

# North in News

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## Saints Have Ensured Respectable Place For Women In Society: Murmu

**AGENCIES**  
Chhatrapur (MP), Feb 26: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said saints in India have ensured a respectable place for women in the society, and the country is now moving "from women-development to women-led development". The contemporary spiritual leaders could play an important role in building a self-reliant, harmonious and environment-friendly India," Murmu said addressing a mass wedding function at Bageshwar Dham in Garha village, at Madhya Pradesh's Chhatrapur district, where 251 couples got married. "The saint community has



played a major role in removing social evils from the society by raising voice against them, and ensured a respectable place for women in the society," she said. "Today, as our country moves from women-development to women-led de-

velopment, we must all contribute to making our daughters and sisters strong and capable," Murmu said. She urged people to pay attention to women's education, health and safety. "Our small efforts would empower them," the presi-

dent said and also advised women to make continuous efforts for their education and self-reliance. "In our tradition, saints have shown the path to the people for centuries. They have raised their voice against the social evils prevalent in contemporary society. They have also raised their voice against discrimination based on caste, gender, etc.," she said. Be it Guru Nanak, Sant Ravidas, Sant Kabir Das, Meera Bai, or Sant Tukaram, all have inspired people to follow the right path through their teachings, Murmu said. The saints have made people aware of the supersti-

tions prevalent in society and taught them to shun untouchability and caste-based discrimination, she said. Praising the Bageshwar Dham for organising the mass wedding function, Murmu said that to make these women self-dependent, sewing machines and other necessary goods are being given to them. "I appeal to all women to continuously strive to educate themselves and become self-reliant. When you succeed, our society and our country will succeed. We have set a goal to celebrate the centenary of our independence in 2047 and make India a developed nation," (Contd on Pg 2)

## MP Jugal Kishore Led Delegation, Others Call On LG Manoj Sinha



**NIN NEWS SERVICE**  
Jammu, Feb 26: A delegation of elected public representatives from Reasi led by Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member of Parliament called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Wednesday. The delegation comprises of Saraf Singh Nag, Chairman, District Devel-

opment Council Reasi; Baldeep Raj Sharma and Kuldeep Raj Dubey. Members of Legislative Assembly, submitted a memorandum of demands pertaining to development of Shiv Khori Shrine, promotion of tourism potential areas and upgradation of Tourism, Water, Power and Health in-

frastructure, and various other public important issues of Reasi District. The Lieutenant Governor assured the members of the delegation that appropriate action will be taken for redressal of the issues projected by them. A delegation of Swarnankar Sangh Jammu (Contd on Pg 2)

## Search Operation Underway After Terrorists Fire At Army Vehicle In J&K's Rajouri

Rajouri/Jammu, Feb 26: An army vehicle came under fire from suspected terrorists in a forward village near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said. However, there were no casualties in the brief firing near Phal village in the Sunderbani sector, they added. The (Contd on Pg 2)

## Five Indian-Origin Men Sentenced To Jail, Canned Over Brawl At Singapore Hotel

**AGENCIES**  
SINGAPORE, Feb 26: Five Indian-origin men were sentenced to jail terms between two and three years and caning for being part of a riot that led to the death of a former bouncer at a Singapore hotel.

Sridharan Elangovan was given 36 months in jail and six strokes of the cane; Manojkumar Velayutham was given 30 months in jail and four strokes; Sashikumar Pakiramy was given 24 months in jail and two

strokes; Puthenvilla Keith Peter was given 26 months' jail and three strokes; and Raja Rishi was given 30 months' jail and four strokes. Each of them pleaded guilty to a charge of rioting at Singapore's Concorde Hotel and Shopping Mall in 2023, a Channel News report said.

Sridharan, 30, Manojkumar, 32, and Sashikumar, 34, were members of a secret society group. Another man, Asvian

Pachan Pillai Sukumaran, 30, was earlier handed a murder charge after he allegedly killed former bouncer Mohammad Israt Mohd Ismail, 29. The Indian-origin man's case is pending.

