Over 2 crore youth have found employment in the MSME sector, while more than 7.5 lakh youngsters have



secured government jobs. In the latest budget, the government also announced a minimum wage policy for outsourced and contract workers to prevent their exploitation. Besides, youth are being encouraged to become self-employed under the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Yojana, marking the beginning of a new era of entrepreneurship in the state," he said. He urged the opposition parties to join hands in UP's journey to becoming India's top economy. "If our opposition colleagues, despite their ideological differences, focus on the welfare of 25 crore people, then I believe there will be no doubt in making UP the number one economy in the country," he said.

Bhutan Building Economy To Retain Youth, Attract Global Investors: Minister

GUWAHATI: Bhutan Minister Younten Phuntsho on Tuesday said that the Himalayan nation was working on building an economy that retains its youth within the country and also attracts global investment.

He also underscored the role of India, particularly the state of Assam with which it shares over 260-km-long border, in the development of his country.

Speaking at a session on advancing India-Bhutan economic partnership at the Advantage Assam 2.0 business summit, Phuntsho said, "It was in December 2023 that we graduated from the UN list of least developed country. We are now a lower middle-income country. And with progress comes new challenges."

A challenge Bhutan is now facing is its youth leaving the country for employment opportunities, as the free education policy has created a pool of qualified human resource, he said.

"Now we want to change the narrative. We are building an economy that will retain the youth and also attract global investors," the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock added.

Mentioning the Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) project, he invited policymakers and investors to be involved in it.

Phuntsho also dwelt on the historical ties between Bhutan and India, particularly the close relations with Assam given the geographical proximity.

"India is our largest trading partner and Assam has a special role to play," he added, while mentioning the multi-modal logistics park at Jogighopa in the bordering state.

He recalled his visits to Assam as a child with

his grandfather during vacations to meet relatives and acquaintances.

"More than the fact that there was no school during vacations, I looked forward to the break so that I could visit Assam and enjoy the hospitality here," he added.



Special envoy of the king to India for GMC, Jonatan Tow, who was also present at the session, said Bhutan is developing the project as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) rather than a Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

It is being developed as a SAR as it helps address legal issues and provides greater autonomy, he said. The airport being built as part of GMC will be greatly beneficial for the entire region, including Assam, he maintained.

Tow said he had held a meeting with officials of Assam on areas of cooperation between the two sides on the GMC project. A presentation on the GMC was made during the session by officials of the neighbouring country.

'Loot, jhooth, phoot': Congress slams BJP over CAG report on excise policy by former AAP govt in Delhi

DELHI : Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav pointed out that of 14 reports, only one was tabled in the state assembly, and questioned the role of some BJP leaders and the then Lieutenant Governor, which were ignored in the CAG report. Congress leader Devender Yadav criticised the financial discrepancies of the former ruling dispensation of Delhi Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and described the CAG report in three words — loot (plunder), jhooth (lies) and phoot (diversion).

The AICC secretary and Delhi Congress chief further denounced the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the findings of the Comptroller and



Auditor General (CAG) report. He pointed out that out of 14 reports, only one was presented.

In a press conference on Wednesday, Yadav said the report had been long awaited and was finally tabled in the Vidhan Sabha on Monday. He emphasised that the Congress had anticipated the irregularities highlighted in the report. He recalled that on June 2, the state Congress committee had lodged a written complaint with the investigation agency regarding the matter. Additionally, former Delhi Congress chief Anil Chaudhary had met the police commissioner with evidence allegedly linking BJP leaders to the irregularities.

Woman raped inside MSRTC's Shivshahi bus at Pune's busy Swargate depot

PUNE: In a shocking incident, a 26-year-old woman was raped inside a state transport bus at the busy Swargate bus depot in Pune. The accused has been identified as Dattatraya Ramdas Gade (36), a history-sheeter, and a manhunt has been launched to nab him.

Swargate is one of the largest bus stations of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC).

The incident allegedly took



place in the early morning on Tuesday.

The woman was waiting for a bus for Phaltan in Satara district

when the accused approached him and told her that the bus had arrived at another platform.

He took her to an empty Shiv Shahi bus parked at a deserted spot. The lights inside the bus were not on and when she hesitated to board the bus,

he convinced her that it was the right bus.

The man followed her inside the bus and raped her before she could flee, the woman said in her complaint.

Days after developing cracks, portion of Hajin road collapses, traffic restricted

BANDIPORA: A portion of a road along the Jhelum river in Hajin town of north Kashmir's Bandipora district has collapsed after developing cracks over the past few days, prompting authorities to restrict traffic movement on the road, officials said.

The situation has caused panic among locals, who had been raising concerns about the worsening condition of the road.

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Manzoor Ahmad Qadri told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the traffic on the road has been



restricted as a precautionary measure.

He also said that teams of Irrigation and Flood Control have been mobilized to provide temporary solutions. "Formal tendering process for the project will be completed this week, and the restoration work on the road is expected to begin soon," he said.

Locals said that they have been noticing the cracks over the past few days, but today a portion of the road collapsed completely, creating fear among the residents—(KNO)

Govt Cracks Down on Illegal Mining, Seizes Mechanical Boat, 7 Vehicles in Raids

BILAL HABIB

PAMPORE: In a major crackdown on illegal mining activities, the Geology and Mining Department of Pulwama, under the supervision of District Mineral Officer (DMO) Engineer Mohammad Manzoor, conducted multiple raids across the district.

According to officials, the first operation was carried out in the Awantipora area, leading to the seizure of a mechanical boat engaged in illegal sand mining. The operation took place at a sand extraction site on the Jhelum River in the Barsoo area of Awantipora. The enforcement team successfully seized the boat, which was later removed from the river and shifted to the Geology and Mining Sub Office in Khrew.

In addition to this, the department conducted surprise raids in several areas, including Tral, Khrew, Kakapora, and Lassipora, resulting in the seizure of seven vehicles involved in illegal mining and the transportation of minerals.

Speaking to Kashmir Convener, Geology and Mining official Nazir Ahmad revealed that the department had received information for last two days about a mechanical boat engaged in illegal sand extraction in the Jhelum River at Barsoo, Awantipora. Acting on these inputs, under the direction of District Mineral Officer (DMO) Pulwama, Engineer Mohammad Manzoor, a raid was

conducted in the Barsoo area. The enforcement team successfully seized the mechanical boat and shifted it to the Geology and Mining Sub Office in Khrew.

He further said that seven vehicles involved in illegal mining and mineral transportation were also seized in Khrew, Tral, Kakapora, and Lassipora area.

The official urged people to refrain from illegal mining, warning that strict action would be taken against violators.

"As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, our team will remain on high alert 24/7. Whenever we receive information about illegal mining, sand extraction from the Jhelum River, or unauthorized stone quarrying, our team will reach the location immediately and take strict action against those involved," Nazir Ahmad said.

DMO Pulwama Engineer Mohammad Manzoor told Kashmir Convener, that this crackdown is part of an ongoing effort to curb illegal mining in the region.

The crackdown on illegal mining activities will continue until complete control is established.

The mechanical boat seized during the raid were found to be operating without authorization, extracting sand from the river Jhelum at Barsoo.

The dedicated team also seized seven vehicles during the raids at Pampore, Tral, Kakapora and Lassipora areas of the district.

