

Kashmir Convener



Never seen any RS chairperson make such political comments: Kapil Sibal on Dhakhar's judiciary

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Terrorism in Jammu will be crushed like in Kashmir: LG

KC News Network

GANDERBAL: Stating that like Kashmir, the terrorism in Jammu areas will also be crushed, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday reiterated that government is resolute to make Jammu and Kashmir terrorism-free.

He made these remarks while attending a passing out parade of the 16th Batch of Basic Recruit Training Course (BRTC) of J&K Police Constables at Manigam Police Training School, in central Kashmir's Ganderbal.

Paying tributes to the valour of J&K Police, the Lieutenant Governor exhorted the young recruits to work with diligence and high professionalism to protect the motherland.

"The nation is grateful to J&K Police for the invaluable sacrifices they have made. Citizens can live peacefully and work freely because they know that our police force is standing firm in protecting the lives and combating terrorism and crime," LG Sinha said.

He also said, "The exemplary courage of J&K Police and their supreme heroism reassures the people that UT is in safe hands. Today J&K Police force is admired across the country for its professionalism, sustained grit and determination".

The Lieutenant Governor said J&K Police, Army and CAPFs are determined to crush terror. "In the last few years,



J&K Police Force, Army and CAPFs have succeeded in crushing terrorism in the Kashmir Valley, however terrorist incidents have increased in Jammu division, which is a matter of concern. Our resolve is to make both Jammu and Kashmir divisions terrorism-free," the Lieutenant Governor said.

It is worthwhile to mention that a total of 438 recruits, including 86 women, completed their rigorous training, today at PTS Manigam. Among them, 211 brave constables have previously served as SPOs.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised on emerging technologies reshaping policing and directed J&K Police Force to adapt to Cutting-edge technology and advanced tools and deploy them to

enhance their operational effectiveness.

"We need a future-ready police force to effectively combat evolving terror and organised crime threats. In view of the rapid changes taking place due to technology, our approach should be on Data-Centric policing to effectively tackle challenges, analyse crime trends and predict the crime patterns and make necessary changes in the investigation," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Extending his best wishes to the passing out Trainees, the Lieutenant Governor said, the skills, knowledge, and values they have gained during their training will provide a solid foundation and enhance their

LG Flags Use Of Cryptocurrency In Narco Dealings

KC NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said cryptocurrency is being used in narco dealings as the dark web is emerging as the new marketplace for drug trade.

Speaking at the passing out parade at Police Training School, Manigam, in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, Sinha said technology is changing at a very rapid pace and the use of new technology outside the training schools, and upgradation of skills to tackle the challenges put up by enemies are the need of the hour.

"The threat of drug smuggling has not remained conventional now. Smugglers and narco-terrorists are changing their ways of communication every day. Dark web is emerging as the new marketplace for drug trade, and cryptocurrency is being used in place of conventional transactions," Sinha said.

The LG said the misuse of new technologies has expanded organised crime and

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Day-5

Security agencies identify areas with terrorist presence in Poonch



KC News Network

JAMMU: With the operation to track down terrorists who escaped after an encounter in Poonch district entering the fifth day on Friday, a senior police official said security agencies have formulated an action plan by identifying areas with suspected terrorist presence.

He said terrorism, which has re-emerged over the past one-and-a-half to two years, remains a reality in the region.

"The combating operation at the Lasana belt of Poonch district has entered its fifth consecutive day on Friday," said Jammu region Inspector General of Police (IGP) Bhim Sen Tuti.

Troops of counter-insurgency force 'Romeo', Special Operations Group of the police, and Central Reserve Police Force are conducting search operations supported by sniffer dogs and aerial surveillance equipment, he said.

A brief exchange of fire took place between

terrorists and security forces in Lasana village in the district on Monday.

IGP Tuti, who toured Poonch, said the district has been dealing with a new wave of terrorism.

"Terrorism is a stark reality here. It has resurfaced over the past one-and-a-half to two years. We have enhanced our capacity," he told reporters.

Tuti said all necessary steps are being taken to combat terrorism and the police force is performing commendably.

He said a few days ago an incident occurred in Lasana, and a coordination meeting was held with security forces to formulate an action plan.

"Areas with suspected terrorist presence have been identified. We are taking action. You will see the results in the coming days," he said.

The IGP maintained that infiltration routes are under constant monitoring.

He further emphasised that intelligence inputs and ground assessments are

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After 40 years, first Indian astronaut to travel into space in May



KC News Network

NEW DELHI: India will send an astronaut to space next month, a feat to be repeated 40 years after Rakesh Sharma's iconic 1994 flight aboard a Soviet Soyuz spacecraft, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh said on Friday.

Singh said Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Air Force is all prepared to fly to the International Space Station (ISS) next month as part of Axiom Space's Ax-4 mission.

"India is ready for its next space milestone," said Singh, underscoring the significance of

the upcoming human spaceflight and a series of critical ISRO missions.

He said the mission will mark the visit of the first Indian to the ISS and make Shukla the first Indian to travel into space in over four decades after Rakesh Sharma.

The Minister made the announcement after a high-level meeting held to review major future plans of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in the coming months.

Singh said that the collaboration with international partners and the strategic momentum of projects like Gaganyaan reflect India's

commitment to becoming a global leader in space technology.

The Minister emphasised that these efforts are not only scientific in nature but also aligned with the vision of a developed and self-reliant India.

ISRO Chairman Dr V. Narayanan said Shukla is fully prepared for the mission, which is expected to provide valuable hands-on experience for India's future crewed missions, including the Gaganyaan project.

A decorated test pilot with the IAF, Shukla was shortlisted under ISRO's Human Spaceflight Program (HSP) and is among the top contenders for the Gaganyaan mission, India's first indigenous crewed orbital flight.

His journey aboard the Ax-4 mission is expected to provide critical hands-on experience in spaceflight operations, launch protocols, microgravity adaptation, and emergency preparedness — all essential for India's crewed space ambitions.

What sets Shukla's mission apart is its strategic

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Prominent Shia Scholar Aga Syed Baqir Laid To Rest

● CM Omar, MP Ruhullah, Advisor Nasir Wani participate



Naveed-ul-Haq

BUDGAM: Thousands gathered in Budgam on Friday to attend the last rites of the renowned Shia cleric and scholar Allama Aga Syed Mohammad Baqir Al-Moosavi Al-Najafi, who passed away late Thursday night.

The Namaz-e-Janaza was held at his ancestral shrine, Astana-e-Aliya after the culmination of congregational Friday prayers.

The funeral procession as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), witnessed participation from Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Member of Parliament

Syed Aga Ruhullah, Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani and other prominent political and religious figures, reflecting the wide-reaching influence of the late scholar.

Allama Baqir, the senior-most member of the influential Aga family, was laid to rest amid a sea of mourners, with emotional scenes as followers and students paid their final respects.

Shops and businesses in parts of Budgam remained closed as a mark of mourning and local Masjids reverberated with prayers in his memory.

A scholar of deep insight, Allama Baqir studied at the esteemed Howza

Ilmia seminary in Najaf before returning to Kashmir in 1982 to carry forward the spiritual legacy of his forefathers.

Known for his mastery of Arabic, Persian, and Kashmiri, he also contributed extensively as a poet, writer, and preacher.

Condolences continued to pour in from across the region.

Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Moulvi Umar Farooq expressed grief over his passing away and termed his demise as great loss to the religious and scholarly circles of Jammu & Kashmir.

"Express my deep sorrow on the passing away of prominent and respected religious scholar Aga Syed Mohammad Baqir Al-Moosavi. His demise is a great loss to the religious and scholarly circles of Jammu & Kashmir. Convey my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and the entire community, and pray to Almighty Allah to grant the departed soul the highest place in Jannah," Mirwaiz wrote on X. President of the All Jammu & Kashmir Shia Association, Molvi Imran

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BOOK LAUNCH

The Chief Minister And The Spy Dr Saheb is a legend: Dulat

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: The launch of former RAW chief Amar Singh Dulat's explosive memoir "The Chief Minister and The Spy" in New Delhi on Friday has reignited political tensions, with the book making



startling claims about National Conference (NC) patriarch Dr. Farooq Abdullah's role during the abrogation of Article 370.

Addressing the audience during the book launch, Dulat dismissed the brewing controversy: "Dr. Saheb [Farooq Abdullah] is not here. I don't know how this started, but few have read the book. Someone picked one paragraph from page 208 and twisted it — English is a difficult language," Dulat said in his speech, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

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Srinagar Premiere Of 'Ground Zero' A 'Symbolic Moment': Emraan Hashmi



KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Actor Emraan Hashmi, whose starrer "Ground Zero" is set to make history by becoming the first film to have its red

carpet premiere in Srinagar in 38 years, says it's an "important and symbolic moment".

Hashmi reached the city of Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the premiere, where he spoke to the reporters.

"We were shooting for about 30 days for our film Ground Zero. I feel happy to come back to Srinagar. It feels very nice. The weather is good here, it is better than Mumbai," Hashmi said.

"It is a very important and symbolic moment for the people here, for this region. The people here are very good and talented, but they need a medium, that avenue in films and television to explore their creativity in any stream."

Directed by Tejas Deoskar, "Ground Zero" is produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani's Excel Entertainment.

The action thriller chronicles the story of BSF officer Narendra Nath Dhar Dubey, who led the operation to track the mastermind behind the 2001 terrorist attacks on the Parliament and Akshardham Temple. Hashmi shared a post on his X handle

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Rains lash Valley, hail storm wreaks havoc in South Kashmir

KC News Network

SRINAGAR: Rains lashed different parts of Valley on Friday, while the hailstorm wreaked havoc in South Kashmir.

Amidst two-day yellow and orange alert issued by the MeT Department the parts of Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir were lashed by the rainfall from late afternoon.

Reports of hailstorms in South Kashmir areas in Shopian district were also received, causing extensive losses to the orchardists and fruit growers.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the next three days upto April 21 would likely witness more



rains and snow across Jammu and Kashmir as the weatherman has stated that an active Western Disturbance would likely affect the region, bringing widespread light to moderate rain in plains and snow in the higher reaches.

The MeT has issued a

warning of heavy rain, snowfall, thunderstorms, and strong winds across Jammu and Kashmir from April 18 to April 20, with peak intensity expected between the night of April 18 and late night of April 19.

The Pir Panjal range in Jammu

and upper regions of Kashmir—especially Anantnag-Pahalgam, Kulgam, Sinthan Pass, Shopian, Pir Ki Gali, Sonamarg-Zojila, Bandipora-Razdan Pass, Gulmarg, and Kupwara-Sadhma Pass—are expected to receive heavy precipitation, reads the advisory.

The advisory warns of strong winds reaching 40–50 kmph, gusting up to 60–70 kmph, along with the possibility of hailstorms and lightning. The adverse weather may cause significant disruption to surface transport, particularly on the Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Leh National Highways and other major roads in hilly areas.

The MeT has also cautioned about risks of

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Never seen any RS chairperson make such political comments: Kapil Sibal on Dhakhar’s judiciary remarks

NEW DELHI: Rajya Sabha member Kapil Sibal slammed Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday for questioning the judiciary over the timeline for the president to take decisions, saying this is “unconstitutional” and he had never seen any Rajya Sabha chairman make “political statements” of this nature.

A day after Dhankhar used strong words against the judiciary, Sibal asserted that the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha Chairman remain equidistant between the opposition and the ruling party, and cannot be the “spokesperson of the party.”