Six other men, between 25 and 33 years old, were named in court documents as co-accused who took part in the riot.

Israt and his friend Muhammad Shahulizam Osman, 30, were former (Contd on Pg 2)

## Devotees Throng Shankaracharya Temple, Srinagar To Pay Obeisance On Maha Shivratri

**NIN NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, Feb 26: Amid rain, a large number of devotees thronged the Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar to pay obeisance on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, being celebrated with religious fervour on Wednesday.

In Kashmir, Shivratri is locally known as Herath, and as part of their unique traditions, Pandits observe night-long prayers and offer wal-



nuts, which are placed in a watak (earthen pot) as a sa-

cred ritual. Despite the inclement weather, tourists

and devotees, including men, women, and children, patiently queued up along the stairs of the Shankaracharya Temple, perched on a hill overlooking the picturesque Dal Lake. Braving the rain and dense fog since morning, they eagerly awaited their turn to offer prayers. Authorities in Srinagar had made adequate arrangements to facilitate smooth (Contd on Pg 2)

## Intruder Killed As BSF Foils Infiltration Bid On Pathankot Border



**NIN NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, Feb 26: An unidentified intruder was killed as the Border Security Force (BSF) foiled an infiltration bid along the International Border (IB) in Pathankot on Wednesday. The BSF said: "On February 26, at pre-dawn, our

troops observed a suspicious movement across the IB in BOP Tashpatan, Pathankot border area and an intruder was observed crossing the IB. The alert troops challenged the intruder but he did not pay heed and kept moving." (Contd on Pg 2)

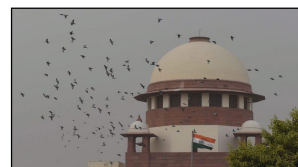
## SC Stays Order Asking Centre To Procure Drugs For Patient With Rare Disorder

**AGENCIES**

New Delhi, Feb 26: The Supreme Court has stayed in the interim a Kerala High Court order directing the Centre to provide an additional Rs 18 lakh worth of medicines to a patient suffering from spinal muscular atrophy, beyond its Rs 50 lakh cap.

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

"Issue notice returnable in the week commencing April 17, 2025... till the next date of hearing, there will be a stay of the order of the im-



pugned judgment." Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a rare genetic disorder characterised by progressive muscle weakness and wasting, affecting the nerve cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscle movement. Under the policy, Centre can

provide Rs 50 lakh for treatment to a needy patient. The high court on February 6 instructed that the SMA drug Risdiplam should be provided as a one-time measure to ensure continued treatment for 24-year-old Seba PA till the matter over his high pricing was ad-

dressed by a single-judge bench — a process expected to take at least a month. Seba's plea before the high court highlighted the exorbitant cost of Risdiplam, priced at Rs 6.2 lakh a bottle. Patients weighing up to 20 kilogram require one bottle a month whereas heavier patients may need up to three bottles, making long-term treatment financially unfeasible. The Centre argued while the high court had clarified its ruling was not a binding precedent, granting individual exceptions could set one by default. "There are more than 3,000 patients across India (Contd on Pg 2)

## Shikara March Marks 2nd Day Of Srinagar Heritage Festival 'Soun Meeraas'



**NIN NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, Feb 26: On the 2nd day of Srinagar Heritage Festival—"Soun Meeraas" an initiative of District Administration Srinagar, a traditional Shikara March showcasing unique cultural richness and historical heritage of Kashmir Valley was held on Wednesday here in the world famous Dal Lake. The event organized by District Administration Srinagar in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts was aimed at acquainting the young generation (Contd on Pg 2)

## Confluence Of Tradition, Technology: Harvard Professors Highlight Experiences, Insights From Maha Kumbh



**AGENCIES**  
NEW YORK, Feb 26: Top professors from the prestigious Harvard University highlighted the coexistence of tradition and technology and the intersection of commerce and spirituality at Maha Kumbh. They emphasised lessons and opportunities from the world's largest religious gathering, which inches towards closure on Wednesday.