JKTF Bandipora Organizes Legal Awareness Program for Teachers

BANDIPORA: The Jammu and Kashmir Teachers Forum (JKTF) Bandipora Wednesday organized a legal awareness program aimed at educating teachers about their rights and responsibilities.



The event witnessed the participation of numerous teachers, featuring a special session led by Mudasir Ahmad Mir (LLB), JKTF's legal advisor.

During the session, Mr. Mir provided valuable insights into various legal aspects concerning teachers, including service rights, grievance redressal mechanisms, and legal protections. He stressed the importance of legal awareness in the teaching community and assured continuous support in safeguard-

ing their professional interests.

A key highlight of the event was an interactive Q&A session, where teachers actively engaged in discussions and sought clarifications on legal matters affecting their profession. Expressing satisfaction with the session, an attendee remarked, "This is the first time such an initiative has been taken by any forum. It has been truly enlightening."

Anjum Nisar, Chief Spokesperson of JKTF, reiterated the forum's commitment to conducting similar programs in the future. "We will continue organizing such discussions to provide teachers a platform to voice their concerns and formulate strategies to address their challenges," he stated.

Several senior JKTF and Employees Joint Action Committee (EJAC) leaders attended the event, including Bashir Ahmad Mir, UT General Secretary, JKTF; Hilal Ahmad Qureshi, Chief Coordinator, JKTF; Master Noor-u-Din, Senior Member, JKTF; Majid Majeed, Vice District President, JKTF Bandipora, Gh Hassan (Hussain), Zonal President, JKTF Bandipora, Nazir Ahmad Ganaie, Zonal President, JKTF Sumbal, Syed Babar Ali, Zonal President, EJAC Sumbal, Arshad Hussain Pathan, Organizer, JKTF Sumbal, Syed Nissar Hussain, Executive Member, JKTF Sumbal, Fayaz Ahmad, M. Tariq Ahmad Mir, M. Shafi Shah, and Vice DP Majid Majeed.

The program marked a significant step in empowering teachers with legal knowledge, reinforcing JKTF's dedication to advocating for their rights and professional well-being.

Seminar on Tourism transformation in Kashmir held at KU

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

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



Speaking at the inaugural event, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her presidential address, highlighted the university's commitment to contributing to the tourism sector through research, innovation, and industry collaboration.

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

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

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

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

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

Earlier, Head DTHLS KU, Dr. Reyaz Ahmad Qureshi, in his welcome address, stressed on the importance of academia-industry collaboration, emphasizing the need to balance tourism development with resource preservation.

Youth JKPC President Raises Alarm on Kitty Betting Menace

Srinagar : Youth JKPC President Mudasir Karim has sounded the alarm on the growing menace of kitty betting in snooker arenas across Kashmir. Highlighting the issue through his tweets, Karim emphasized the urgent need for authorities to take proactive measures to protect the youth from this illicit activity.

"We commend the relentless efforts of J&K Police in tackling gambling, drug peddling, and maintaining law and order in J&K," Karim said. "However, the unchecked rise of illicit betting in snooker arenas demands immediate attention."

Karim expressed concern that these recreational spaces have become hotspots for underground gambling, drawing unsuspecting youth into a cycle of financial risk and moral compromise. "The normalization of such practices erodes ethical values and exposes young individuals to potential criminal networks, fostering a culture of quick money over hard work and integrity."

To address this issue, Karim urged the authorities to implement stringent monitoring mechanisms, including surprise police visits and regular checks of CCTV footages. "Protecting our youth is a collective responsibility, and together, we can create a safer environment for our future generations."

The Youth JKPC President's tweets have sparked a timely conversation on the need for proactive measures to safeguard the youth from the scourge of kitty betting. (KNS)

MP Jugal Kishore led delegation, others call on LG

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

The delegation comprises of Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Development Council Reasi; Baldev Raj Sharma and Kuldeep Raj Dubey- Members of Legislative Assembly, submitted a memorandum of demands pertaining to development of Shiv Khori Shrine, promotion of tourism potential areas and upgradation of Tourism, Water, Power and Health infrastructure, and various other public important issues of Reasi District.

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

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

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



Highway robbers impersonating as commandos arrested: Sgr Police

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Police on Wednesday said to have arrested a gang of robbers, who were posing as Police Commandos to loot trucks during nighttime.

The operation led to the recovery of dummy guns, a vehicle, black uniforms, and other incriminating materials used in the crime, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

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

Acting swiftly, Srinagar Police said that it formed multiple teams and conducted an extensive search operation. Within days, four accused persons were identified and arrested from different areas of the city.

They have been identified as Sahil Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-u-Din Sheikh, resident of Narakh Budgam, Aqib Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-u-Din Sheikh, resident of Narkarah Budgam, Arbaz Ahmad Wani, son of Hilal Ahmad Wani, resident of SD Colony Batmaloo and Faisal Ahmad Shah, son of Azad Ahmad Shah, resident of Nowhatta.

The investigation led to the seizure of two dummy guns, nine mobile phones, a Swift vehicle, ATM cards, cash, and black commando uniforms used in the crime, the statement reads, adding that the accused specifically targeted trucks with registration numbers from outside the Union Territory, choosing desolate highway stretches during nighttime to execute their crimes.

"They intimidated drivers using dummy guns while dressed in black commando uniforms before robbing them of cash, ATM cards, and other valuables."

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

Srinagar Police reiterated its commitment to combating crime and ensuring public safety. Citizens are urged to report any suspicious activities or criminal incidents to the nearest police station to help safeguard society, the statement reads—(KNO)



No Official Ban on Student Unions in Kashmir University, Just a 15-Year-Old Verbal Directive

Srinagar, February 26—The Jammu and Kashmir government has never officially banned student politics, associations, or unions in the region, an RTI response has revealed.

Officials from the Higher Education Department confirmed that no government order or official directive restricts student activism in Jammu and Kashmir.

The RTI was filed by Nasir Khuehami, National Convener of the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association, seeking a copy of any official order banning student unions in universities and educational institutions across the Union Territory. The department's response dispelled misconceptions, clarifying that there are no official restrictions on campus politics anywhere in J&K.

In response to the RTI, multiple institutions—including the University of Jammu, Central University of Jammu, Government College for Women Gandhi Nagar, Central University of Kashmir, and the Islamic University of Science and Technology—affirmed

that neither they nor the government had issued any formal ban on student politics. They also confirmed that student associations and unions were not officially prohibited on their campuses.

However, the reply from Kashmir University was particularly striking. The university did not cite any official ban but stated that it has a "transparent system" in place, making a student union unnecessary. The university's proctor, in his response, acknowledged that student unions were verbally banned in 2009 by the then Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Riyaz Punjabi. This directive, however, was never formalized through any written order.

Reacting to the university's justification, Khuehami criticized the claim of a "transparent grievance cell," arguing that students in Kashmir University fear the Chief Proctor more than the people of North Korea fear Kim Jong Un. "Which student in Kashmir University doesn't know that when someone raises an issue, they are summoned the next

day? The Chief Proctor is seen as anything but an academician," he remarked.

He further questioned the university's logic, pointing out that major institutions across India—such as Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Delhi University (DU), and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)—all function within transparent frameworks while also maintaining active student unions. "Transparency and student representation are not mutually exclusive. If anything, they strengthen each other. So why is Kashmir University using this as an excuse to deny students their right to organize?" he asked.