“Everyone knows that the Lok Sabha Speaker’s chair is in between. He or she is the Speaker of the House, not the speaker of one party. They also don’t vote, they only vote when there is a tie. The same is with the upper house. You are equidistant between the opposition and the ruling party,” the senior advocate said at a press conference here.

“Everything you say must be equidistant. No speaker can be the spokesperson of a party. I don’t say that he (Dhankhar) is but no Speaker in principle can be the spokesperson of any party. If it appears so then the dignity of the chair is lowered,” Sibal asserted.

Dhankhar on Thursday questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the president to take decisions and act as a “super Parliament”, saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a “nuclear missile” at democratic forces.

Dhankhar’s strong words to the judiciary came during his speech to Rajya Sabha interns, days after the Supreme Court sought to fix a timeline for the president to grant assent to the bills reserved for her consideration by the governor.

“So, we have judges who will legislate, who will perform executive functions, who will act as super Parliament and absolutely have no accountability because the law of the land does not apply to them,” Dhankhar said.

He also described Article 142, which grants plenary powers to the Supreme Court, as a “nuclear missile against democratic forces available to the judiciary 24×7”.

Slamming Dhankhar for his remarks, Sibal said, “If you give such statements it will look as if judiciary is being taught a lesson. It is not neutral and not constitutional.” The judiciary should not be attacked in this manner by the executive, especially two ministers – Arjun Ram Meghwal and Kiren Rijiju – and the chairman of the house, as the judiciary cannot defend itself.

“Then the polity must defend the judiciary. Independence of the judiciary is fundamental to democracy in the country. What is being done is unconstitutional,” he said.

“I have never seen any chairman of the House make political statements of this nature. Even BJP chairman in the past (have not done so),” Sibal said, hitting out at Dhankhar.

Sibal said he was saddened and surprised by the statement of Dhankhar.

“Judicial institutions – high courts or Supreme Courts, if there is faith in any institution, it is the judiciary. I feel that when government people do not like the decisions of the judiciary then they start accusing that it (judiciary) has gone beyond its limit. When they like it and the opposition says something then they say it is the decision of the Supreme Court,” the former Congress leader said.

When someone raises questions about Article 370 or Ramjanam bhoomijudgement, the government people point out that it is a Supreme Court decision, he said.

“When (Justice) B.Pardiwala judgement came they say how can the Supreme Court say this. The judgement which you do not like is wrong and which is as per your thinking, it is fine. It is not right for a constitutional functionary to say such a thing,” Sibal said referring to Dhakhar’s remarks.

“I respect him a lot but you said article 142 is nuclear missile material, how can you say this? Article 142 has given powers to the Supreme Court and it is given by the Constitution, it is not by the government it is the Constitution to do complete justice,” Sibal said.

He also pointed out that the President of India is a titular head and acts on the aid and advice of the council of ministers.

“The governor acts on the aid and advice of the council of ministers in a state. So when a bill is passed it goes to the governor, the governor can make comments and send it back but if passed again, the governor has to give an assent as stated in the Constitution. The governor can send the bill to the president. President acts on the aid and advice of the ministers, so the matter goes to the Centre. The president does not have personal powers,” he said.

Dhankhar said how can president’s power be curtailed, Sibal noted and wondered who is curtailing the power of the President.

Can the governor sit for two years on a bill that is important for people, Sibal asked and added that this amounts to an intrusion on the supremacy of the legislature.

“If you have a problem with a judgement, call for a review. If there are still problems, take an advisory opinion from Supreme Court,” Sibal said.

“He (Dhankhar) talked about 1984 but did not talk about 2002. You talked about an emergency bit not undeclared emergency that is going on, you did not talk about capture of institutions,” Sibal said in a scathing criticism of Dhankhar’s comments.

He said it seems that he only talks about what happened in Congress governments and not after 2014.

“We moved an impeachment motion against judge of a high court in December; it was signed by more than 50 members. We are in April, it took five months to find out whether those signatures are genuine or not. How many more months would it take?” Sibal said.

“If you do not with expedition decide the matter then the argument for us is that we cannot do anything. If the governor doesn’t not clear bills, the judiciary cannot do anything,” he said. If the executive doesn’t do its job the judiciary has to intervene, Sibal asserted. Article 142 of the Constitution gives the Supreme Court the power to issue orders that ensure “complete justice” in any matter before it.

Major Digital Overhaul In EPFO With New IT Platform Set For May-June Rollout: Mandaviya

RANCHI: The Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is set to undergo a major digital overhaul to enhance services for over 9 crore beneficiaries, with Version 3.0 set to launch by May or June, Union Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Friday.

In coming days, EPFO beneficiaries will be able to withdraw funds from ATMs due to faster processing of claims on the newer Version 3.0, Mandaviya said in an interview with PTI.

“EPFO will soon implement Version 3.0 with the help of a robust IT platform to provide seamless and simplified services, including auto-claim settlements, digital corrections, and ATM-based fund withdrawals. The overhaul is aimed at making EPFO accessible and efficient,” he said.

According to Mandaviya, the new version will eliminate the need for complex and lengthy form-filling processes or physical visits for claims and corrections. Beneficiaries will be able to update their EPFO accounts and mandates using OTP verification and conveniently monitor their pension entitlements or withdraw funds.

Due to fast settlement of claims, the funds would be quickly available in the subscriber’s bank account, he added.

He said EPFO currently holds a corpus of Rs 27 lakh crore with a sovereign guarantee and offers 8.25 per cent interest.

The Centralised Pension Payment System, already in place, benefits over 78 lakh pensioners by allowing them to receive pensions in any bank account across the country, removing the earlier requirement of maintaining accounts in designated zonal banks.

The minister said the government is also considering the integration of various social security schemes, including the Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Bima Yojana, and Shramik Jan Dhan Yojana, to streamline and strengthen pension coverage.

In a move to enhance healthcare access for workers, Mandaviya said that beneficiaries under the Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) will soon be able to receive free medical treatment at hospitals empanelled under the Ayushman Bharat scheme.

In addition, designated charity-run private hospitals will also be brought under its ambit to expand social security coverage.

Currently, ESIC provides free treatment to about 18 crore people through 165 hospitals, over 1,500 dispensaries and around 2,000 empanelled hospitals.

Mandaviya said the EPFO has significantly improved its grievance redressal mechanism following the rollout of Version 2.01, with complaints being reduced to less than half.

With the introduction of EPFO 3.0, the organisation aims to further improve accessibility and efficiency.

In 2024-25, EPFO collected over Rs 3.41 lakh-crore in contributions through 1.25 crore electronic challan cum returns (ECRs) filed by employers.

The minister also highlighted efforts to extend social security to gig and platform workers, saying their current number exceeds one crore and is expected to double in the next five years.

As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Labour and Employment signed a memorandum of understanding on April 15 with food delivery platform Swiggy to integrate gig and logistics employment opportunities with the National Career Service (NCS) portal.

The partnership aims to create over 12 lakh job opportunities in the next two to three years.

Swiggy will list its delivery, logistics and support roles on the NCS portal, helping more workers access employment opportunities.

Mandaviya emphasised on the government’s focus on ensuring the effective implementation of various labour laws and the Mines Safety Act as part of its broader commitment to workers’ welfare.

The minister concluded by saying the EPFO – one of the largest social security organisations in the world – remains committed to simplifying processes for members and improving the ease of doing business for employers.

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Government is making every effort, including deploying automatic pumps and personnel at vulnerable spots, to ensure that the national capital remains free from waterlogging during monsoon, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Friday.

Accompanied by Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Verma, the chief minister inspected the waterlogging-prone Minto Bridge underpass to take stock of the preparations for monsoon.

“Automatic pumps have been deployed here that will flush out water during heavy rain and a 2.5-kilometre-long pipeline has been laid to carry the accumulated water out. Operators will also be on round-the-clock duty” Gupta said.

Vulnerable spots have been identified and corrective measures are being taken. The Delhi Government will take every step in a time-bound manner to ensure there is no waterlogging this year, she told reporters.

“Last year, 194 waterlogging locations were identified across the city by traffic police. Most of these are on PWD roads. At these points, we are taking several measures such as desilting of drains, installation of more pumps, and deploying pump operators where required,” Verma said.

Gupta also inspected monsoon preparedness at other major waterlogging points, including Ring Road near the WHO building – among the top 10 waterlogging hotspots for the past several years.

After completing the inspection, the chief minister held a meeting with several departments, including power and PWD, during which projects involving traffic congestion and dark spots on roads were discussed.

The Delhi Police has identified 233 traffic points where jams occur regularly. Most of the points are under the PWD and action has been initiated to improve them, according to a statement issued by the Government.

The Chief Minister held a meeting with all departments concerned, including the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), on waterlogging, traffic jams and dark spots and directed all to complete the work as per set timelines,” Verma said.

Punjab-Based Agent Arrested At IGI Airport For Facilitating Illegal US Entry Through ‘Dunki Route’

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police has arrested a 36-year-old Punjab-based agent allegedly involved in forging travel documents and facilitating illegal entry into the United States through the ‘Dunki route’, an official said on Friday.

The accused, identified as Naresh Kumar, a resident of Matoulli village in Patiala, Punjab, was apprehended following the deportation of an Indian passenger from the US, he said.

Kumar had allegedly worked with other agents to arrange a fake Schengen visa and later tampered with the passenger’s passport to conceal the forgery.

The case came to light on the intervening night of April 4 and 5 when a deportee, Gursahib Singh (39), arrived at IGI Airport from the US.

During scrutiny of his travel documents, immigration officials noticed glue marks on one of the pages of his passport, indicating signs of tampering.

Singh, a resident of Tarn Taran district in Punjab, was subsequently booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Passport Act at IGI Airport police station, a senior police officer said. He was arrested and interrogated, during which he revealed the details of the operation.

Police said Singh disclosed that after returning to India from Singapore in 2024, he came in contact with an agent named Gurdev Singh alias ‘Gurri’, who promised to help him enter the US illegally in exchange for Rs 20 lakh. Singh paid Rs 17 lakh in cash and transferred the remaining Rs 3 lakh to a bank account later found to belong to Naresh Kumar.

As per the plan, Singh was routed through multiple countries including the UK, Spain, Guatemala, Mexico, and finally Tijuana, from where he crossed into the US illegally via the ‘Dunki route’. Before entering the US, an associate of the agents procured a forged Schengen visa and affixed it to Singh’s passport, which was later tampered with to hide the fake visa.

However, Singh was detained by US authorities and deported to India after a three-month stay in custody. His arrival triggered the investigation that led to Kumar’s arrest.

“During sustained interrogation, Naresh Kumar confessed to his role in the forgery and revealed that he and his brother had been operating as travel agents for several years,” the officer said.

“He admitted to working with Gurdev Singh on a commission basis and confirmed receiving Rs 3 lakh from the passenger,” he added.

Efforts are underway to trace Gurdev Singh, who remains absconding.

Investigators are also examining Kumar’s bank accounts and his possible links to similar cases, he said.

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has arrested the main promoter of a Noida-based real estate company under the anti-money laundering law in a case linked to the alleged diversion of home buyers’ funds worth Rs 107 crore.

Anil Mithas of the Unnati Group was taken into custody on April 16. A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Uttar Pradesh’s Ghaziabad sent him to the ED’s custody till April 24, the federal probe agency said in a statement.