The Consulate General of India in New York organised a special discussion on Monday titled 'Insights from the World's Largest Spiritual Gathering – Maha Kumbh' featuring the Jorge Paulo Lemann Professor at Harvard Business School, Taron Khanna, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at the Harvard Divinity School Diana Eck, and Assistant Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School Tiona Zuzul. The professors shared their insights and experiences from on-ground research conducted during the Kumbh Mela in 2013 and various aspects of this year's pilgrimage, from spirituality and engineering to administration and the combination of tradition, technology, and economics. Khanna, addressing the gathering at the special event hosted by the Consul General of India in New York Binaya Pradhan, underlined the aspects of scale, sanitation and technology at the Kumbh Mela.

"I, personally as a scholar, am fascinated by the coexistence of tradition and technology because that's how society is developed. We (Contd on Pg 2)

## Dr Jitendra Inspects 'Microbe Repository' At Chandigarh, Virtually Inaugurates Palampur 'Tulip' Garden

**AGENCIES**

CHANDIGARH, Feb 26: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, inspected "Microbe Repository" and other facilities at the CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology (CSIR-IMTECH) here and also took an update on the ongoing projects in the institute.

During the review, Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted that microbial technology is a crucial pillar of biotechnology, emphasizing its growing significance in shaping the next generation industrial revolution. Dr. Jitendra Singh credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the groundbreaking New BioE3 Policy, which places a renewed focus on biomanufacturing and bio foundries. He underscored India's rapid progress in the biotech sector,



stating, "India's bioeconomy has witnessed an extraordinary surge from \$10 billion in 2014 to over \$130 billion in 2024, with projections to reach \$300 billion by 2030." The Minister also recalled the recent launch of India's first indigenous antibiotic, Nafthromycin, developed to combat resistant infections. He noted that the number of biotech startups in India has grown expo-

entially from just 50 in 2014 to nearly 9,000 today, solidifying India's position as a global hub for biotech innovation. Furthermore, he informed that India now ranks third in the Asia-Pacific region and 12th globally in bio-manufacturing, underscoring the increasing importance of CSIR-IMTECH in driving pioneering research in microbial genetics, infectious diseases, fermenta-

tion technology, environmental microbiology, and bioinformatics. CSIR-IMTECH, a premier research institute in microbial biotechnology, hosts a repository of over 14,000 microbial strains through its Microbial Type Culture Collection and Gene Bank (MTCC). This national repository not only provides authenticated cultures to researchers and industries but also supports key regulatory authorities, including IPC, BIS, and NBA, in microbe-related concerns. The institute is at the forefront of harnessing microbial resources for scientific and industrial applications, addressing unmet needs in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and environmental sciences. Connecting virtually with CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT), Palampur, Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated several new facilities and (Contd on Pg 2)

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Saints...

Murmu said, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said that the couples, who got married at the mass wedding function, will be provided a financial help of Rs 51,000 each as part of the state government schemes. Governor Mangubhai Patel and Bageshwar Peeth's seer Dharendra Shastri also addressed the function.

## MP Jugal...

City called on Lieutenant Governor.

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

## Search...

terrorists believed to be hiding in a forest, fired a few rounds at the army vehicle passing through the area, which is considered a traditional infiltration route for terrorists.

The troops returned fire and reinforcements were rushed to neutralise the terrorists, the officials said, adding that a search operation is underway in the area.

In another development, the officials said army troops opened fire after observing suspicious movement near the L&C in the Keel Battalion area of the Akhnoor sector in Jammu during the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. A massive counter operation was launched this morning, which was ongoing when the last reports were received, they said.

Indian Army Rajouri rajouri terrorist attack Rajouri attack Rajouri District Terrorist attack attack in Rajouri.