"If Kashmir University truly believes in democracy and free expression, it must immediately revoke its arbitrary and undemocratic stance on student representation. The university must align itself with the principles of academic freedom and student participation rather than clinging to an outdated, unofficial restriction that has no legal or moral standing," he said.

Indian Army Procures Critical Procures Critical CBRN Defence Equipment

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

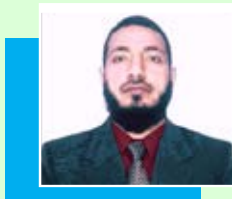
ACADA has been designed and developed by DRDO's Defence

Research and Development Establishment, Gwalior and marks a significant milestone in the nation's indigenisation initiative in the niche CBRN domain.

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



Valuing Talent: The Fight Against Job Exploitation



Mir Muzamil

In the ever-evolving job market, the exploitation of young professionals has become a harsh reality despite the skills and education, many individuals find themselves trapped in low-paying jobs with little room for growth, forced to accept unfair wages out of desperation. This cycle of underpayment and undervaluation not only stifles individual potential but also weakens

despite years of service. This situation begs a crucial question: Who is responsible for this exploitation? The parents who encourage their children to accept low-paying jobs? The job seekers who settle for less? Or the employers who fail to provide fair wages? Or perhaps all three? The Role of Parents: Encouragement or Unintentional Compromise? Parental influence plays a significant role in shaping the career choices of young professionals. Many parents, out of concern for financial security, push their children into accepting whatever job comes their way, often using the phrase “something is better than nothing.” But what does this “something” truly mean? Is it mere survival at the cost of dignity and ambition? Why do some parents prioritize immediate financial relief over long-term career growth

you in a stagnant position? While immediate financial stability is important, it should not come at the cost of long-term prosperity. A job should be more than just a means to survive—it should offer dignity, security, and progress. Do not let employers take advantage of your circumstances. If a job does not pay you fairly, question it. If you are not respected, walk away. If an employer does not value your time, find one who does. The Role of Employers: A Call for Ethical Leadership Employers hold immense power in shaping the professional landscape. They are not merely business owners; they are key contributors to societal development. They have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to create workplaces that are fair, equitable, and growth-oriented. Yet, many employers in India, and particularly in our valley,

Despite these challenges, it is important to acknowledge that not all employers exploit their workforce. In the valley, there are a few companies and corporations that are employee-oriented, employee-friendly, and committed to fostering a professional work culture. These organizations implement adaptive technologies, promote skill development, and ensure that employees are treated as valuable assets rather than expendable resources. A key feature of these companies is their high employee retention rate—above 95%—a testament to their commitment to



the broader workforce. While job seekers struggle for financial security, employers continue to capitalize on an oversupply of talent, offering little in return. It is time to challenge this norm and demand a system where work is valued, talent is nurtured, and fair compensation is the standard, not the exception. In my previous article, “Wake-Up Call for Youth,” I urged job seekers to never settle for less out of desperation. However, after engaging with numerous professionals across different fields, I have realized that this problem is far more widespread than it seems—particularly among women. Many young professionals, despite being highly skilled and educated, continue to work for meager salaries, trapped in a system that fails to recognize their contributions. The Stark Reality: A Case of Chronic Underpayment During one such interaction, I met two sisters who have been working for the past eight and four years, respectively. Shockingly, their salaries have remained unchanged since their initial hiring— 12,000 and 8,000 per month. Despite their dedication, experience, and qualifications, they have not seen any financial growth. Their story is not unique; it represents a silent crisis affecting countless individuals who remain underpaid

for their children? Instead of urging them to compromise, why not empower them to demand better? Why not stand by their side as they seek employment that values their skills and education? Rather than pressuring their children into low-paying jobs, parents must act as their strongest advocates. They should encourage their children to pursue opportunities that offer growth, dignity, and fair compensation. Until a child is found guilty of incompetence or lack of effort, they deserve full support in their pursuit of professional success. The Responsibility of Job Seekers: Recognizing Self-Worth To the young professionals—especially my sisters—who continue to accept jobs that do not pay them what they deserve, I understand that financial obligations often leave little choice. However, it is crucial to recognize your own value. Your time, education, and dedication are worth far more than the minimal salaries being offered. Employers will continue to exploit workers as long as they remain silent. If you do not demand what you deserve, who will? Ask yourself: Are you working only to meet current financial commitments, or are you building a future? Is your hard work paving the way for professional growth, or merely sustaining

exploit the abundance of skilled labor. They focus solely on profit maximization, often at the expense of their employees' well-being. This culture of exploitation must end. Employers must understand that their success is directly tied to the well-being of their workforce. Employees are not just resources to be used and discarded—they are human assets who drive innovation, productivity, and growth. The Consequences of Ignoring Human Capital If businesses continue to undervalue their employees, they will eventually suffer the consequences. A demotivated workforce leads to low productivity, high turnover rates, and ultimately, a decline in business success. The world is changing. Automation and artificial intelligence are replacing human labor in many fields. If employers fail to treat their workforce with dignity, they will soon find themselves struggling to retain talent. The future belongs to organizations that prioritize their employees' well-being and recognize that a company's true strength lies in its human assets—not in profit margins alone. A Positive Shift: Companies That Prioritize Employees

In my previous article, “Wake-Up Call for Youth,” I urged job seekers to never settle for less out of desperation. However, after engaging with numerous professionals across different fields, I have realized that this problem is far more widespread than it seems—particularly among women. Many young professionals, despite being highly skilled and educated, continue to work for meager salaries, trapped in a system that fails to recognize their contributions.

fair wages, growth opportunities, and a healthy work environment. They recognize that a satisfied workforce leads to higher productivity, innovation, and long-term success. Such companies have adopted global best practices, offering incentives, career growth opportunities, and flexible work policies that create a sense of belonging and job satisfaction. These organizations understand that an employee's well-being directly impacts business outcomes. Their leadership focuses on creating an inclusive and supportive work environment where individuals feel valued, heard, and motivated. As a result, they attract and retain top talent, setting an example for oth...

‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ – A Societal Breakdown that Sparks Intellectual Discourse



ASIF AHMAD SHAH

‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ is a chilling new movie that takes Edgar Allan Poe’s spooky tale and turns it into a modern horror flick that leaves you unsettled and apprehensive about society, sparking a sense of intrigue and curiosity. It follows Roderick and Madeline Usher, the last of a once-powerful family, living in a creepy, crumbling mansion. Roderick’s a paranoid mess, sure his family’s cursed, while Madeline’s fading away, pale and sick. Their old friend—the narrator—shows up to help, but things unravel fast: Madeline dies, gets buried, then bursts back to life, and the whole house collapses in a stormy, dramatic finish. With its dark vibes and twisted plot, the film’s more than just scary—it’s a snapshot of how wealth, fear, and power can tear everything down. Big thinkers like Karl Marx, Zygmunt Bauman, David Harvey, Michel Foucault, and Karl Popper give us a way to see it all mixed. The story starts with the Ushers holed up in their giant, rotting mansion—a place that screams old money and control. Marx would say this family’s the rich elite, the kind who got fat off other people’s hard work long ago, maybe exploiting farmers or workers to build their fortune. Harvey would zoom in on the house itself, a space that shows their power—big, fancy, but falling apart because that kind of wealth can’t last forever. It’s like those empty luxury towers in cities today,

standing tall while others scrape by. The Ushers are clinging to this wreck, and you can feel the and dark, are like that power system closing in over space and people. Madeline’s the wild card. She’s quiet at first,



weight of their past crashing down. Roderick’s the jittery boss of this sinking ship, always talking about a family curse. Popper would poke at that—where’s the proof? He’d say Roderick’s just buying into a story without testing it, and the narrator’s there like a skeptic, trying to figure out if it’s real or nonsense. But Foucault would jump in and say it’s not just about truth—it’s about power. Roderick uses the curse idea to keep everything under his thumb, especially Madeline. He locks her in, calls her sick, and even buries her when she “dies”—its control dressed up as care, the way society labels people “crazy” or “weak” to shut them up. The mansion’s walls, cracking