The money-laundering case stems from FIRs filed by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Uttar Pradesh government against Unnati Fortune Holdings Limited (UFHL) and its promoters for “cheating and fraud” of Rs 107 crore. The ED said its probe has found that an amount of Rs 522.9 crore was collected between 2012 and 2019 from home buyers by Unnati Fortune Holdings Limited and IVRCL Infrastructure and Projects Limited for a residential project named ARANYA located in Sector 119 in Uttar Pradesh’s Noida. Instead of using the entire money for construction, the promoters used “some part” for the said purpose and “siphoned off” the rest by way of “fake loans and advances, share premium, advance payment for material, deposits etc.” to various companies.

The Noida project got stuck due to a lack of money, the ED said. An audit report of the company, prepared on the directions of the Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (UPRERA), showed “diversion” of Rs 107 crore worth funds, the agency said.

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Former CJ I Opts Out Of Dulat’s Book Launch Function Amid Abdullah Controversy

NEW DELHI: Former Chief Justice of India T S Thakur has decided to skip former R&AW chief A S Dulat’s book release function, citing the political storm over certain parts of the book concerning National Conference president Farooq Abdullah.

The book, “The Chief Minister and The Spy” was scheduled to be released later Friday by Justice (Retd) Thakur.

This comes a day after Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said in Jammu that his father and veteran politician Farooq Abdullah will not be attending the book release function.

Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday dismissed Dulat’s claims that he had “privately backed” the abrogation of Article 370 as a “cheap stunt” to boost the sales of the top spy’s forthcoming memoir.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre abrogated Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, on August 5, 2019, and bifurcated the erstwhile state into Union territories.

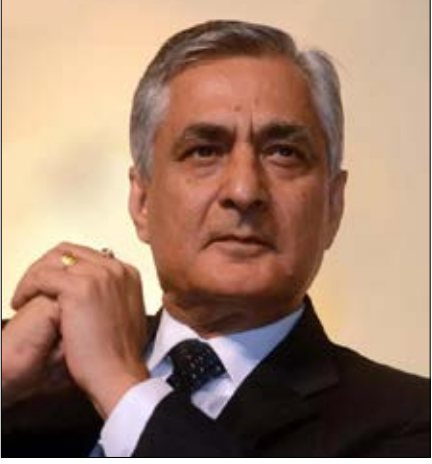
In his response to Dulat’s invitation, Justice (Retd) Thakur said, “While I had accepted your kind invitation to participate in the release function, I have since yesterday (Wednesday) seen a political storm brewing in the print and electronic media for certain parts of your book especially those attributing certain statements to (Farooq) Abdullah whom you admire and treat as a valued friend.”

The ex-CJI said Farooq Abdullah has also publicly “disowned, if not denounced” the statements attributed to him.

“In the circumstances, you would kindly appreciate that the raging controversy and its political overtones would be an embarrassment for me which I would like to avoid not only on account of my long and cordial association with the Abdullah family but also because as a totally apolitical person I would not like to be seen promoting or endorsing a book which is being disowned by the very person about whom the same has been written,” Justice Thakur (retd) said.

The former chief justice said besides, Farooq Abdullah, who was supposed to be sharing the dais with journalist Vir Sanghvi for a discussion on the book, may also not be doing so.

“I am acutely conscious of the fact that my recusal on the eve of the launch would inconvenience and force you to look for a substitute but given the situation in which I am placed, you will forgive me for the discomfort that it may cause to you or the publisher of the book,” he said.



Editorial

Putting Farmers First

At the 15th meeting of BRICS Agriculture Ministers, India sent a clear and powerful message to the world: agriculture must be inclusive, equitable, and sustainable — and small and marginal farmers must be placed at the heart of global agricultural policy. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, representing India at the forum, not only reaffirmed India's commitment to its farmers but also laid out a robust blueprint for sustainable agriculture that balances food security, climate action, and rural empowerment.

In a world plagued by climate volatility, inflationary shocks, and mounting food insecurity, it is easy to overlook the plight of the smallholder farmer. What stands out in India's approach is its blend of tradition with technology. Initiatives like AgriStack, Climate-Resilient Villages, and the Drone Didi and Lakhpati Didi programs show how digital tools can drive transparency, service delivery, and female empowerment in agriculture. Equally important is India's emphasis on cluster-based farming, cooperative models, and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), which foster collective bargaining power and improved market access for small farmers.

The launch of the BRICS Land Restoration Partnership marks a new chapter in global agri-diplomacy. India's support for this initiative, combined with its own flagship programs like NMSA and NICRA, underlines a growing convergence of ecological stewardship and food policy. By focusing on restoring soil fertility and fighting desertification, BRICS nations are finally acknowledging that sustainable agriculture begins with healthy land and empowered communities. The Joint Declaration issued by BRICS reflects a broader, more humane vision of food systems—one that includes digital certification, fair trade, gender equity, and financial inclusion. But declarations must not remain on paper. The true test lies in coordinated action, funding for smallholder innovations, and a genuine shift away from extractive agri-models that have widened global inequalities.

India's invitation to BRICS nations to participate in World Food India 2025 is more than symbolic — it is a call to innovate, collaborate, and build bridges between nations and farmers. As India roots its global vision in its ancient ethos of Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah — may all be happy, may all be healthy — it reminds the world that sustainability must be seeded in equity, and progress must be harvested with compassion.

India has shown the way. Now, the world must walk with its farmers.

Fazal Shafi Bhat's Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal: A Literary Gem of Our Times

BY MOHAMMAD ARFAT WANI

Book Information

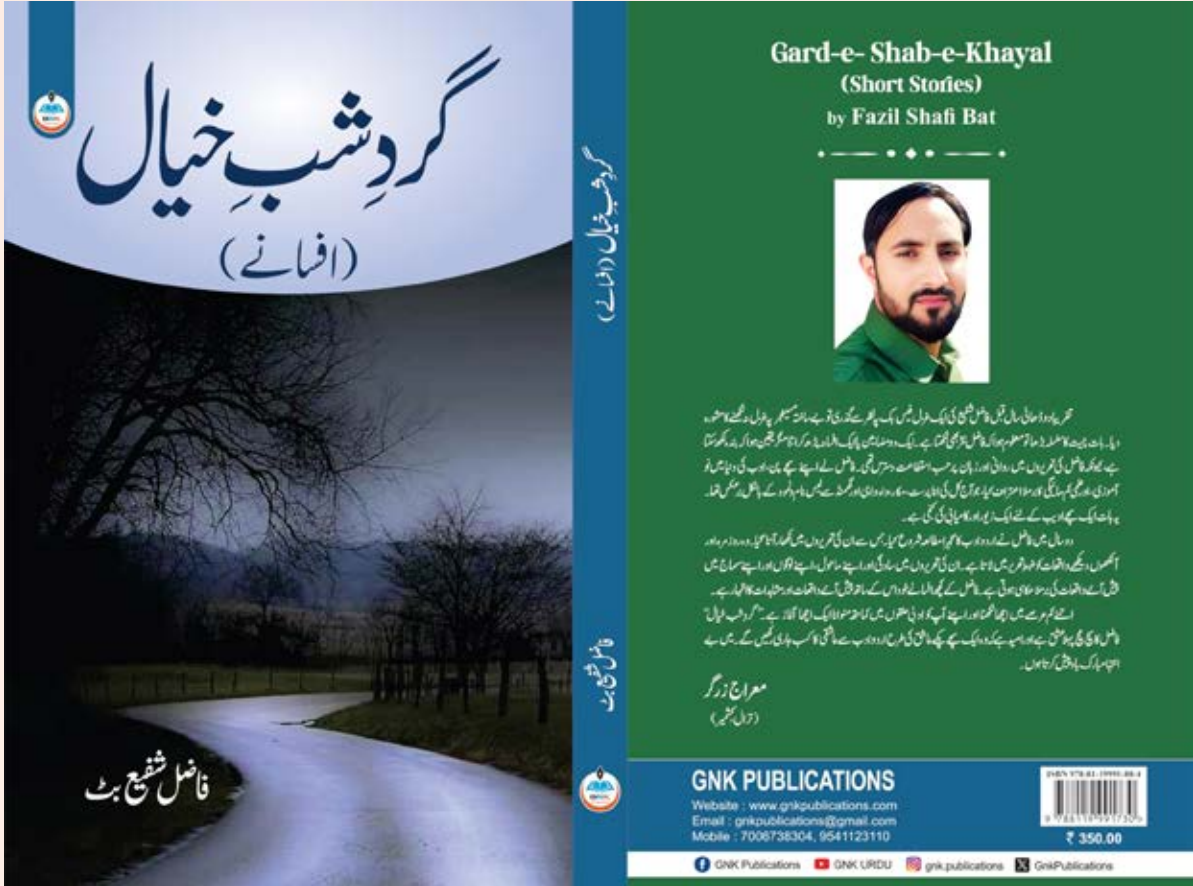
Title: Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal
Author: Fazal Shafi Bhat
Pages: 158
Price: 350 (Discounted: 300)
Publisher: GNK Publications
Contact: 7006738304

In the evolving landscape of Urdu fiction, Fazal Shafi Bhat has emerged as a towering figure whose pen sketches both the beauty and the brutality of

ing from spiritual introspection to contemporary social crises.

A Monumental Contribution to Urdu Fiction
Fazal Shafi Bhat's stories are not just narratives; they are reflections of life. His ability to merge literary elegance with piercing social commentary places him in the league of visionary Urdu storytellers. With simple yet potent language, Bhat invites readers to step into richly imagined worlds that evoke both emotion and introspection.

A Mirror to Society and the Soul



life with remarkable sensitivity. His latest offering, Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal, a short story collection, is a literary milestone that resonates with emotional depth, societal reflection, and artistic brilliance.

Recently published by GNK Publications (Price: 350 | Discounted Price: 300), this 158-page anthology is a treasure trove of 25 short stories that capture the essence of human experiences—rang-

What distinguishes Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal is its intellectual and philosophical weight. Each story acts as a mirror, reflecting not just societal issues but the internal dilemmas that define the human condition. Bhat's keen observations and deep understanding of human psychology infuse his characters with authenticity and relatability.

This is not just a collection—it's a commentary on our times. Whether it's spiritual decay, moral confusion, or emotional neglect, Fazal Shafi Bhat addresses them all with subtlety and skill.

Exploring the Book's Literary Strengths

1. Thematic Diversity
From Zabeeha, a meditation on true sacrifice, to Kaalikokh ka Dukh, a heartbreaking tale about illegitimate children, the collection spans themes that are as relevant as they are poignant. Bhat ad-

3. Rich Characterization

The characters are drawn from real life—ordinary people facing extraordinary challenges. They are relatable, flawed, and deeply human, making each narrative resonate with the reader's own experiences or those around them.

Highlighted Stories and Their Essence

- Trailer: A story exploring the spiritual symbolism of a beard, now reduced to fashion.
 - Kufran-e-Nemat: A beautiful ode to daughters and their divine worth.
 - Shab Khoon: Inheritance disputes portrayed through Islamic ethical lenses.
 - Reengtajahannum: A cautionary tale about misplaced trust and shattered lives.
 - Bazaar-e-Ganan Marg: A stark reminder that hopelessness equates to disbelief.
 - Tilsmi Kangri: A poetic celebration of honesty, simplicity, and sacrifice.
 - NakaradaGunah: A striking take on the misuse of social media and its ripple effects.
- Each of the 25 stories brings forth a unique moral, insight, or reflection, contributing to a collection that educates as much as it entertains.

Fazal Shafi Bhat: The Voice of Conscience

More than just a storyteller, Fazal Shafi Bhat is a chronicler of our times. His work holds up a mirror to society, reminding us of forgotten values, uncomfortable truths, and the redemptive power of honesty and compassion. His keen eye for detail, understanding of emotional nuance, and unwavering literary discipline make him a writer of enduring significance.