## Five...

bouncers at Club Rumsors and members of another secret society.

On August 19, 2023, a group of about 10 people, including several of the accused, were drinking at Club Rumsors at Concorde Hotel and Shopping Mall when Israt and Shabirulnizam, who wanted to pass Israt's wedding invitation card to club staff, sat near the entrance of the club opposite to the accused persons.

At about 6 a.m., as the club was closing, Israt and the accused had a verbal exchange during which the former bouncer was stabbed multiple times.

Club Rumsors staff then called for an ambulance for Israt, who was bleeding profusely. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

## Devotees...

and hassle-free visits for devotees at the temple and other places of worship.

A group of tourists from Mumbai, Himachal Pradesh, and Delhi was delighted after paying obsequance on a cold weather morning at the temple.

Kritika from Delhi said that "it was a great experience to

visit Shankaracharya temple on the holy occasion of Maha Shivratri." She said that the spiritual feelings are all around this temple.

The devotees also took part in the special prayers and prayed for the eternal and everlasting peace for the country, particularly Kashmir.

J&K Lt Governor, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and several leaders have greeted the people on Maha Shivratri.

## Intruder...

"Sensing the threat, our troops neutralised the intruder," the BSF said. The BSF said the identity and motive of the intruder is being ascertained.

"Vigilant BSF troops thwarted infiltration attempt. Strong protest will be lodged with Pak Rangers," the BSF said.

## SC Stays...

with varying facts and circumstances and if each case were considered unique, it could create an unsustainable financial burden," it added.

The Centre's counsel said the government policy set a firm cap at Rs 50 lakh for all patents, regardless of available resources.

Senior advocate Anand Grover, appearing for Seba, said the government could have taken steps to reduce the cost of SMA treatment by either negotiating with the drug manufacturer or invoking provisions under the Patents Act, 1970. Grover said countries like China and Pakistan had successfully negotiated with the manufacturer to lower the price of SMA treatment and questioned why India had not taken similar steps.

The bench, however, suggested that the Indian government might be refraining from such measures due to "international ramifications".

"Why would the Indian government not be interested? They will be very much interested. It's easy to be critical on that. They would have tried their level best to get the prices down," the bench said.

The bench asked the Centre to explore the possibility of approving expenditures beyond Rs 50 lakh on a case-by-case basis.

## Shikara...

about the values of rich cultural heritage and tradition of Srinagar. During the event, the tourists and local people cherished the live demonstrations of the Floating Market in Dal Lake exhibiting living proof of Kashmiri culture of past times, when local farmers and artisans would sell their products and crafts directly from their boats. Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Syed Ahmad Kataria, other senior Officers and Officials of District Administration Srinagar and IGCA were present on the occasion.

## Confluence...

keep some things core to us, that's a tradition that stays" and

adds layers of technology to it, Khanna said.

Khanna said the Kumbh Mela is a "fascinating place" to see how technology gets absorbed into religion and "it's been neat to see layers of technology" implemented at the Kumbh.

He also pointed out that the 2025 Kumbh is called the 'Swachh Kumbh' and said it is "incredibly clean". Khanna also lauded the digitisation of the "lost and found" services in the Maha Kumbh this year, describing it as "super interesting" because "it speaks directly to this idea of tradition and technology".

Eck in her presentation underscored that while the Kumbh Mela is a "great pilgrimage", "what astonished us more than anything was just the astonishing fact that this city is built in such a short time, and it has a whole range of things associated with it", including engineering teams, electricity substations, building an urban environment, health services and small businesses.

Eck highlighted the temporary tents built with four to five materials for the Kumbh by skilled builders in a matter of days.

"The Kumbh Mela is a good example of the ability to create simple structures with simple materials and do it quickly. There is a lot that various places in the world can learn from this," she said, citing the example of the need for temporary encampments for vast refugee populations.

"That kind of skill, I don't think is going to be outgrown in the future," she said.