Then there’s Bauman’s angle—everything’s shaky, slippery, like water you can’t hold. The Ushers’ world is falling apart, and they’re scared stiff. Roderick’s pacing, Madeline’s drifting, the house is groaning—it’s that modern fear Bauman talks about, where nothing feels solid anymore. Consider today’s worries: jobs vanish, the weather’s wild, and lives are unpredictable. The movie’s storms and flickering lights make you feel that panic, like the Ushers are drowning in a world they can’t fix. Mix that with Marx, and it’s not just fear—it’s the rich losing their grip because their old tricks no longer work. Harvey would nod: the house isn’t just a home; it’s a dying symbol of their control

trapped by Roderick’s rules, but when she claws out of her tomb—alive, furious—it’s a game-changer. Foucault would cheer her breaking free, like the powerless fighting back against the ones in charge. Marx might see her as the spark of revolt, the underdog tearing down the elite’s rotten setup. Harvey could tie it to the house, collapsing right after—she’s smashing the space that propped up their power. Bauman would call it chaos breaking loose, the liquid mess of a world where even death isn’t inevitable. Popper might squint and ask: is she proving the curse or just proving Roderick wrong? Either way, her comeback’s the tipping point—everything falls apart.

The movie’s end—house in rubble, Ushers gone—is where it all clicks. Marx would say it’s the rich paying for their greed, an unequal system that couldn’t stand. Harvey would point to the wrecked mansion, proof that hoarding power in spaces like those backfires. Bauman would feel the fear in that final crash, a world too shaky to hold up. Foucault would see the power games—Roderick’s control, Madeline’s rebellion—ending in a draw where no one wins. Popper would shrug and say we still don’t know if the curse was real; the collapse doesn’t prove anything for sure. Together, it’s a wild mix: a wealthy family’s downfall tied to greed, shaky times, space wars, control flops, and untested beliefs. The film looks impressive—shadowy shots, howling winds, a house that feels alive. Roderick’s twitchy panic and Madeline’s ghostly rage are spot-on; you believe they’re doomed. It’s slow in spots—too many empty hallway scenes—and the narrator’s a dud, just watching instead of digging deeper. A bit more on why the Ushers got this way—greed? Bad luck? —I would’ve made the ideas pop more. But it’s still gripping, blending horror with big thoughts about society. ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’ isn’t a feel-good flick—everyone’s toast by the end—but it’s worth seeing. It’s about a rich family crashing because of old wealth, fear, power plays, and shaky stories, all tangled up in a creepy package. If you like movies that scare you and make you think about today’s messes—class gaps, control freaks, uncertain times. Just brace for the dark and get ready to be intrigued and engaged by the blend of horror and societal commentary. Author is an Independent Research and Alumnus of JMI, New Delhi. He can be mailed at Pirasif@live.com

Sakeena Itoo reviews performance, functioning of JKMSCL

Emphasises added transparency, efficiency in medicine distribution across J&K

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

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

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo underscored the need for further strengthening monitoring system of medical supplies for enhanced healthcare service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir. She called for bringing added transparency and efficiency in medicine distribution for patients in all district and Sub-district hospitals as well as health centres.

The Minister asked the Principals of all GMCs to maintain proper record of medicines distributed

among patients at their respective hospitals as well as of those prescribed for patients but not available in their stocks.

the management to work towards a more responsive and efficient system that caters to growing medical needs of locals here.



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

Acknowledging the role of JKMSCL in upgrading the healthcare infrastructure across J&K, she urged

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

equipments. She directed the JKMSCL management to expedite pending procurement processes and ensure timely delivery of medical supplies, machinery and equipments, especially in rural and remote areas.

While reviewing the status of Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS) portal, Sakeena Itoo stressed on the management of JKMSCL for physical monitoring of drugs being distributed among various health facilities.

She asked them to constitute teams for conducting surprise inspections of drugs and medicines being delivered to hospitals and other facilities.

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

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

Dy CM attends Shivratri festivities at Rajouri, Jammu

Prays for peace, prosperity of JK



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

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

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

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

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

Thousands throng Poonch Shiv Khori Mandir on Maha Shivratri

DC Vikas Kundal pays obeisance at Temple shrine

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

Men, women and children adorned in colorful attires filled the temple, taking part in special prayers held on the occasion.

Visitors also enjoyed local cuisine at food stalls set up along the route to the temple shrine, enhancing the festive atmosphere of the day.

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

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

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

Srinagar: Amid rising blazes, Downtown residents demand fire safety measures

Call for mandatory fire extinguishers, regular safety audits

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar: Amid rising fire incidents in Srinagar, particularly in the congested Downtown area, residents have urged authorities to make fire extinguishers mandatory in homes and conduct regular fire safety audits to prevent disasters.

Residents from various parts of Downtown told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that due to closely packed wooden houses and narrow lanes, even a small fire quickly turns into a major disaster.

"We have witnessed multiple fire incidents in Srinagar recently, causing huge property damage. The houses here are built close to each other, and fires spread within minutes," said Bilal Ahmad, a resident of Nowhatta.

Another local from Chattabal, Mohammad Ashraf, called for strict fire safety laws, making it compulsory for every household to have fire extinguishers and regular audits.

"Prevention is the only way to safeguard our homes and lives. We urge the authorities to introduce fire safety laws for Downtown Srinagar," he added.

In the past few weeks, Srinagar has witnessed several major fire incidents, including in Rajbagh and Eidgah, which left nearly half a dozen families homeless and caused massive damage to houses.

Nazir Khan from Habba Kadal said that most houses in Downtown Srinagar are made of wood, making them highly vulnerable to fire.

"We need proper safety measures before another tragedy strikes. The government should take immediate action," he said.

In May 2022, after several fire incidents in which many government buildings were gutted, the administration ordered a "Fire Safety Audit of all Government buildings across J&K." In this regard, an order was issued by the General Administration Department (GAD).

Stating that the audit across the Union Territory was to be carried out immediately, while the concerned authorities were directed to take necessary measures based on the audit reports.

The residents demand mandatory installation of fire extinguishers in homes and businesses; regular fire safety audits of residential and commercial buildings; strict implementation of fire safety laws in congested areas; and increased awareness and training programmes on fire prevention—(KNO)

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

SRINAGAR: The National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDF&DC) an organization under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs/Divyangjan), Ministry of Justice & Empowerment, GoI provides concessional financial assistance up to Rs 50 Lakh to persons with disabilities to support their economic rehabilitation.

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

The details of the scheme can be accessed on the website www.nhfdc.in.

Distt Floriculture Office Anantnag refutes illegal felling of trees in Rani Bagh

SRINAGAR: The District Floriculture Office Anantnag today strongly refuted the information circulated on various media platforms regarding illegal felling of trees in Rani Bagh.