Gird-e-Shab-e-Khayal is not merely a book—it's a timeless contribution to Urdu literature. It's the kind of work that deserves to be read, discussed, and preserved. Whether you are a student of literature, a passionate reader, or someone seeking stories that matter, this collection is a must-read.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Fazal Shafi Bhat for gifting the literary world such a profound piece of work. May his pen continue to illuminate minds and inspire hearts.

Author is Literary Writer & Columnist | Kuchmulla Tral, Pulwama, Kashmir . He can be reached at wania6817@gmail.com

Observing Fire Services Week Amidst Frequent Fires



BY RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

As India observes Fire Services Week from April 14 to 20—commemorating the sacrifice of 66 brave personnel who lost their lives in the Victoria Dock explosion of 1944 in Mumbai—it is a moment of both tribute

urgent and troubling picture—especially in regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where forest fires have become a seasonal nightmare and urban fires frequently displace families overnight.

A Force Beyond Firefighting

Beyond fire extinguishing, the Fire and Emergency Services department plays a vital role in disaster response. During the 2014 Kashmir floods, the coordination between disaster forces, the military, and fire personnel helped mitigate an otherwise worse catastrophe. On national occasions like Republic Day and Independence Day, the department's personnel demonstrate their

snowfall have compounded the fire risk. The barren mountains and water scarcity have created alarming conditions for both extinguishing fires and maintaining the ecological balance. Forests across Pir Panjal, North, and South Kashmir have been ravaged by flames—posing not only a loss to biodiversity but also endangering the very lungs of our environment.

What's even more concerning is that ill-equipped forest officials and untrained local volunteers are often the only line of defense against raging wildfires. The absence of proper tools, coordination, and training has shown that awareness alone is not enough. A comprehensive, well-funded, and technologically driven strategy

regulations, and quick-response units.

The Way Forward

While observing Fire Services Week, let us go beyond ceremonial events. It is time for:

Modernization of equipment and training fire personnel for forest-specific emergencies.

Integrated disaster response plans that involve local communities, forest departments, and fire services.

Stricter legislation to restrict unregulated human activity in forests.

Widespread public education, especially in rural and forest-adjacent areas, about preventing accidental fires.



and reflection. The week serves not only as a solemn reminder of the risks faced by fire fighters but also as a call to action for citizens and authorities to unite in creating a safer, fire-resilient India.

This year's theme, "Unite to Ignite a Fire Safe India," emphasizes the collective responsibility of individuals, institutions, and communities in fire prevention. Activities such as public lectures, fire safety documentaries, poster campaigns, essay competitions, painting contests, and health checkups for personnel and the public reflect the department's robust efforts toward awareness and preparedness.

Yet, while these initiatives are commendable, the real-life challenges on the ground paint a more

crisis management skills through daring stunts and drills, showcasing preparedness, discipline, and resolve.

In schools, hospitals, and other public spaces, regular awareness drives—especially for women often engaged in household cooking—serve to educate citizens on handling fire-related emergencies. These grassroots campaigns are crucial, yet they need to be backed by policy and investment.

Climate Conditions Worsen the Crisis

This year, a long dry spell and meager

must be adopted, involving fire services personnel who are specially trained in tackling forest fires.

Fires That Leave Families Homeless

Meanwhile, in residential and commercial zones, devastating fire incidents continue to raze homes and livelihoods within hours. Recent cases in Kishtwar, Kadipora Anantnag, Baramulla, Sonamarg, and Bandipora underline the urgent need to modernize fire response infrastructure. Millions worth of property have been lost—losses that could be prevented through advanced alarm systems, fireproof building materials, stricter

Use of technology, including drones, satellite surveillance, and thermal sensors to detect and combat fires early.

At a time when fire-related tragedies are increasingly affecting our forests and homes, community participation, policy intervention, and departmental strengthening must work in tandem. As responsible citizens, we must acknowledge that safeguarding natural resources is a shared civic duty, not just the responsibility of a few uniformed heroes.

Let Fire Services Week not be limited to rituals, but become a rallying cry for a fire-safe and environmentally secure India.

This year, a long dry spell and meager snowfall have compounded the fire risk. The barren mountains and water scarcity have created alarming conditions for both extinguishing fires and maintaining the ecological balance. Forests across Pir Panjal, North, and South Kashmir have been ravaged by flames—posing not only a loss to biodiversity but also endangering the very lungs of our environment.

Rs 212 Cr Spent Under JJM in Nowshera; Dy CM Calls for Expedited Completion

JAMMU, APRIL 18: Aiming smooth water supply in Nowshera Constituency in ensuing summer season, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, who is also the local MLA, today reviewed functioning of Jal Shakti department besides assessing progress on works being executed under JJM, NABARD and UT Capex during a meeting held here in this regard.

The Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti, apprised that there are total 70 schemes functioning in the constituency including 51 under Jal Jeevan Mission, 18 under Languishing/UT Capex and one under NABARD to overcome the water crisis in Nowshera.

It was also informed in the meeting, that out of 18 schemes under UT capex, 11 have been completed while 7 are under process. Similarly, 75 percent of the work has been completed on the only scheme under NABARD.

Regarding the financial status of 51 schemes under JJM, the concerned official apprised that out of Rs 358.59 crore estimated cost an expenditure

of Rs. 212.77 crore has been achieved on procurement of material and development of infrastructure. He said within the stipulated timeframe.

Choudhary emphasized that the only priority should be maintaining regular supply of water in view of ensuing summer season. He asked all the departments including Jal Shakti, Irrigation and Flood Control, JPDC, Ground Water to work in synergy providing maximum relief to the people.

The Deputy Chief Minister asked to expedite pace of progress on various developmental initiatives, focusing on timely commissioning of schemes. He also stressed upon them to ensure that public service deliverance mechanism shall be speeded up so that the people

do not face any inconvenience.

He said that measures are underway to further improve and upgrade the existing infrastructure of PHE and PDD departments.

Later, the Deputy Chief Minister chaired a meeting to review the legal cases of Industries and Commerce, Geology and Mining, Public Welfare Works and Labour and Employment departments pending in the High Court and CAT.

The Senior Law Officer apprised the Dy CM that a total of 1083 cases of L&C are pending, of which, objections have been filed in 58 cases. It was also informed that there are around 2200 cases of PWD pending in the Court which are mainly pertaining to land acquisition, services matter and contractual liabilities among others.

The Dy CM asked the law officers to focus on disposal of cases in favour of their respective departments. He exhorted that all the cases should be dealt with sincerity to enhance the disposal rate.

engaged in sweeping operations and clearing the refuse to restore cleanliness.

Appreciating the relentless dedication of field staff and sanitation workers, the Commissioner

CS Atal Dulloo Reviews Strategic Roadmap to Boost Tourism Across Jammu

JAMMU: Department of Tourism today presented a strategic and action oriented roadmap to the Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, regarding promotion of tourism across the region, during an exclusive meeting held here in this regard.

Dulloo impressed on the department to redouble efforts towards vigorous promotion and publicity of the tourism circuits. He enjoined upon them to be proactive across all the social media platforms, using the services of influencers there to reach out to the masses.

He asked for starting rafting and paragliding at some of the places across the region, taking utmost care of the safety parameters. He also asked for roping in the professionals in this tourism trade activity to train the youth.

The Chief Secretary asked the department to frame the Homestay policy as soon as possible with other guidelines for registration of BnB Enterprises. He also directed for devising the loan product for development of Home-stays in the region as per the past directions.

On the occasion, Commissioner Secretary, Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, gave a presentation detailing the multifaceted approach focused on thematic circuits, adventure tourism, heritage experiences, infrastructural upgrades and promotion of offbeat destinations, aimed at making Jammu a year-round diversified

tourist destination.

The identified major tourist circuits that were unveiled during the meeting included the Katra-Shivkhori Circuit, emphasizing on pilgrimage, adventure and border and Gurudwara Nangali Sahib.

Similarly, Pir Panjal Circuit encompassing Rajouri and Poonch, this circuit offers fort tourism, cultural immersion and alpine treks, promoting sites like Peer Ki Gali and Budha Amarnath Ji.

Moreover, a bundle of adventure and offbeat trails to several alpine lakes like Chandann Sar, Nandan Sar, Katoria Sar were proposed. Besides, trekking routes and unexplored valleys were mapped with plans for eco-tourism and sustainable adventure tourism in collaboration with mountaineering institutes.

Additionally, a Rs 4 crore project was proposed under CAPEX 2025-26 to develop a full-fledged paragliding facility, complete with lounges, cafes, sunset points and public utilities at Aithem.

With respect to the iconic Chenab Railway Bridge, it was given out that a Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and branding initiatives are underway at the world's highest railway bridge site, with audio-visual content to engage the visitors and enhance their experience on visiting this engineering marvel.

tourism. This circuit integrates spiritual hotspots like Shri Mata Vaishno Devi, Shivkhori and heritage sites such as Krimchi Temples and Raghunath Temple, Ranbireswar besides nature trails of Mantalai and Patnitop and border tourism (Suchetgarh). Chenab Valley Circuit covering Bhaderwah, Kishtwar and Doda and white water rafting at Shibnot, trekking trails and valley tourism (LalDraman, Warwan).

This route blends adventure, natural beauty and cultural richness with activities like rafting at Baradari and scenic treks through Warwan Valley. The itineraries tap into Bhaderwah, a region with growing tourist footfall and the newly accessible Tatapani, now linked via Sanagdan Railway Station.

Samba-Kathua Circuit focused on religious, heritage and water-based tourism, highlighting Basohli, Ranjit Sagar Lake and Sarthal besides the pilgrim sites of Budha Amarnath



MLA reviews developmental scenario of Kupwara town



KUPWARA: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Kupwara, Mir Mohammad Fayaz today chaired a meeting of concerned officers and stakeholders here at D.C Office Kupwara to review the developmental scenario of Kupwara town.

Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan was also present in the meeting.

On the occasion, MLA emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts to improve public infrastructure, sanitation, road connectivity, and overall urban services in the town. He reviewed the status of key projects including road macadamization, drainage improvement, solid waste management, street lighting, and ongoing works under the District Capex Budget.

Stressing on the need for accountability and transparency, MLA directed concerned departments to strictly adhere to timelines and maintain quality standards in all works. He also called for expediting the completion of pending projects and initiating new development works in response to public demands. During the meeting, Mir Fayaz took note of several public grievances related to basic amenities and directed officials to ensure swift redressal. He assured that the government remains committed to the holistic development of Kupwara town and urged officials to work with dedication and a people-first approach.

Deputy Commissioner also spoke and emphasized the importance of coordination among various departments for achieving better results on the ground. The meeting was attended by CPO Kupwara, Executive Officer MC Kupwara, officers from R&B and representatives from traders and other associations.

Inter-School Chess, Carrom & Yoga competitions continue across Baramulla

BARAMULLA: Department of Youth Services and Sports, Baramulla, is continuously organizing inter-school chess and carrom competitions across various educational zones of the district.

As part of the series, Zone Baramulla today kick-started the Inter-School Chess Competition for Under-14 boys at Boys Higher Secondary School Baramulla. A total of 50 students from different schools of the zone took part in the event. The winners were awarded with certificates in recognition of their talent and performance.

Similarly, Zone Fatehgarh conducted an Inter-School Chess Competition for Under-14 boys, witnessing the participation of 60 students from various schools. The event aimed to promote strategic thinking and concentration among young learners.