Eck also lauded the technological innovation at Kumbh, describing it as "extraordinary".

Zuzul, who had travelled to India for the first time in 2013 for Kumbh as part of Eck's research team, highlighted the evolution of businesses and economic opportunities as well as logistical challenges and solutions that the Kumbh presents. Zuzul said she hopes to return to India for the next Kumbh in around 2027.

"I'm really excited to understand how this intersection of commerce and spirituality will evolve. It is important for the government, and larger and local businesses to think about what kind of Kumbh we want to create. What sorts of commercial opportunities do we need to provide, and what does that mean for the spiritual essence of the religious gathering," she said.

Khanna suggested the organisers could spend a bit more time passing on the learnings from one Kumbh to the next, not just in 6-12 year intervals but year by year.

In response to a question on what the organisers did well this year and issues that can be fixed for the future, Zuzul said: "Something that really impressed me this year was just the thought that went into creating the infrastructure to allow for a successful and orderly Kumbh, whether it's the number of toilets that were built or the Artificial Intelligence cameras that could count the number of people present in any given place."

"I think changing human behaviour is something that takes a

very long time, and often can't just be done through these sorts of mechanisms." "I suspect that what we'll see in future years more attempts to influence how people behave in this space in a more emergent way," she said.

The Maha Kumbh Mela commenced in Prayagraj at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati on January 13 this year and will conclude on Mahashivratri on Wednesday.

The Uttar Pradesh government has said that an unprecedented 600 million devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela so far this year have taken a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam, the confluence of the three holy rivers. "Basically, this is it. It is the river itself for which people come. That is the cathedral, that is the temple, that is the destination," Eck said.

## Dr Jitendra...

participated in critical scientific discussions. He joined the EMBO Workshop on High Elevation Plant Adaptation in a Changing Climate (HEPACC) and the Industry, Farmer & Academia (IFA) Meet, emphasizing that such initiatives reflect the Government of India's commitment to scientific advancement, economic empowerment, and sustainable agriculture.

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

Dr. Jitendra Singh lauded CSIR-IHBT for leading multiple national missions, including: CSIR Floriculture Mission – Expanded floriculture to 1,000 hectares, benefiting 3,800 farmers across Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh, generating an income of 780 crore. Aroma Mission. Millet Mission. Immunity Mission. Waste to Wealth Mission. Phenome India-CSIR Health Cohort Knowledgebase. CSIR Precision Agriculture Mission. The Minister also inaugurated state-of-the-art facilities, including Autonomous Green House, Heeng Seed Production Centre, Heeng QPM Facility, Ornamental Bulb Processing Facility and Phyto-Analytical Facility.

Additionally, he laid the foundation stone for the Phyto factory Facility and dedicated a Cement Concrete Road from Floriculture Junction to Chandpur R&D Farm. Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized that by integrating scientific research, industry collaboration, and government policies, the rich biodiversity of Himalayan states can be harnessed for economic prosperity, benefiting farmers and advancing India's scientific ecosystem.

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

Poonch February 26 : Dr. Rubia Bukhari, Founder of the Dr. Rubia Bukhari's Cocoon Artistry Initiative and Lecturer at the Department of Sericulture Poonch Campus University of Jammu, has made a remarkable impact at SILKTECH 2025, securing the 2nd Prize in the prestigious Poster Presentation category. The international event, dedicated to innovations in Sericulture and Silk Technology, witnessed the participation of leading experts, researchers and professionals from across the globe.

The conference which serves as a global platform for advancements in sericulture showcased cutting-edge research, sustainable silk production techniques and novel applications in the silk industry. Dr. Bukhari's award-winning presentation highlighted the transformative potential of Cocoon Artistry, an initiative that integrates traditional silk craftsmanship with contemporary artistic expression, thereby opening new avenues for sustainable employment



and economic empowerment.