While refuting the said information, the concerned officer of the department said, "It has come to the notice that misleading information is being circulated regarding allegedly illegal tree felling in Rani Bagh, Anantnag which is factually incorrect and baseless."

The facts are that only pruning of dried and hazardous branches of old Chinar trees was carried out with due authorization to ensure public safety, he said.

Following an open auction conducted on January 09, 2025 under the supervision of the District Floriculture officer, the process was conducted transparently and in accordance with regulations.

The public has been advised to refrain from sharing misleading information and have been asked to verify facts from the concerned authorities, of justice and accessibility.

During the meeting, the progress of several ongoing cases was thoroughly examined and reviewed. The participants engaged in a detailed dialogue on improving case outcomes and enhancing coordination between panel lawyers and the DLSA.

Nusrat Ali Hakak highlighted the need for continued efforts to provide equitable and prompt legal aid to marginalized sections of society, reiterating DLSA's mission to make justice accessible to all.

CEC extends winter vacation for schools in Kargil till Mar-15

Kargil: Amid inclement weather, the Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil Wednesday extended winter vacations for all government and private schools till March-15. Earlier on December-04-2024, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kargil had announced a phased manner of winter vacations for all government and private schools in the district. For classes from 1st to 8th, the vacations were ordered from December-5-2024 to March-5-2025 and for classes 9th to 12th, the vacations were scheduled from December-15-2024 to March-5-2025. Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun on Wednesday chaired a meeting at the Council Secretariat to review the ongoing winter conditions and their impact on educational institutions. Officials said, "In light of heavy snowfall and extreme cold, the CEC announced the extension of winter vacations for both government and private schools until March-15-2025."

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

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

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

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

He also reviewed the measures to maintain continuous supply of water in remote areas and called

for proactive initiatives, including a robust complaint redressal in tandem with communities to conserve and protect forests and



mechanism, to address public grievances effectively.

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

Rana expressed hope that the forest fraternity shall work

environment.

He exhorted upon the officers to work with dedication and sincerity to solve public issues and concerns. He further said that there is a need to attach high importance to addressing the challenges of climate change. He also laid stress on forest fire prevention and management mechanisms that have gained added significance due

MD KPDC reviews revenue realization, RDSS progress, PM Surya Ghar scheme

Reviews measures for seamless power supply during Holy Month of Ramzan

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

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

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

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

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

of approved projects.

While reviewing PM Surya Ghar Yojana, he highlighted the need to increase awareness about the scheme and to encourage more consumers to avail themselves of the government subsidy. He called for focused efforts to cover the maximum number of beneficiaries under the scheme.

As part of his visit, the MD toured the Receiving



Station Sangam and directed all Sub-Transmission and Distribution level officers to strictly adhere to the curtailment program.

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

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

Religious Fervour marks Maha Shivratri Celebration across Ramban

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

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

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

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

The Yatra commenced from Pracheen Shiv Mandir, Maitra, passing through Govind Pura Maitra, Boli Bazaar, and Main Bazaar, before culminating at Raghunath Mandir.

The district and police administration had made



elaborate security and logistical arrangements to ensure a smooth and peaceful celebration. People from different communities, including men, women, and children, stood alongside the procession route, welcoming the Yatra with great devotion. To mark the occasion, Langars were organized at Maitra by Sanatan Dharm Sabha and at Ramban by local residents, offering Prasad to devotees.

Shikara March marks 2nd Day of Srinagar Heritage Festival “Soun Meeraas”

Participants, Tourists celebrate heritage event at Dal Lake showcasing Kashmir's unique cultural richness

SRINAGAR: On the 2nd day of Srinagar Heritage Festival- "Soun Meeraas" an initiative of District Administration Srinagar, a traditional Shikara March showcasing unique cultural richness and historical heritage of Kashmir Valley was held on Wednesday here in the world famous Dal Lake.

The event organized by District Administration Srinagar in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts was aimed at acquainting the young generation about the

values of rich cultural heritage and tradition of Srinagar.

During the event, the tourists and local people cherished



the live demonstrations of the Floating Market in Dal Lake exhibiting living proof of Kashmiri culture of past times, when local farmers and

artisans would sell their products and crafts directly from their boats. Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Syed

Ahmad Kataria, other senior Officers and Officials of District Administration Srinagar and IGNCa were present on the occasion.



Imagine you eliminate sleep, exercise, and food for 24 hours. What do you think will make the biggest impact on your energy levels? The answer: Sleep. Not getting enough sleep plays the largest role in impacting your mood, energy, and productivity. Interestingly, there is much more talk about nutrition and activity. Getting sleep often remains in the background, although its impact on health is very important.

The Importance Of Sleep And Why Does It Matter

This article is part one in a series that will discuss the importance of sleep, how it impacts recovery, and the best tips for improving your slumber. In short, the importance of sleep impacts everyone, including those who:

- Work a night shift
- Exercise and eat healthily, with a desire to continue progressing
- Take vitamin D
- Have lots of STTs: stress, tempo, and technology
- Experience insomnia and are considering taking sleeping pills

Why does sleep matter?

An adult needs 7-8 hours of sleep a night. If you sleep 6 hours or less, you are already harming yourself. People who sleep 5 hours or less live ten years less. If you are a professional athlete, add an extra hour to your sleeping routine.

Positive effects of sleep include:

- Hormone production, such as growth, hunger, and satiety hormones
- Glucose regulation
- Memory and learning, like transitioning from short-term to long-term memory
- Energy replenishment, including toxin removal, tissue recovery, and productivity
- Mental health, such as an improved mood, emotional stability, and promotion of creativity

Scientists are increasingly discussing the sleep shortage pandemic. Society isn't getting enough sleep due to stress, the fast pace of life, and technology.

That's why:

During the last 50 years, the average sleep duration decreased by 1 hour and 10 minutes, leaving an average sleep time of 6 hours and 50 minutes.

People tend to stay up longer, going to sleep around midnight. Going to bed this late causes the body to miss out on critical processes.

These factors change sleep patterns. As a result, we spend less time in the REM stage, which is vital to our creativity and emotional health.

Sleeping pills are booming. In the US, 10 million people take sleeping pills every day.

Night shift jobs take up 20-30% of the labor market. People working night shifts are in the risk group because of sleep deprivation.

Sleepy drivers are responsible for more traffic accidents than drunk drivers or drivers on drugs

combined.

Sleep is fundamental for physical activity and diet. And if you're looking for a great way to improve your health, start with getting your sleep habits right. Moreover, if you lack sleep or are a terrible sleeper from 12 to 3 a.m., you might experience a shortage of leptin hormone. Sleep shortage leads to an urge to eat, and because of a hunger hormone called ghrelin, you end up eating 300-400 more that day.

Sleep and mental health

Mental fitness is a growing movement that emphasizes keeping one's brain and emotional well-being in good shape. With that push comes a new generation of CEOs. Not too long ago, old school, hard-working leaders who didn't get enough sleep and had no personal life dominated the industry. Things have changed, and now we have marathon runners, yogis, and healthy diet enthusiasts running ventures. They all know the secret to success: You have to work on the brain as much as you work on the body. Taking care of yourself impacts everyday life, including increased productivity, energy, and sharpness.