Zone Dangiwaicha successfully held Inter-School Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls. A total of 12 girls in the Under-14 category and 7 girls in the Under-17 category showcased their skills on the chessboard.

Zone Chandoosa also organized Inter-School Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 boys and girls. Around 45 students participated in the competitions, highlighting the enthusiasm of students for indoor mind sports.

On the second day of competitions, Zone Singpora Kalan hosted Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls at High School Singpora Kalan, providing a platform for young girls to explore and sharpen their intellectual abilities.

Zone Uri marked its second day with the successful organization of Inter-School Chess and Carrom Competitions for Under-14 girls at Boys Higher Secondary School Uri. The event witnessed active participation and encouraged sportsmanship among the young girls of the region.

Meanwhile, Zone Wagora successfully concluded its Inter-School Chess Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 boys and girls at High School Watergam. Winners were felicitated with certificates as a token of appreciation and encouragement.

Zone Sopore also joined in by organizing Inter-School Yoga Competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls on its second day. The event was held at Subhana Stadium Sopore with the participation of 60 girls.

Medals were awarded to the top three position holders in each category, acknowledging their excellence and discipline in the art of yoga.

JMC workers working tirelessly to keep city clean: JMC Commissioner

JAMMU: Reiterating the commitment of the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) to maintain a neat and clean city, Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav stated that officers, officials from various departments, and sanitation workers are working tirelessly to uphold this mission.

In accordance with the Commissioner's directions, two teams—comprising the concerned Deputy Commissioners, Sanjay Badyal and Lal Chand, Chief Transport Officers (CTOs), Dharamveer Singh and Talat Ahmad, Transport Officers (TOs), and enforcement staff were constituted to assess the on-ground situation in the aftermath of the recent heavy rain and storm. These teams conducted inspections across various areas in the South and North Zones, including Gandhi Nagar.

The diligent efforts of the CTO section, almost all major roads have been cleared of fallen trees and obstructions. However, some scattered garbage and tree branches remain in a few areas. Men and machinery are already on the job to ensure their swift removal. Additionally, manual sweeping and lifting of small refuse heaps lying along footpaths is required. Sanitation workers have been actively

commented their round-the-clock efforts to restore normalcy. He also urged the citizens of Jammu to extend their cooperation to JMC teams and promptly report any unattended areas for timely action.

The Jammu Municipal Corporation remains steadfast in its commitment to public safety, cleanliness, and the overall well-being of the city's residents.



Orientation programme for Yuva DOOTs held at Kulgam

KULGAM: For the training cum capacity building of Yuva DOOTs under Mission YUVA, a day-long training-cum-orientation program was held today for Yuva DOOTs in Conference Hall, Mini-secretariat Kulgam.

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kulgam, M Altaf Khan presided over the event as chief guest and highlighted the significance of empowering youth at the grassroots level to drive entrepreneurship and self-employment.

The training aimed to equip Yuva DOOTs with the necessary skills and knowledge to connect with and support potential entrepreneurs in their respective panchayats.

They were trained extensively on their roles as grassroots motivators, responsible for spreading awareness about various self-employment schemes and facilitating youth engagement at the village/ward level.

The training session emphasized the importance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for monitoring the effectiveness of the initiative, ensuring that the Yuva DOOTs remain result-oriented in their approach.

At the outset, detailed insights from the Baseline survey, conducted earlier to identify

youth with entrepreneurial potential were presented by CCO, DE&CC Kulgam enabling the Yuva DOOTs to understand the scope and focus areas of their intervention. The training covered all relevant parameters including mobilization techniques, scheme benefits, documentation and reporting formats.

Kulgam encouraged the Yuva DOOTs to act as catalysts of change and assured them of full administrative support in overcoming challenges, if any in the field. He underlined the importance of youth-led development and community participation in building a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district. The interactive sessions held during

Training program for YUVA DOOTs held at Anantnag

ANANTNAG: A day-long training-cum-orientation program under Mission YUVA was today held for YUVA DOOTs at Dak Bunglow Khanabal, Anantnag.

The training aimed at enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of YUVA DOOTs in promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment at the grassroots level.

The event was presided over by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Sandeep Singh Bali.

In his address, Bali emphasized the importance of youth empowerment and their role in driving sustainable development through entrepreneurship.

He motivated the DOOTs to become catalysts of change, and assured them of comprehensive administrative support in tackling any field-level challenges and stressed the importance of community engagement in fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Assistant Director (AD) Employment Anantnag encouraged the YUVA DOOTs to work with zeal and dedication in achieving their outreach and support targets under the mission.

Resource persons from various departments including the Nodal Officer, JKEDI, Lead District Manager (LDM) Anantnag, Employment Officer DE&CC Anantnag, and Career Counselling Officer DE&CC Anantnag, delivered sector-specific presentations.

They also demonstrated the features and usage of the Mission YUVA app/portal, equipping the participants with practical know-how.

The interactive sessions facilitated meaningful dialogue, enabling participants to seek clarifications and share insights.



DC inaugurates Medical Screening Camp at Dak Banglow Poonch

POONCH: The District Administration Poonch, in collaboration with Ankur Maitrika Multi-speciality Hospital Jammu, today organized a two day free medical camp here at Dak Banglow, aimed at providing specialised treatment to local patients.

The camp was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal, alongside ADC Tahir Mustafa Malik, ACR Mohd Sayeed and CMO Dr. Parvaiz Ahmed Khan.

A significant turnout of residents participated in the camp, benefiting from free medicines, health check-ups, tests, and screenings. A team of

doctors and specialists from Maitrika Hospital comprising Dr. Ajay Walkhloo (Gynecologist), Dr. Deepak Pathania (Nephrologist), Dr. Satveer Singh (Orthopedic), Dr. Mehrooz Mirza (Cardiologist), Dr. Anchal Kotwool (Urologist), Dr. Shurya (Pediatrician) and Dr. Varon Pal Singh (Physician) attended the patients.

In his address, the DC emphasized the district administration's commitment to provide best medical practitioners for consultation and treatment of people, particularly for those unable to reach tertiary care and super-specialty hospitals. He highlighted the importance of making government health schemes accessible to the most remote communities. The free medical camp was part of ongoing efforts by the District Administration to enhance healthcare accessibility in Poonch and improve the well-being of its residents.



Div Com Jammu reviews restoration of public amenities disrupted by windstorm

JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar today convened a meeting to assess the damages caused due to Wind Storm and reviewed the status of restoration works.

The meeting attended by Managing Director JPDC, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Deputy Commissioners from Jammu Division, Chief Engineers of PDD, Jal Shakti, XENS and concerned officials apprised the sectors wise affect of Wind Storm and the damages to their infrastructure.

The Divisional Commissioner took stock of the district-wise damages suffered to power, Jal Shakti and Roads infrastructure, while seeking details from the respective Deputy Commissioners.

MD JPDC, and Commissioner JMC, also apprised the Divisional Commissioner on the damages caused to Power infrastructure and public amenities infrastructure due to the wind storm and the restoration works thereof. The Divisional Commissioner was also

apprised about the works completed to restore the power infrastructure, water supply schemes and clearing of roads across the division.

It was informed that maximum restoration works, in terms of power and water supply, have been done and remaining will be completed by today evening and tomorrow.

Chief Engineer PWD apprised that roads have been cleared of fallen trees and landslides triggered by the storm.

The Div Com directed the concerned officials to restore the power infrastructure for 100% supply to domestic areas by today evening and for agricultural lands by tomorrow.

He called for war footing efforts by the ground staff of the power department.

The Divisional Commissioner further directed the Deputy Commissioners to closely monitor the restoration works and submit a comprehensive report of the damages and restoration by 7 pm today.

The Divisional Commissioner asked the concerned officials to expedite the repair of damages to public infrastructure and also assess the loss to public property and livestock to provide relief to affected persons from SDRF.

The Divisional Commissioner also asked for cleaning and desilting of drainage networks in Jammu City.



The Essence of Islam: Harmonizing Devotion with Universal Welfare



SHABEER AHMAD LONE

"Verily," says the Koran, " those who believe (the Moslems) and those who are Jews, Christians or Sabaeans ,whoever has faith in God and the last day(future existence) and worketh that which is right and good,- for them shall be the reward with their Lord ; there will come no fear on them ; neither shall they will be grieved." Sura v,69.

The same sentiment is repeated in the fifth sura ; and a hundred other passages prove that Islam does not confine sal- vation to the followers of Mohammad (pbuh) alone: "To every one have we given a law and a way...And if Allah had pleased , He would have made you(all mankind) people of one religion.

This dissonance calls for an urgent reexamination of Islamic teachings, where the core ethos of "all-sided welfare of all" is revived. By exploring Qur'anic injunctions, Hadith guidance, jurisprudential wisdom, historical precedents, and cross-cultural parallels, this study seeks to illuminate Islam's profound call for compassion and justice, offering rare and transformative insights that challenge prevailing paradigms and inspire a realignment with its true spirit.

The Qur'an profoundly articulates the essence of Islam as a harmonious integration of faith, justice, and universal welfare. True righteousness, as outlined in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177), transcends ritualism, emphasizing belief in Allah and acts of compassion toward the needy, orphans, and society's vulnerable. This verse encapsulates the comprehensive nature of Islamic ethics, where belief in Allah is intricately tied to acts of char- ity and justice. Islam demands justice without bias (4:135) and stresses equality, as reflected in the principle of universal brotherhood (49:13). Wealth is not to be hoarded but shared for societal upliftment (9:34-35; 59:7), with charity likened to seeds that multiply manifold (2:261). The Qur'an inspires balance between worldly and spiritual pursuits (28:77) while

ently tied to the welfare of humanity, advocating for compassion, justice, and love in both personal and collective contexts.Ibn Khaldun's thought demonstrates that Islam's true essence lies in the integration of individual devotion with social welfare, where ethical governance, justice, and resource management create a harmonious, flourishing society. His insights provide a timeless framework for aligning spiritual commitment with the collective good, ensuring sustainable progress and justice for all. Nasr's "The Heart of Islam" emphasizes that devotion to God in Islam is intrinsically linked to social responsibility, justice, and compassion, offering practical guidance for the welfare of humanity. Similarly, Sayyid Qutb's "Fi Zilal al-Qur'an" asserts that Islam provides a dual framework of personal devotion and societal justice, applying Qur'anic teachings to foster global welfare.

Despite these clear directives, a concerning trend of ritu- alism has emerged in many Muslim communities. Repetitive non-obligatory pilgrimages, such as multiple Umrabs within short intervals, are often undertaken while pressing societal needs remain unmet. Reports suggest that billions of dollars are spent annually on such pilgrimages, yet many neighbors, relatives, and fellow citizens languish in poverty, unable to afford

Empires offered free healthcare to all, regardless of religion or status, exemplifying Islam's inclusive approach to welfare. These historical precedents demonstrate that Islam's teachings, when applied holistically, can lead to societies that thrive on principles of equity, compassion, and justice.

The universality of Islam's message resonates across cultures and traditions. For example, Buddhist teachings on compassion and Christian principles of "faith without works is dead" (James 2:17) align with Islam's emphasis on integrating belief with ac- tion. These parallels highlight the shared human aspiration for justice and care, reinforcing the need for Muslims to embody these values in their practices. The Qur'anic call to reflection-"Do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon their hearts?" (47:24)-serves as a timeless reminder to revisit and realign priorities, ensuring that worship is not reduced to mere formality but is infused with purpose and impact.