Director Poonch Campus, Prof. Rakesh Vaid, extended his heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Rubia Bukhari for securing the 2nd Prize at SILKTECH 2025 and bringing laurels to the University of Jammu. He commended her dedication to research and innovation in Sericulture and Cocoon Artistry, emphasizing that her achievement not only high-

lights the academic excellence of Poonch Campus but also strengthens its role in promoting skill development and sustainable entrepreneurship in the region. Speaking on her achievement, Dr. Rubia Bukhari expressed her gratitude to the organizers of SILKTECH 2025 and credited the success to her dedicated research in Sericulture and Cocoon Artistry.

"This recognition is a testament to the potential of Cocoon Artistry in fostering sustainable livelihoods and promoting the rich heritage of silk production in Jammu and Kashmir. My goal is to take this initiative to a global stage and contribute to the growth of Seri-Tourism in the region," she remarked. Her innovative approach in fusing traditional silk-based practices with modern entrepreneurship has been widely recognized and her work continues to inspire young researchers and artisans. The Cocoon Artistry Initiative, under her leadership, has played a crucial role in promoting skill development, economic self-reliance, and the revival of the silk industry in border districts like Poonch and Rajouri. With this success, Dr. Rubia Bukhari continues her journey of innovation research and skill development, furthering the mission of Dr. Rubia Bukhari's Cocoon Artistry Initiative and positioning the region as a hub for Seri-Tourism and sustainable silk entrepreneurship.

## BGSBU Embarks on Academic Expansion



LIAQAT ALI KHATANA

Rajouri, February 26 : Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) is undergoing a significant transformation, expanding its academic offerings and solidifying its position as a premier institution of higher education. Under the visionary leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Jawaid Iqbal, Dean Academic Affairs Prof. M J Warsi, and Registrar Mr. Abhishek Sharma, IAS, the university is setting new benchmarks in academic excellence, research, and innovation. BGSBU has established new departments, including Sanskrit, History, Political Science and International Relations, Sociology, Linguistics, and Mechanical Engineering. The university has also introduced several postgraduate and undergraduate programs, catering to evolving academic and professional demands. The new undergraduate engineering programs include B.Tech in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Electronics and Computer Engineering, and Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Additionally, the university has launched M.Tech programs in Computer Science and Engineering, Power and En-

ergy Systems, Electronics & Communication, and Water Resource Engineering. Vice Chancellor Prof. Jawaid Iqbal stated, "BGSBU is committed to academic excellence and holistic development. Our focus is on creating a knowledge-driven ecosystem that empowers students and faculty to contribute meaningfully to society."

city. "Prof. Iqbal emphasized that the introduction of these programs reflects the essence of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), promoting interdisciplinary teaching and research while contributing to societal growth. Prof. M J Warsi, Dean of Academic Affairs, added, "These academic initiatives will enhance career prospects and contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the region. The university's expansion is expected to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete at the Union Territory and National levels."

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## On the occasion of Mahashivratri, Sohail Kazmi Meets BJP MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat, Takes Blessings from Baba Ramesh at Nageshwar Mandir

Jammu, Feb 26:

As the auspicious occasion of Mahashivratri approaches, a notable gathering took place at the revered Nageshwar Mandir in Janipur Colony, Jammu, where Jenab Sohail Kazmi, a prominent social figure, met BJP MLA Akhnoor, Mohan Lal Bhagat. The two leaders were warmly received by the local community and took blessings from Baba Ramesh, the spiritual leader of the temple.

The meeting was an opportunity for the leaders to come together and mark the significance of Mahashivratri, a festival celebrated by millions across the nation. The visit aimed to foster unity, spiritual well-being, and cooperation within the



community.