If you are a leader, you must also lead yourself to better sleep patterns, because a good leader is like an athlete. Athletes are working on physical recovery by using cold therapy, foam rolling, and stretching. Business leaders who get a lot of mental pressure during the workday also need recovery: mental recovery.

Sleep is one of the best mental recovery tools.

Why is sleep important to leaders?

A sleep shortage, which is less than 7 hours, or poor sleep quality, often in the form of frequently waking up or snoring, dramatically impacts health and productivity. And unfortunately, sleep deprivation leads to long- and short-term consequences, such as glucose spikes, a weak immune system, and a slower metabolism. In some way, good sleep is your brain detox.

Also, sleep is crucial to your performance. Sleep deprivation impacts your concentration, attention span, and energy levels. Moreover, it also plays a big part in creativity and problem-solving skills crucial

for risk management. Interestingly, not getting enough sleep can impact your management skills. Research finds that leaders who sleep less are more likely to be irritable and have less patience and emotional stability.

Two critical elements for better sleep



Sleeping better isn't hard. There are two easy things you can reduce immediately: alcohol and caffeine. Those are two critical elements impacting your sleep quality.

With alcohol, you can reach deep sleep, but it can cause you to miss out on the REM stage as it increases your heartbeat and temperature. This leads to waking up more frequently, even if you don't notice it. Alcohol has the same algorithm as Valium or Xanax, which activates GABA, the chief inhibitory neurotransmitter. Its principal role is reducing neuronal excitability throughout the nervous system. You can activate this neurotransmitter with less harmful methods, such as amino acid Taurine or lime-blossom tea.

Caffeine is a great stimulant to use in the first part of your day because it lasts up to 12 hours in your body. But consuming it later in the day causes it to block adenosine, an important sleep chemical. Replace coffee with green tea, which consists of l-theanine, a great relaxant. Or, sip something more suitable for a night like cacao or coconut milk.

Sleep is fundamental for physical activity and diet. And if you're looking for a great way to improve your health, start with getting your sleep habits right. Moreover, if you lack sleep or are a terrible sleeper from 12 to 3 a.m., you might experience a shortage of leptin hormone. Sleep shortage leads to an urge to eat, and because of a hunger hormone called ghrelin, you end up eating 300-400 more that day.

Continued From P1...

Sigh of relief

capital of the Union Territory, having a deficiency of 74 per cent during the period. There is a forecast of more snow and rain for the next two days, which would likely reduce the rainfall deficit of this season. The weatherman has issued yellow and orange alerts for Jammu and Kashmir, predicting light to moderate rainfall till February 28. KNO reported that amid the declining trend in precipitation for the last three consecutive years, Kashmir Valley has recorded the worst-ever deficit rainfall in 2025 in the last eight years. Official data revealed that a deficiency of 70 per cent was recorded from December 2024 to February 2025

Temperature plum-mets

Sonamarg recorded 1.5 ft and Doodhpathri recorded 8 inches. Pahalgam and Kupwara recorded rainfall of above 20 mm in the last 24 hours while Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, witnessed the rainfall of 7.8 mm during the period. Chill returned to Srinagar as the city recorded the maximum temperature of 6.6 degree Celsius. In its week-long weather forecast, Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places with isolated heavy rain and snow over both Kashmir & Jammu divisions for next two days. On March 1 & 2, Ahmad said that amid generally cloudy weather, there is a forecast of light rain and snow at isolated to scattered places, adding that on March 3, light to moderate rain and snow is expected at many places. From March 4 & 6, he said generally dry weather is expected.

PM Modi

Meanwhile, in its advisory, the local MeT department has said that there is a possibility of temporary disruption of surface transportation mainly over Sadhna pass, Razdan Pass, Sonamarg-Zojila-Gumri axis, Mughal Road, Sinthan Pass & other major roads of hilly districts are expected. Tourists, travelers and transporters are advised to plan accordingly & follow administration and traffic advisory, it reads, adding that farmers are advised to suspend irrigation & other farm operations. Significant fall in day temperature is expected during the above period, the MeT added Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Russia last year in October at the invitation of the Russian President Vladimir Putin to attend the 16th BRICS Summit which took place in Kazan under the chairmanship of Russia. This visit assumes greater significance as it will come amidst the talks between US and Russian officials towards ending the war in Ukraine. The first round of talks had been held in Riyadh earlier this month. Prime Minister Modi had made a strong pitch for peace in his meetings with the Russian President and the Ukrainian head of state Vladmir Zelenskyy in his earlier visits. (Agencies) “I Am Not a Marshal,

practice. Citing parliamentary procedure books by M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shakhder, he emphasized that making legislative matters public before formal admission constitutes a procedural impropriety. Elaborating on the importance of these rules, Rather noted that publishing questions before Speaker approval, disclosing answers before they are presented in the House, or making notices of adjournment motions and resolutions public before formal admission all violate parliamentary decorum. He stated that such actions could invite the Speaker's displeasure, as they breach long-standing legislative conventions. On the preparations for the Budget Session, Rather said that all necessary arrangements were underway to ensure its smooth functioning. He confirmed that meetings had been held with department officials and media representatives to clarify their roles and responsibilities. The session will include the Governor's address, budget

presentation, discussions on departmental grants, and deliberations on resolutions, questions, and bills.

Cong-NC ties

He, however, again emphasized on the need for forming a coordination committee between the two coalition partners to streamline governance and address the key policy matters. Karra stated that his party was committed to 'mitigating' the miseries of the people as outlined in its manifesto. “When we went to the people through district-wise meetings, we found that while they participated in elections with an open heart, their expectations are yet to be met. We hope that after the budget session, with the flow of funds and allocations, these issues will be addressed,” he said. He highlighted that public sentiment strongly favours the restoration of statehood. “People understand that statehood is the biggest issue at this time. They are even willing to take this movement forward,” he said, adding that he has taken the matter to the public and is working to make it a people's movement. He said as the assembly session approaches, the Congress would continue to press for greater clarity on business rules and push the government to take up the statehood demand with the Centre.

MP Jugal Kishore

The delegation comprises of Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Development Council Reasi; Baldev Raj Sharma and Kuldeep Raj Dubey- Members of Legislative Assembly, submitted a memorandum of demands pertaining to development of Shiv Khori Shrine, promotion of tourism potential areas and upgradation of Tourism, Water, Power and Health infrastructure, and various other public important issues of Reasi District. The Lieutenant Governor assured the members of the delegation that appropriate action will be taken for redressal of the issues projected by them. A delegation of Swarankar Sangh Jammu City called on Lieutenant Governor. Representatives of All India Registered Nurses Federation, J&K headed by its President Vishav Mohan Sharma also called on the Lieutenant Governor MP Jugal Kishore Representatives of All India Registered Nurses Federation, J&K headed by its President Vishav Mohan Sharma also called on the Lieutenant Governor

Dal Lake

artists performing on beautifully decorated Shikaras, creating a mesmerizing scene on the waters of Dal Lake. Notably, the rally was organized to commemorate the ancient customs of the area, based on its cultural and artistic identity. A local musician, who performed at the rally, expressed his joy and said that participating in this festival was an honor. “Such festivals provide us with a platform to project our art and preserve our culture,” he said. Tourists and locals alike were equally surprised, and most stopped their cars along Dal Lake shores to witness the scenery. A local resident, Zubair Ahmad mentioned, “It is wonderful to witness such an event in Srinagar, particularly on Dal Lake. The combination of cultural shows and Dal Lake's beauty makes it a special occasion.” Importantly, Soan Meeras festival is a part of a greater effort to honor and protect Kashmir's rich heritage. Over the years, the government and cultural organizations have made efforts to revive traditional art, crafts, and heritage tourism.