To truly embody the essence of Islam, Muslims must reorient their focus from excessive ritualism to meaningful action. Acts



"Who give alms, alike in prosperity and in success, and who master their anger, forgive others! God love the doers of good" sura iii.128."But those who misbehave, their works are like the mirage in a plain, - the thirsty count it water, till when he comes to it he finds nothing, but he finds that Allah is with him, and He will pay his account, for Allah is quick to take account."sura-xiii 11.

The Islam of Muhammad (pbuh) is a life to be to live in the present "- a religion of right doing, right thinking, and right- speaking, founded on the divine love ,universal charity ,and the equality of man in the sight of Allah, the religion which enshrines righteousness and justification by work deserves the true recognition of the lovers of humanity." -Mr. Cotter Morrison ,in his "Service of Man"

Islam from Salam (salama), in its primary sense, means to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, to be at perfect peace; striving after righteousness; in its second- ary sense, to surrender to Him with whom peace is made. The noun derived from it means peace , greeting, safety, salvation. The essence of the ethical principles involved and embodied in Islam is summarised in the second chapter of the Koran: "There is no doubt in this book- a guidance to the pious ,who believe in the Unseen, who observe the prayers, and distribute (charity) out of what we have bestowed on them; and who believe in that which we have commissioned thee with, in that we commis- sioned others with before thee, and who have assurance in the life to come; -these have received the direction of their Lord."

The bases on which the Islamic system is founded are: a belief in the unity, immateriality, power, mercy and supreme love of the creator; 2) charity and brotherhood among mankind; 3) subjugation of the passions; 4) the outpouring of a grateful heart to the Giver of all good; 5) accountability for human actions in another existence. Appeal is made to the inner consciousness of humanity. The divine love and mercy of Allah enfolds creation. There are five most fundamental qualities for being truly religious without which one can claim to be religious but hardly qualify to be one, These are 1) Constant quest for truth; 2) to be humble 3) to be compassionate 4) to be transcendent invision 5) to be against myopic and imperfect establishment. The Author of the Kashshaf thus sums up the essence of the Islamic teaching : "Seek again him who drives you away; give to him who takes away from you; pardon him who injures you; for Allah loveth that you should cast into the depth of your soul the roots of His perfection." Zamakhshari (the kashaf).

Islam, as a universal and timeless faith, transcends the con- fines of ritualism to embrace a comprehensive vision of spiritual and societal well-being. Rooted in the divine revelation of the Qur'an and exemplified by the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it offers a holistic framework for individual transformation and collective welfare. The essence of Islam lies in its emphasis on justice, compassion, and balance, ensuring that acts of worship are deeply integrated with the service of humanity. However, contemporary practices often reflect an overemphasis on external rituals, such as repetitive pilgrimages and lavish mosque constructions, at the expense of addressing critical societal needs like poverty, education, and healthcare.

reminding humanity of their accountability for even the small- est deeds (99:7-8). It promotes forgiveness, compassion (3:134; 42:40), and reflection on divine wisdom (39:9; 47:24), urging believers to align devotion with active service for the collective good. These timeless teachings embody Islam's universal vision of justice, equity, and moral responsibility, uniting spiritual devotion with a commitment to the welfare of all. Similarly the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasize a profound balance between devotion to Allah and service to humanity, showcasing Islam's holistic approach to universal welfare. Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that the highest form of worship lies in serving humanity, stating, that "The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others" (Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat, Hadith 5787), and underscored the importance of caring for neighbors, declaring, "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbor goes hungry" (Musnad Ahmad, Hadith 14494). Com- passion and mercy were central to his message, as he affirmed, "Allah will not show mercy to him who is not merciful to others" (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith 6013). The Prophet encouraged acts of justice and charity, teaching that "The most beloved of deeds to Allah is to make a Muslim happy, to relieve him of hardship, to forgive his debt, or to feed his hunger" (Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabeer, Hadith 13646). He further emphasized the value of simplicity, warning against extravagance, and reminded that "Wealth does not decrease by giving in charity" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2588). Social service was regarded as a spiritual act, with the assurance that "Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs" (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith 2442), and fairness in dealings was paramount, as he advised, "Pay the worker his wages before his sweat dries" (Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith 2443). These timeless Hadiths highlight the Prophet's call for sincerity in faith, social equity, and the fulfillment of collective respon- sibilities, demonstrating Islam's enduring vision for individual and societal well-being.

The Prophet(pbuh) said: Ostentation is a sort of polytheism(shirk) and the reason as explained by al-Ghazali, is that when he said: if somebody worships for Ostentation is a worship of one's self not of Almighty Allah. In the charter of humanity uttered by prophet pbuh above the Jabal ar Rahman, he reminded; constant redistribution and circulation of the private wealth to intended beneficiaries as prescribed by the Quran (9:60) to avoid accumulation in the hands of few (hoarding) which called by jurists as zakat or fiscal duty or ibadat maliyah (worship of Allah by means of property). The Prophet pbuh used to spend the sadaqat on orphans, weaklings and poor: till they earn their livelihoods by themselves.

The essence of religion, particularly Islam, as envisioned by Mulla Sadra, Syed Nursi, Meister Eckhart, Schuon, alongside other key mystics who have emphasized the harmonization of devotion with universal welfare, from earliest to more recent times, include Rabia al-Adawiyya, Fudayl ibn Iyad, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, Rumi, Bahauddin Naqshband, Shah Waliullah al-Dihlawi, and Ibn Ata Allah al-Iskandari. These figures have significantly contributed to the understanding that spiritual devotion is inher-

basic necessities like food, education, or healthcare. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against such neglect, asserting, "He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbor goes hungry" (Musnad Ahmad). This profound hadith underscores that devotion to God is hollow if it is divorced from empathy and responsibility toward others.

A similar imbalance is evident in the construction of ex- travagant mosques, Consider the millions spent on extravagant house constructions, extravagant mosques, ostentatious life style, wasteful spending, disregard for responsible use of resources, non-obligatory pilgrimages versus the unmet needs of the poor, the uneducated, ailing patients, poor parents craving for their daughter marriage ,widows suffering ,people in debt and the homeless. millions spent on them could transform lives if re- directed. Balance, justice and compassion are fundamentals in Islam. While the architectural beauty of mosques is celebrated, their functionality often remains limited. Historically, mosques were centers of learning, charity, and social reform, serving as community hubs that addressed diverse needs. The Prophet's mosque in Madinah, simple yet profoundly purposeful, stands as a testament to this ethos. In contrast, many modern mosques prioritize aesthetics over utility, with millions spent on elaborate structures that do little to alleviate the struggles of the poor or the marginalized. The responsible use of resources in Islam is a holistic concept that integrates spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions. Rooted in divine guidance, it promotes a balance between consumption and conservation, ensuring justice and compassion for all. By embracing these principles, Muslims can contribute to a sustainable and equitable world, embodying the Qur'anic vision of being "a just community" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:143) and fulfilling their role as stewards of the Earth. This ex- travagance not only contradicts the simplicity of the Prophet's example but also represents a misallocation of resources that could be better used to address urgent societal challenges.

Charity and economic justice, central pillars of Islam, are also frequently overlooked. The Qur'an repeatedly commands Muslims to redistribute wealth to ensure societal equity, stating, "And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]" (2:43). Zakat, Sadaqah, and Khairat are mechanisms designed to uplift the disadvantaged and reduce economic disparity. However, contemporary statistics reveal that these obligations are often neglected or poorly implemented. A study by the Islamic Development Bank found that less than one-third of eligible Muslims pay Zakat effectively. This failure exacerbates poverty, leaving millions to suffer needlessly while resources remain hoarded by the affluent. The Qur'an sternly warns against such behavior, stating, "And those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah-give them tidings of a painful punishment" (9:34).

Islamic history provides numerous examples of welfare- oriented leadership and community organization that modern Muslims can emulate. Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab, known for his commitment to justice, implemented comprehensive welfare programs, including public treasuries, food distribution systems, and care for orphans. The Bimaristans of the Abbasid and Ottoman

The essence of religion, particularly Islam, as envisioned by Mulla Sadra, Syed Nursi, Meister Eckhart, Schuon, alongside other key mystics who have emphasized the harmonization of devotion with universal welfare, from earliest to more recent times, include Rabia al-Adawiyya, Fudayl ibn Iyad, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Arabi, Rumi, Bahauddin Naqshband, Shah Waliullah al-Dihlawi, and Ibn Ata Allah al-Iskandari. These figures have significantly contributed to the understanding that spiritual devotion is inherently tied to the welfare of humanity, advocating for compassion, justice, and love in both personal and collective contexts. Ibn Khaldun's thought demonstrates that Islam's true essence lies in the integration of individual devotion with social welfare, where ethical governance, justice, and resource management create a harmonious, flourishing society...

of worship, such as pilgrimage and mosque construction, should not be pursued at the expense of pressing humanitarian needs. Instead, surplus wealth and resources should be channeled to- ward initiatives that address poverty, education, healthcare, and social injustice. The spiritual fulfillment derived from transform- ing lives far outweighs the transient gratification of repetitive rituals. Mosques must reclaim their historical role as centers of community service, fostering education, dialogue, and support for the underprivileged.

The essence of Islam lies in harmonizing devotion with all- encompassing welfare, creating a legacy of justice, compassion, and inclusivity. By internalizing the foundational teachings of the Qur'an, the prophetic example, and the rich legacy of Islamic history, Muslims can fulfill their role as stewards of humanity. This approach not only honors the spirit of worship but also ensures that Islam remains a timeless and transformative force for good, inspiring generations to come. True piety is found not in extravagance but in simplicity, not in repetition but in action, and not in isolation but in service to all.

The true spirit of Islam lies in harmonizing spiritual devo- tion with the pursuit of universal welfare, creating a symphony of compassion, justice, and inclusivity that transcends time and space. When acts of worship are aligned with acts of care, they become transformative, not only for individuals but also for societ- ies. The Qur'an and Sunnah consistently call for this integration, urging believers to prioritize the needs of the vulnerable and the marginalized. Historical examples and teachings from across traditions reaffirm this ethos, reminding us that faith finds its highest expression in service. Today's challenges demand a revival of this essence, where resources are directed toward alleviating suffering and building equitable communities rather than indulging in excesses of ritualism. By reclaiming the timeless and profound message of Islam, we not only honor its legacy but also ensure its relevance as a guiding force for humanity. In embodying this vision, Muslims can fulfill their divine mandate as stewards of the Earth, cultivating a legacy of care and justice that uplifts all, resonating with the very purpose of existence itself.

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Continued From P1...

Terrorism in

capabilities to discharge their duty with utmost sensitivity.

"I am confident that apart from professional tradecraft, the life values that new recruits have imbibed at the Manigam Police Training School and ideals like courage, valour, patience, self-sacrifice and discipline they have inculcated in life will enable them to face all kinds of challenges in the future," he said.

Zubair Ahmad Khan, Principal PTS Manigam briefed about the program and various activities conducted during the Training course.

The Lieutenant Governor took the ceremonial Salute and inspected the parade. He also felicitated the new recruits who had excelled during their training.

An oath was administered to the new recruits for performing their duties with dedication and honesty.

Nalin Prabhat, DGP; S J M Gillani, Chairman & MD Police Housing Corporation; Anand Jain, ADGP Armed; Dr Mandeep K Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Vidhi Kumar Birdi, IGP Kashmir; Jatin Kishore, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal; senior officials of Police, Security Forces and civil administration and family members of the passing out trainees were present.

LG Flags

increased the number of cybercrime incidents as well.

"In such a situation, you have to implement a policy of continuous innovation to remain a step ahead of the criminals. I hope the J-K Police force is dedicated and ready to tackle all these challenges," he said, assuring that the J-K administration and the central government stand with the security forces with full might.