Jenab Sohail Kazmi, while speaking at the event, expressed his admiration for the Nageshwar Mandir's role in promoting peace and harmony among the people. He remarked, "Mahashivratri is not only a time for reflection and prayer but also an opportunity to strengthen

the bonds of togetherness in our society. I am honored to meet BJP MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat today and receive the blessings of Baba Ramesh. It is crucial that we work together for the progress and welfare of our people, and I hope this gathering today serves as a reminder of the shared values

we hold." BJP MLA Akhnoor Mohan Lal Bhagat also extended his wishes for a prosperous Mahashivratri to all attendees and emphasized the importance of spirituality in the life of every individual. "Mahashivratri is an occasion that transcends religious and political differences. It is a time for us to unite in the name of Lord Shiva, whose blessings guide us towards righteousness and peace. I thank Baba Ramesh for his divine guidance and hope this sacred occasion brings joy and prosperity to all," Bhagat said.

Baba Ramesh, the spiritual head of Nageshwar Mandir, blessed the leaders and the gathered crowd, urging

everyone to embrace the teachings of Lord Shiva for peace, love, and prosperity in their lives. "On this sacred night of Mahashivratri, may we all be blessed with wisdom and spiritual awakening. Let us dedicate ourselves to the service of humanity, as Lord Shiva teaches us to live with compassion, truth, and humility," Baba Ramesh said. As the evening unfolded, the spirit of unity and devotion filled the air at Nageshwar Mandir, setting the tone for a memorable Mahashivratri celebration. Local devotees, community leaders, and spiritual followers gathered in harmony, paying homage to Lord Shiva and seeking his blessings for peace and prosperity.



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

Say Maha Shivratri symbolizes the divine power of Lord Shiva

Jammu, February 26: BJP leader and MLA East Constituency, Yudhvir Sethi, along with former Minister and senior BJP leader Priya Sethi today paid obeisance at the ancient Peer Kho Temple on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri. The duo participated in the special prayers and sought blessings from Lord Shiva for peace, prosperity, and harmony in Jammu and Kashmir.

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



Countless devotees, Priya Sethi, while addressing the gathering, extended her heartfelt greetings to the people on Maha

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

A large number of devotees thronged the Peer Kho Temple to offer prayers and perform Rudra Abhishek on this pious occasion. The temple premises reverberated with chants of 'Har Har Mahadev' and 'Om Namah Shivaya' as devotees immersed themselves in religious fervor. Both leaders reiterated their commitment to promoting the spiritual and cultural legacy of Jammu and appreciated the administration for facilitating seamless arrangements at religious places during the festival.

## UT status to J&K is an insult of public opinion, warn to protest on March 3. Elected representatives should protest in the House: Sahni

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

In a press conference held today at the party's state central office, state chief Manish Sahni said that the erstwhile state of Jammu-Kashmir remaining a Union Territory (UT) is an insult to public opinion, the Lieutenant Governor, Chief Minister, all ministers and MLAs are enjoying their personal facilities to the fullest, but public issues are being sidelined and people are being crushed in the mill of dual power system, the era of accountability is almost coming to an end. He said that the BJP government at the centre has maintained silence in fulfilling the promise of restoration of statehood, while Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his ministers are not able to move beyond verbal



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

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

Awantipora, Feb 26: In a sophisticated way towards digital policing, Police in Awantipora has registered its first electronic First Information Report (e-FIR) following a complaint lodged via Email. The complaint was filed by Mushtaq Ahmed Bhat resident of New Colony Khrew, against Adil Ahmad Bhat and Bilal Ahmad Bhat both residents of New Colony Khrew. The complainant alleged them about assaulting his whole family causing injury to them. The complainant has supported the complaint with OPD ticket from PHC Khrew and copy of Aadhaar card as evidential proof.

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

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 26: The District Floriculture Office Anantnag today strongly refuted the information circulated on various media platforms regarding illegal felling of trees in Rani Bagh.