Javed Rana

weigh environmental, economic and social concerns. He said that environmental conservation has become a global priority due to the growing concerns of climate change and increasing pollution. “To restore environmental balance, it is crucial to adopt a more sensitive approach toward nature and wildlife conservation as each species has an important role to perform in the ecosystem. If we want to protect them we have maintain a fine balance between human development and wildlife conservation,” he added.

Rana said that co-existence of varied life forms is indispensable to maintain a fine balance in the ecosystems and conservation efforts included status surveys, research, monitoring, development of conservation action plans and advocacy. He further directed the wildlife warden to carry out a population estimation of the animals in the particular area and to survey other areas for their presence. “Population assessments provide the foundation for evaluating the status and threats to endangered species and plan and implement species recovery and conservation plans accordingly,” he added. Rana also called for involvement of local communities in the conservation of endangered species and their habitats. These communities play a significant role in shielding endangered species from hunting, while protecting the places these animals live, he said. He further called for strengthening enforcement mechanisms like wildlife monitoring activities, mitigating human-wildlife conflict which form an integral part of conservation achievements. “There is need to design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity,” he said. Rana also praised the efforts of the field staff in discovering these rare species in the dense forests. Wildlife Warden, Amit Sharma, a wildlife expert, said that the sightings of these rare species has sparked excitement among wildlife enthusiasts, experts and renewed interest in the region's ecosystem. He said that the department will be conducting population census and research on these species to ensure their conservation and protection in harmony with nature.

3 schools from

Another team from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Leh documented changes in the attitudes of people. The team demonstrated the increased awareness due to climate change and explored how ice stupas play an important role in the conservation of glacial water. “Climate change is causing huge disruptions in people's day-to-day lives. Drip and sprinkler irrigation is practiced on the campus. The school is residential. Therefore, water consumption is higher than a day school,” the handout reads. Anurag Behar, Chief Executive Officer, Azim Premji Foundation, and Narayan P S, Global Head of Sustainability and Social Initiatives, Wipro Limited, and Managing Trustee, Wipro Foundation, felicitated the winning teams with certificates and cash prizes. Narayan P.S., Global Head of Sustainability and Social Initiatives, Wipro Limited, and Managing Trustee, Wipro Foundation said the annual Wipro earthian awards was the culmination of the 14th edition of Wipro's long-running program that seeks to ignite interest and foster learning in young minds on humanity's unique relationship with nature. “Bringing students and teachers together from schools spread across the country, the Wipro earthian program is designed to generate action-based learning that celebrates the underlying connectedness of the individual with the larger fabric of community and nature,” he said,


Militants fire

They added that the militants, believed to be hiding in a forest, fired a few rounds at the army vehicle passing through the area — considered a traditional infiltration route for militants. The troops returned fire while reinforcements were rushed to neutralise the militants, the officials said. J&K Budget”, Sadiq, who is also a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) said in a statement here today. He said that the first budget of the newly elected government is going to be presented next month. “The Chief Minister consulted extensively with all stakeholders before preparing the budget and we are confident that the budget will lay a strong foundation for public relief and development,” the NC leader said. Sadiq claimed that the Omar Abdullah led government has succeeded to a large extent in restoring the trust and confidence of the people towards the government. “For the past 10 years, especially after 2019, the communication between the government and the people was broken”, he said. The NC Chief Spokesman said the government led by Omar Abdullah has managed to restore that connection once again, the Ministers and members of the National Conference have dedicated themselves

to the people and are always available to listen to the people's problems and solve them. “From 2015 to 2024, only anti-people decisions and actions were taken. But, now every decision of the National Conference government will be people-friendly and in public interest”, he emphasized. The NC leader said that during the last 10 years in Jammu and Kashmir, there was only public opposition and anti-people decisions were taken. (Agencies)

SAD DEMISE

Haji Mohammad Yousuf Gabroo is No More



With profound grief and sorrow it's to be informed that Haji Mohammad Yousuf Gabroo resident of Lal Nagar Chanapora, Srinagar has left for heavenly abode on Tuesday evening 25 February 2025.

Ina Illa hi Wa Ina Illahi Rajaoun

May Almighty Allah grant him highest place in Jannah, Ameen.

Ijtami Fateh Khwani will be held on 01 March 2025 at ancestral graveyard at Jamia Murtaza, Lal Nagar Chanapora Sriangar at 10:30am.

Bereaved: 7006951247

ICA Opens First Branch in Srinagar to Boost Job-Oriented Skills for Kashmiri Youth

Irfan Gani Bhat



SRINAGAR: In a major push for skill-based education in Kashmir, the Institute of Computer Accountants (ICA) has inaugurated its first branch in Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar. The launch marks a significant milestone in ICA's mission to equip local youth with industry-relevant skills in computerized accounting, finance, and taxation. The inauguration ceremony was led by MLA Zadibal, Jinab Tanvir Sadiq, as the Chief Guest, who officially inaugurated the new center. The event also saw the presence of Guest of Honor Dr. Touseef Ahmed, Mr. Mehran Khan, and ICA's Central Director, Mr. Ishtiyag Ahmed Wani, who emphasized the growing importance of skill development in today's competitive job market. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Touseef Ahmed highlighted the rising unemployment challenges in Kashmir and the urgent need for practical training programs. “Kashmir's youth have immense potential, but they need the right skills and opportunities to succeed. ICA is committed to bridging this gap by providing high-quality, job-oriented courses that prepare students for real-world careers,” he stated. The new ICA branch in Hazuri Bagh is equipped with modern facilities and offers a comprehensive

curriculum covering Tally, GST, accounting, finance, income tax, and basic computer applications. With a focus on hands-on training and industry-aligned courses, ICA aims to empower students with the expertise needed to secure stable employment and contribute to the region's economic growth. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks to the esteemed guests, reaffirming ICA's dedication to fostering education and employment opportunities for Kashmiri youth.

ELECRA MA 2025 marks beginning of India's next generation electrical revolution

SRINAGAR, Feb 26: As India accelerates its journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047 and strengthens its position as a global manufacturing hub under Aatmanirbhar Bharat; the power sector plays a crucial role in driving economic growth, energy security, and sustainability. In this evolving landscape, IEEMA (the Indian Electrical & Electronics Manufacturers' Association) commenced ELECRA MA 2025, the world's largest electrical show on an inspiring note today at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida. The 16th edition of ELECRA MA showcases India's capabilities in electrical and power technologies, reinforcing its role as a trusted global partner. The grand inauguration was graced by Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister of Power and Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs highlighting the government's commitment to strengthening India's energy infrastructure and fostering innovation in the sector. The event also witnessed industry visionaries like Oliver Blum, CEO, Schneider Electric; Matthias Rebellius, CEO, Siemens Smart Infrastructure; Sunil



Singhvi, President, IEEMA; Vikram Gandotra, President (Elect) and Chairman, ELECRA MA 2025 and Siddharth Bhutoria, Vice President, IEEMA & Vice Chairman, ELECRA MA 2025, who shared insights on the future of the electrical and power sector. Addressing the gathering, Manohar Lal Khattar, Union Minister of Power and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs emphasized India's commitment to


energy security, grid modernization, and sustainability, aligning with the nation's long-term vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. “India is well positioned to become the world's third-largest economy by 2027 and a developed nation by 2047, with power driving this transformation. The electrical and electronics manufacturing industry will be key in scaling clean energy, advancing grid modernization, and

strengthening transmission networks. With over 200 GW of renewable energy capacity installed and a target of 500 GW by 2030, India is making significant progress in sustainable energy adoption. Expanding EV infrastructure and Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) technology will further accelerate the shift towards e-mobility. By 2030, India aims to achieve 800 GW of generation capacity, with 50% from renewable, reinforcing its role as a global clean energy leader. I commend IEEMA for organizing ELECRA MA 2025, a pivotal platform bringing together industry leaders, innovators, and policymakers to drive digital transformation and sustainability, solidifying India's position as a hub for energy innovation and economic growth.” ELECRA MA is set to showcase groundbreaking technologies, solutions, and insights from over 1,000+ exhibitors and participation from leading industry players. The event expects over 400,000+ business visitor footfalls, making it the biggest congregation of electrical industry professionals.