In the last few years, Sinha said, the performance of Jammu and Kashmir Police in real-time intelligence sharing and swift response has been appreciable.

"I hope the combination of special strategy, advanced technology, and specific intelligence will put the last nail in the coffin of terrorism and its whole support system. In future, the success of the anti-terror operations and (maintenance of) law and order missions will depend on the effective use of the technology," he added. (Agenciese)

Security agencies

utilised to realign operational strategies, and there is heightened surveillance and enhanced coordination among all agencies.

Stressing that terrorists aim to create fear through selected targets, Tuti said that the security grid remains robust, alert and responsive.

He reiterated that while the terrorists seek to destabilise peace and tranquility in the region, it is a collective effort to defeat them.

After 40 years

importance. Unlike the symbolic undertones of India's first human spaceflight, this time the focus is on operational readiness and global integration. His participation underscores India's growing engagement with public-private international partnerships in space and its resolve to emerge as a serious contender in human space exploration.

Prominent Shia

Reza Ansari, described him as "a scholar, a guide, and a spiritual light," adding that his passing leaves a void not easily filled.

Member of Parliament from Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency and a religious cleric, Aga Ruhullah Mehdi said that their family lost the last living example of a rich scholarly past.

"With his demise we lost the last living example of our family's rich scholarly past. Allama Aga Syed Baqar Al Musavi, an Islamic scholar with exemplary command on Islamic Theology and Jurisprudence. A great interpreter of Quran and Hadith," Ruhullah wrote.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in a post expressed sorrow and said that his contributions to religious thought, social harmony, and public service will be remembered with deep respect and affection.

"Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raij" un. Deeply saddened by the passing of distinguished Shia scholar, cleric, and religious leader Allama Agha Syed Mohammad Baqir Al-Moosavi. His profound contributions to religious thought, social harmony, and public service in J&K leave behind a legacy that will be remembered with deep respect and affection. Heartfelt condolences to his family, followers mourning this great loss," Omar wrote.

Peoples democratic Party (PDP) Chief and former chief minister, Mehbooba Mufti prayed for highest place in Jannah to the departed soul. "Deeply saddened to know of the passing away of revered Shia cleric, prolific author & theologian Aga Syed Baqir Moosavi Sahab. May Allah SWT grant him highest place in Jannah & give patience to his family & legion of admirers," she wrote.

Peoples Conference (PC) Chairman and MLA Handwara, Sajad Gani Lone in a post said, "Deeply saddened by the passing of Allama Aga Syed Mohammad Baqir Al-Moosavi Al-Najfi of Budgam. A revered scholar and guide. May Allah SWT elevate his ranks and grant him Jannat al-Firdous (Ameen)."

Apni Party President and former minister, Syed Altaf Bukhari wrote, "Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Rajioon. The passing of Allama Aga Syed Baqir Al Safvi Najafi marks the end of an era. He will always be remembered for his profound contributions as a distinguished religious scholar and revered leader. His teachings and wisdom will continue to inspire and guide people for generations to come. This is a tremendous loss, especially for the Muslim community of Kashmir. May Almighty Allah grant his soul the highest place in Jannah."

Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, President of Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) has expressed deep sorrow over the passing of prominent Shia cleric and scholar.

In his condolence message, Hakeem Yaseen

hailed the late scholar as a towering figure of faith, intellect, and service. "Allama Al-Moosavi's unparalleled contributions to religious discourse, interfaith harmony, and public welfare in Jammu and Kashmir have left an indelible mark," he said.

Hakeem noted that the revered cleric was a beacon of unity whose teachings inspired generations across communities. "His demise is a monumental loss not just to the Shia community but to all who value peace, wisdom, and spiritual integrity."

Offering his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, followers, and admirers, Hakeem Yaseen prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the mourners to bear the irreparable loss.

The Chief Minister

"This book isn't about that paragraph. Read what comes before and after. The story is about a great man – the tallest leader of Kashmir, one of India's tallest. He's among the world's tallest leaders. Dr. Saheb is a legend. That won't change," he said.

When pressed about allegations that Abdullah tacitly supported the Article 370 revocation, Dulat was unequivocal. I really don't know what transpired. I did ask Dr. Sahab and Omar as well, and they said, "We were told nothing at all. While writing this book, I again asked Dr. Sahab, and he said, ask Omar, but... The response I got from both father and son was that they had been told nothing. So, it's got nothing to do with what people are saying today. It's a lot of rubbish—that's all I can say."

As per KNO, Dulat added further that no one in Kashmir supported the 370 repeal. "There was not a single Kashmiri anywhere who supported the abrogation. And there were a lot of Indians who spoke against it—I did. I wrote against it, spoke against it, and so did many others. I remember our former Union Home Minister, Chidambaram, speaking with a lot of passion in Parliament, referring to it as a "monumental blunder." So, there's no question of any Kashmiri supporting it. Now, of course, as time has passed and the Supreme Court says everything is okay, Kashmiris probably feel that 370 is not coming back—though they're still willing to fight for it."

He recounted a poignant February 2020 meeting: "What transpired between Dr. Farooq and me was that he couldn't fathom why, after being with India all his life—his family, his father, everybody—they had to lock him up. That was the crux of it. So he said, "If they had to do this, why couldn't they take us into confidence?" That's the crux of the whole thing."

Dulat blamed media sensationalism, claiming that The Hindustan Times story wrecked everything. "As I said, I don't know who started this deliberately—somebody did, obviously—because that first story in Hindustan Times wrecked everything. It rattled everyone, and I think it probably shook Dr. Sahab too. I don't know what frame of mind he's in, but obviously, it disturbed him. I can't say who is responsible. It's very difficult to say, and I don't want to name names here because I think this is a happy occasion and ought to end happily. But yes, somebody was responsible—I don't know who."

The ex-spy revealed how Kashmir became his life's work. "In 1988, I thought it was a holiday posting. By 1989, bombs were exploding. That winter, everyone fled – we lost four officers in weeks. Jagmohan had me removed, calling me 'Farooq's man.' But Kashmir never left me."

He named three figures, who targeted him: "Jagmohan, Mufti Sayeed, and Arun Nehru – they wanted me out."

Reflecting on the insurgency's origins, Dulat, as per KNO, said: "We wasted a chance in 1989-90. The JKLF boys didn't understand 'azadi.' Pakistan's ISI exploited them – General Durrani told me even they were surprised by the militancy's spread."

On the Pandit exodus, Dulat said that then governor Jagmohan should not be blamed for the exodus of pandits however he was happy about it. "I was there when it started. A prominent Kashmiri Pandit (quoted in my book) came to me desperately, saying, 'We have to go.' There was so much fear—especially after Judge Ganju was killed on Hari Singh High Street. Nobody came for hours to retrieve his body—he bled to death. A lot of blame is put on Jagmohan—but I don't think he was responsible for the exodus. He was happy with it because if Pandits stayed, more would've been killed, and he'd have gotten the blame."

Recounting the 1999 Kandahar hijacking, Dulat revealed during the book launch that Farooq Abdullah [then Chief Minister] theatrically threatened to resign when Delhi demanded prisoner releases. "We went to Governor Saxena at 10 PM – he served Black Label and said to Dr Farooq, 'You're a big man, don't resign.' Farooq relented," claimed Dulat.

In a stunning historical assessment, Dulat, as per KNO, declared that history will judge Farooq Abdullah greater than his father. "He is a man with very strong and good political instincts, but he's also a very brave man to have endured all that he has. As a politician, I think he's one of the best. I've written in the book that he's the Sultan of Politics. When history is written, Dr. Farooq will emerge even greater than Sheikh Abdullah. Now, I'm not saying spending 12 or 13 years in jail is easy, but the Sheikh had Mahatma Gandhi on his side. He had Nehru on his side. You know the story—when the Sheikh was finally released, he came to Delhi and stayed as the Prime Minister's guest. Would that happen today?"

Srinagar Premiere

on Friday morning as he reached the city along with the director, Deoskar.

"#Groundzero touchdown landmark day: first Red carpet movie screening after 38 years in #Srinagar; this is a special movie screening to honour BSF soldiers and their officers," read the caption. The film is releasing on April 25.

Rains lash

landslides, mudslides, shooting stones, and a rise in water levels in rivers and streams. Waterlogging in low-lying areas is also expected. Farmers have been advised to suspend all agricultural operations from

April 18 until the afternoon of April 21.

Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Eyed Rs 2000 Cr Properties Without Investing A Penny: BJP

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Friday dared Congress leaders facing corruption charges to seek a quick and time-bound disposal of cases, as it slammed the party for citing politics as the reason for the ED's action against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case.

The ruling BJP kept the heat on the opposition party following the ED's chargesheet against the Gandhis and accused chief ministers from the Congress-ruled states of ploughing public money as advertisement into the weekly newspaper which few read.

Former Union minister Anurag Thakur alleged that the Congress used the newspaper as its ATM, claiming that Gandhis sought to acquire properties worth Rs 2,000 crores of the National Herald without investing a penny from their pocket.

Both Gandhis together owned 76 per cent of the Young Indian company which was, he said, given Rs 50 lakh loan by the Congress.

The company then took over the Associated Journals Limited, which owns the newspaper affiliated to the Congress, in lieu of Rs 90 crore it owed to the opposition party, he said.

Thakur asked if a political party can give a loan. To a question about the allegation that the ED action was politically motivated, the BJP leader dared Congress leaders facing corruption charges to move courts to seek quick and time-bound trial in the cases against them.

"If they have guts, they should do it," he said, adding that in the "Congress model of corruption" the thieves make a lot of noises.

The National Herald case, he said, has stunned the Congress ecosystem into silence.

Thakur noted Gandhis have moved courts for quashing action against them for many times since a lower court took cognizance of the matter before the Modi Government came to power.

The courts gave them no relief except that they are on bail, he said, adding that the judiciary did not intervene in the Enforcement Directorate's probe.

Turning to his home state Himachal Pradesh where the Congress is in power, Thakur accused the party of not fulfilling any of its 10 main promises but spending crores of rupees in advertisement in the National Herald.

"Does any Congress leader or member read it in Himachal," he asked, demanding that people should be given details of money spent by different Congress Governments in advertisements in the newspaper, which is available digitally.

The Congress has been organising protests in different parts of the country against the ED action.

Hospital staffer arrested for alleged sexual assault on ICU patient in Gurugram

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has arrested a 25-year-old accused of allegedly sexually assaulting a trainee air hostess lying in the ICU ward of Medanta Hospital in Gurugram.

The accused, identified as Deepak, a resident of Muzaffarpur, Bihar, was arrested today from Gurugram, the police said. The 25-year-old, who had been on the run, had been employed at the same hospital for five months, according to the police.

"We have been informed that the police have identified a suspect who has been taken into custody in connection with the ongoing investigation concerning allegations of sexual assault on a patient. On the basis of information provided to us by the police, we have suspended the suspect employee," the hospital said in a statement, as per an NDTV report.

This arrest was made after the SIT, aided by 8 crack teams, analysed footage from 800 CCTV cameras installed at the hospital, in addition to questioning the hospital staff.

According to the police, the woman—originally from Bengal—had nearly drowned in a swimming pool while undergoing a training programme with a major airline, which saw her admitted to a major hospital.

The victim was then transferred to Medanta on April 5, where she reportedly underwent emergency treatment, including going on a ventilator in the ICU wing, for over a week. The alleged assault took place on April 6, at which time the semi-conscious victim had been allegedly unable to resist her attacker's advances because of her "weakened condition". She

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that in my Driving licence bearing Registration No: JK15 20190000230, my name and parantege has been Mistakenly Mentioned as Mohammad Anwar Chachie, S/O Ghulam Nabi Chachi, while as my Actual and correct name and parantege as per my Aadhaar Card is Mohammad Anwar Gojar Chachi, S/O Ghulam Nabi Gojar Chachi. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Regional Transport Office Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Mohammad Anwar Gojar Chachi.
S/O Ghulam Nabi Gojar Chachi.
R/O Bonakoot Bandipora. Pin code: 193502. Dated - 19-04-2025.

also claimed two nurses were present at the time, but hesitated to intervene.

After her release from the hospital, the victim informed her husband on April 13. He promptly went to the police, and a case was registered the next day.

At the time the case was filed, the hospital, responding to the allegations, issued a statement.

"We have been made aware of a complaint from a patient and have been cooperating with the investigations conducted by relevant authorities. At this stage no allegations have been substantiated, and all relevant documents including CCTV footage from the hospital for the time period in question, have been handed over to the police. We remain committed to supporting the process of investigation," it read.

Four days later, the accused was brought to book.

Centre approves IAS appointments: Here are the new secretaries taking office soon

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, on Friday announced the approval of various IAS appointments. A significant chunk of them came from the 1994 IAS batch under various state cadres.

Samir Kumar Sinha, IAS (Assam-Meghalaya cadre: 1994 batch) was escalated to the Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation. Sinha would take the post from Vumlunmang Vualnam, following Vualnam's appointment as Secretary, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

PMO Additional Secretary, Hari Ranjan Rao, IAS (MP:94) was also appointed as Officer on Special Duty, Department of Sports, Ministry

of Youth Affairs and Sports. Rao will be in the rank and pay of Secretary. "The officer will take over as Secretary, Department of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports" read the circular.

Other significant postings included Rajesh Kumar Sinha, IAS (KL:94) as Special Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways; Ranjana Chopra, IAS (OR:94) as Special Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Culture.

The ACC also extended the tenure of Bharat Lal, IFS (Retired), as Secretary General, National Human Rights Commission "on contract basis for a period of one year" beyond June 30, 2025.

Most of the IAS rejig comes into effect on the superannuation of officers in currently assigned positions and/or reassigning of IAS posts—most of them falling on May 31, 2025.

Other postings in the ACC notification include:

Meeta R. Lochan, IAS (MH:90) will be the Secretary, National Commission for Backward Classes, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. K Moses Chalai, IAS (MN:90) will be the Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Finance. Manoj Govil, IAS (MP:91) will be Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat. Vandana Gurnani, IAS (KN:91) will be Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment. Rajit Punhani, IAS (BH:91) to be Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Ashish Srivastava, IAS (MP:92) will be Secretary, Inter State Council Secretariat, Ministry of Home Affairs. Vumlunmang Vualnam, AS (MN:92) will be Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. Nikunja Bihari Dhal, IAS (OR:93) to be Secretary, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs

DDC reviews achievements of RDD Department, status of PMGSY Projects in Poonch District

POONCH: District Development Commissioner Vikas Kundal today reviewed the physical and financial progress achieved under various developmental initiatives undertaken by the Rural Development Department (RDD), besides status of PMGSY projects here at two separate meetings.

The DDC evaluated progress of RDD initiatives including works under MGNREGA, construction of houses under PMAY-G, BDC/PRI/DDC Works, CD Panchayats works, SBM works, Panchayat Ghars and execution of Aspirational Block Development Plan.

The RDD officials presented a comprehensive overview of ongoing projects via a PowerPoint presentation. DDC Kundal inquired about project execution, delays, compensation status, social audit reports, geotagging and payment statuses across all blocks in relation to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). He urged officers to enhance the execution of works under this vital act and directed the preparation of a line listing of pending cases under the Aadhar Based Payment System, ensuring no delays in ABPS across all blocks.

The DDC also reviewed targeted work plans for the fiscal year 2025-26, instructing all Block Development Officers (BDOs) to initiate project execution promptly. He emphasized the need for improved physical performance under the convergence scheme.

Highlighting the importance of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana



(PMAY) housing projects, the DDC encouraged BDOs to expedite works to benefit beneficiaries as soon as possible.

Meanwhile: The DDC convened a meeting with key functionaries from the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) to assess the progress of ongoing projects in the district.

The meeting focused on both physical and financial progress of the works. Executing officers provided detailed updates on project-wise advancements, including blacktopping of roads, drainage construction, protection works, and constructing bridges across multiple road projects.

The Deputy Commissioner evaluated the status of significant road projects such as Bafliaz to Mandi Phagla, Chandimarth to Dogrian, Sallian to Mahara, KM 7th of T01 to Behramgalla and

Bankhet to Chanansar.

He emphasized the importance of expediting the tendering processes and directed the authorities to complete all ongoing and new works within the financial year 2025-26 to benefit the general public.

Reviewing the progress of work on bridge projects, the DC stated that he will personally visit the sites to inspect the progress and ensure quality standards are met. Furthermore, he urged officers to resolve any outstanding issues promptly to facilitate the completion of these essential projects.

The meeting was attended by Executive Engineer PMGSY Poonch/Mendhar, as well as all Assistant Executive Engineers (AEs), Assistant Engineers (AEs), and Junior Engineers (JEs) from the PMGSY Department.

Div Com Jammu reviews restoration of public amenities disrupted by windstorm Orders speedy assessment of loss to public property

JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar today convened a meeting to assess the damages caused due to Wind Storm and reviewed the status of restoration works.

The meeting attended by Managing Director JPDCI, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Deputy Commissioners from Jammu Division, Chief Engineers of PDD, Jal Shakti, XEns and concerned officials apprised the sectors wise affect of Wind Storm and the damages to their infrastructure.

The Divisional Commissioner took stock of the district-wise damages suffered to power, Jal Shakti and Roads infrastructure, while seeking details from the respective Deputy Commissioners.

MD JPDCI, and Commissioner JMC, also apprised the Divisional Commissioner on the damages caused to Power infrastructure and public amenities infrastructure due to the wind storm and the restoration works thereof.

The Divisional Commissioner was also apprised about the works



completed to restore the power infrastructure, water supply schemes and clearing of roads across the division. It was informed that maximum restoration works, in terms of power and water supply, have been done and remaining will be completed by today evening and tomorrow. Chief Engineer PWD apprised that roads have been cleared of fallen trees and landslides triggered by the storm.

The Div Com directed the concerned officials to restore the power infrastructure for 100% supply to domestic areas by today evening and for agricultural lands by tomorrow. He called for war footing efforts by the ground staff

of the power department.

The Divisional Commissioner further directed the Deputy Commissioners to closely monitor the restoration works and submit a comprehensive report of the damages and restoration by 7 pm today.

The Divisional Commissioner asked the concerned officials to expedite the repair of damages to public infrastructure and also assess the loss to public property and livestock to provide relief to affected persons from SDRF.

The Divisional Commissioner also asked for cleaning and desilting of drainage networks in Jammu City.

Rohit Looking To Be In His Zone Again, A Big Score Is Coming Very Soon: Boucher

Former South Africa wicketkeeper-batter Mark Boucher believes out-of-form Mumbai Indians veteran Rohit Sharma is showing signs of returning to rhythm in the IPL and a big knock is just around the corner.

Rohit has failed to reach the 50-run mark in six matches this season with the 26 he scored against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Thursday being his highest score.

"Rohit Sharma took it upon himself to go after the bowlers. We saw some good old-fashioned Rohit Sharma sixes - big ones too. I liked his attitude," Boucher, a former Mumbai Indians head coach, said.

"He put the bowlers under pressure, created scoring opportunities. He was just past the 30-mark -- a big score is coming very soon. He's looking in that zone again," he told the IPL broadcaster.

Boucher also reflected on the performance of MI skipper Hardik Pandya, whose 21 off just nine balls with three fours and a six took Mumbai to the threshold of victory.

"Hardik Pandya is one of the best all-rounders in the world. When he's firing, the team usually wins. I love his new role with the ball - he's not just bowling in the power play, but in the tough middle overs, the 'ugly overs'.

"And he's picking up wickets there too. That's giving him confidence, and it's translating into his batting, where he's going in and finishing games."

On the all-round performance of Will Jacks, he said, "Will Jacks has been under pressure and hasn't performed like he'd have wanted at

the start of the competition. But he is amazing - he's a genuine all-rounder and more than just a part-time spinner."

"He bowled really well and picked up some crucial wickets. That would've fed into his

"Hardik Pandya is a character, and he is leading from the front -- whether it's batting, bowling, fielding, or even off the field. He's always smiling. The one thing about him -- he never gives up.

in the last game against Delhi Capitals. Most teams would've given up. But Mumbai Indians clawed back -- and that's Hardik Pandya for you. That was the game that may well have turned their season around.



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batting confidence too - finally feeling like he's contributed. There's no reason he can't carry this momentum and do some fantastic things like he has for other franchises and for England."

Former India batter Ajay Jadeja also shared his perspective on Pandya.

"Last year wasn't the best for him, but this year, even without great results early on, he's stayed true to his style."

Jadeja feels MI's turnaround came in the Super Over win against Delhi Capitals on April 16.

"The turnaround, in my opinion, came

"Tonight was a bonus. It was a comfortable win, but the Delhi game showed what MI and Hardik are made of. When Hardik Pandya walks in, even when the team needs 10, 12, 15 runs an over, you still feel they've got a better chance with him at the crease."

"He bowled really well and picked up some crucial wickets. That would've fed into his batting confidence too - finally feeling like he's contributed. There's no reason he can't carry this momentum and do some fantastic things like he has for other franchises and for England."

We have to adapt to tough surfaces: Vettori after loss to MI

MUMBAI: Urging his batters to suitably tweak their approach on "difficult" surfaces, Sunrisers Hyderabad coach Daniel Vettori said they cannot expect belters at every venue and need to up their game after being outgunned by a wily Mumbai Indians in their IPL clash here.

Mumbai Indians produced a perfect show on a tricky pitch here at the Wankhede Stadium which had assistance for spin and pace for the seamers, especially with the slow and short balls to win the contest by four wickets on Thursday.



SRH could only post 162 for five after struggling to find their flow with the bat. MI pacers and right-arm off-spinner Will Jacks (2/14) set up the win.

"I feel like no one really has control over their surface, so there's a little bit of luck involved in terms of coming up against wickets that don't suit us," Vettori told the media after SRH failed to win another away game in this IPL.

SRH features big-hitters like Abhishek Sharma, Travis Head Heinrich Klaasen, Ishan Kishan and Nitish Reddy. Barring Abhishek (40 off 28 balls), and Klaasen (37 off 28 balls), the other batters could not make a noteworthy contribution.

"There has to be more to it from our side that we have to adapt. We know that conditions like this exist in Chennai, sometimes (in) Ahmedabad. We're not expecting to go over around the country and come up on belters, so the ball's in our court to realise that," the former New Zealand spinner said.

Vettori said it was MI bowlers who made the job extremely tough for SRH batters in the first half of the game, especially in the middle overs.

"It was just incredibly tough through those middle stages," he said.

"It was a difficult surface. Mumbai read the conditions exceptionally well...they really relied on that slow ball, but it was mainly effective because of their execution and there's some supreme exponents of it in (Jasprit) Bumrah and Trent Boult and even Hardik Pandya."



Khyber Cement Ka Zarra Zarra Dil Se Bana Hai