MADRASATUL BANAT DARUL ULOOM RAHEEMIYAH BANDIPORA KASHMIR

A Premier institution for girls education

Madrasatul Banat Tayyib Abad under supervision of Darul Uloom Raheemiyah




With the grace of Allah Ta'ala, Madrasatul Banat Darul Uloom Raheemiyah was established as a residential institution on 1st Rabi-ul-Awwal 1442 AH. Alhamdulillah! In just two years, it has flourished into a thriving centre of education, nurturing 90 resident students with free accommodation and meals, alongside 60+ non-resident students who attend daily. This growing institution is guided by nine dedicated teachers and supported by four administrative staff, with a monthly operational cost of approximately 3 lakh rupees.

By the mercy of Allah Ta'ala, many students have completed the recitation of the Holy Quran, while others have advanced to higher levels of Islamic learning and are now serving the cause of Deen.

Currently, the Madrasa functions in temporary tin-roofed sheds, while a four-story building is under construction. This noble endeavour requires your Zakat, Sadaqah, and donations to ensure a better future for these aspiring students. Your contribution will be a Sadaqah Jariyah (Everlasting Charity), bringing endless rewards for you and your departed loved ones.

Support This Noble Cause



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May Allah accept your generosity and bless you abundantly.

Your well wisher: Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Rahmatullah Kashmiri Nazim Darul Uloom Raheemiyah, Bandipora.

Afghanistan Register Historic Win, Knock England Out Of C-Trophy

Ibrahim Zadran's majestic 177 and pacer Azmatullah Omarzai's fi-fer trumped Joe Root's masterful hundred, as the brave Afghanistan registered a thrilling 8-run win to knock a largely-insipid England out of the Champions Trophy on Wednesday. England are winless after two matches and in their last league match in Group B they will face South Africa, who already have three points along with Australia. Afghanistan now have two points and will have to beat the Aussies in their final group match to entertain the hopes of reaching the last eight. For a long time, England's chase merely rattled along as the dismissal of Phil Salt and Jamie Smith jolted them early. They were 30 for two then, and eventually ended up at 317 all out with a ball to spare as pacer Omarzai (5/58) struck at crucial junctures.

But Root (120, 111b, 11x4, 1x6) brought stability to England's innings through two alliances, adding 68 runs with Ben Duckett (38), who was dropped on 29, for the third wicket and then an 83-run stand with skipper Jos Buttler for the fifth wicket.

They were not really blazing partnerships but kept England afloat, keeping them in the vicinity of the asking rate.

But the jettisoning of Duckett and Buttler prematurely curtailed those blossoming joint ventures, as Root had to shoulder the burden all by himself.

Root's was a clever innings, as he hardly hit any ball in anger but still managed a strike-rate close to 100, and at times above 100.



But there those little flourishes which are so central to a Root innings such as a reverse sweep four off wrist spinner Noor Ahmad or a scooped six behind wicketkeeper off Fazalhaq Farooqi.

He brought up his 17th ODI hundred with

a single off Rashid Khan, and looked to stay on. But a rather tired ramp off pacer Omarzai ended in the gloves of keeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz.

But England had another willing soldier in Jamie Overton (32, 28b), who added precious

54 runs for the seventh wicket, but a feeble heave off Omarzai ended his stint.

It also marked the end of England's journey in this tournament.

Earlier, Zadran's remarkable innings helped Afghanistan pile 325 for seven.

Zadran, whose daddy hundred came off 146 balls (12x4, 6x6), had solid support from skipper Hashmathullah Shahidi (40, 67b, 3x4), with whom he raised 103 runs for the fourth wicket, and Azmatullah Omarzai (41, 31b) with whom he milked 72 runs for the fifth wicket.

Later, he plundered 111 runs for the sixth wicket with Mohammed Nabi (40, 24b) to put England through the wringer.

But Afghanistan's start to a must-win game was way off the mark after they elected to bat first. Jofra Archer's (3/64) pace and accuracy put them under considerable strife inside the first 10 overs on an absolute batting beauty.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz dragged an Archer delivery back onto his stumps while attempting a drive, Sediqualah Atal was trapped in front and Rahmat Shah pulled one straight to Adil Rashid at square leg as the Afghans slumped to 37 for three inside the Power Play.

Zadran began the repair work in the company of Shahidi and they were understandably circumspect.

But once he reached 50 off 65 balls, Zadran opened up more and smoked Jamie Overton for a couple of fours to signal the shifting of gears.

However, Shahidi was dismissed when he tried to reverse sweep leg-spinner Rashid, whose front-of-the-arm delivery crashed onto the stumps.

But Root (120, 111b, 11x4, 1x6) brought stability to England's innings through two alliances, adding 68 runs with Ben Duckett (38), who was dropped on 29, for the third wicket and then an 83-run stand with skipper Jos Buttler for the fifth wicket.

Cummins bowling again as he eyes IPL and Test Championship returns

Pat Cummins has returned to bowling as he prepares for the IPL next month and the build-up to the World Test Championship final against South Africa in June.

Cummins, Australia's Test and ODI captain, was ruled out of the ongoing Champions Trophy due to an ankle injury he managed during the Test series against India but told ESPNcricinfo on Wednesday that he was heading for the first bowl of his rehab.

"The ankle is all going strong, [have been] able to give it a good rest and then been building up slowly, which you don't get to do when you play lots of cricket," Cummins said. "It's feeling as strong as it has for a fair while. Should be fine [for the IPL], that's the plan. So have a few weeks of bowling, building back up and then hopefully don't have to worry about it for a while."

Cummins, an ambassador for Prime who are the exclusive broadcasters for the Champions Trophy in Australia, said his ankle is something he has had to manage on an ongoing basis and it began to become a bit more of an issue during the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

"It's something that we've opted never to have surgery on or intervene too much, just a lot to rehab," he explained. "Having this break meant that I could get a couple of cortisones and really rehab it well the last couple of weeks."

Cummins is confident he will be able to build his workload during the IPL and is eyeing playing a full role in the three-Test series against West Indies which follows the WTC final. There is a chance he will miss some of Australia's white-ball matches ahead of the Ashes - there are five T20Is in West Indies then series against South Africa, New Zealand and India - before facing England from late November.



Khyber Cement Ka Zarra Zarra Dil Se Bana Hai