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

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

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

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

## Keshav Chopra Organizes 11th Varshik Langar on Mahashivratri

Jammu, Feb 26: On the occasion of Maha Shivratri Chairman Samvedna Society Keshav Chopra organized 11th Varshik langar at Talab Tillo in which BJP JKUT President Sat Sharma (CA), MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta, Prominent Journalist Sohail Kazmi, BJP Spokesperson Gaurav Gupta, District President BJP Jammu Adv Rajesh Gupta, BJP JKUT Secretary Ayodhya Gupta, Neelam Nargotra, Suneet Raina, Jeet Angral, Ex Dy. Mayor Dharma Singh Janwal, Dr Akshay Sharma, JKUT Health and Medical Cell Convenor Puneet Mahajan Participated. Sat Sharma expressed Shivratri greetings to the people of the JKUT



and said that Shivratri is such a festival which reminds us how to get rid of evils and lead a pious life. Arvind Gupta also expressed greetings to the people of the JKUT and hoped that May this Shivratri brings

Peace for everyone. Sohail Kazmi & Gaurav Gupta also expressed their best wishes to the people of Jammu Kashmir and requested everyone to come forward and work for the needy sections. Keshav Chopra while

expressing the greetings said that these festivals also provide an opportunity to come together as a mark of respect towards our religion and also Prayed for peace and Prosperity of the JKUT. Veena Gupta, Kushant Daffara,

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

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

Says Central Govt always prioritized interests of employees, J&K people

Jammu, Feb 26: Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta, reaffirmed that normalcy has been fully restored in Kashmir, attributing this transformation to the decisive policies of the Modi government. He emphasized that post the abrogation of Article 370, the region has witnessed unprecedented peace, development, and a secure environment conducive to economic and social progress. The fear-driven narrative that once gripped Kashmir has been replaced by a renewed sense of stability, paving the way for large-scale investments and an

improved quality of life for its residents. He was speaking to media persons after offering prayers at several temples in the Gandhi Nagar constituency on the auspicious occasion of Maha Shivratri in Jammu. Kavinder lauded the Central Government for extending the package of concessions and incentives for Central Government employees serving in Kashmir for another three years. Terming it a significant step, he said such measures would enhance the welfare and security of employees posted in the region while strengthening governance and administrative efficiency.



The senior BJP leader asserted that the Modi government has completely transformed Jammu and Kashmir by implementing developmental policies and ensuring the integration of the

Union Territory with the national mainstream. He pointed out that infrastructural projects, tourism revival, and improved law and order conditions reflect the government's unwavering commitment to the region's progress. Extending his greetings on Maha Shivratri, he prayed for peace, prosperity, and the well-being of all citizens. He emphasized that the festival symbolizes unity and spiritual enlightenment, urging people to uphold the rich cultural traditions that define India's diverse heritage. "The Central Government has once again demonstrated its dedication

to the people of Jammu and Kashmir by ensuring that the employees working in the Valley receive the necessary financial and logistical support. This decision will further instill confidence among government servants and reaffirm the government's resolve to strengthen governance in the region," he said. "The Modi government has always prioritized the interests of employees and citizens in Jammu and Kashmir. This extension of incentives will further strengthen governance and ensure that essential services in the Valley continue without disruption," he added.

### Srinagar Police Arrests Highway Robbers Impersonating Police Commandos

Srinagar, Feb 26: Srinagar Police has apprehended a gang of robbers who were posing as Police Commandos to loot trucks during nighttime. The operation led to the recovery of dummy guns, a vehicle, black uniforms, and other incriminating materials used in the crime.

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

Acting swiftly, Srinagar Police formed multiple teams and conducted an extensive search operation. Within



days, 04 accused persons were identified and arrested from different areas of the city. They have been identified as:

- Sahil Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-u-Din Sheikh, resident of Narak Budgam
- Agib Ahmad Sheikh, son of Mehraj-u-Din Sheikh, resident of Narkarah Budgam
- Arbaz Ahmad Wani, son of Hilal Ahmad Wani, resident of SD Colony Batmaloo
- Faisal Ahmad Shah, son of Azad Ahmad Shah, resident of Nowhatta

The investigation led to the seizure of two dummy guns, nine mobile phones, a Swift vehicle, ATM cards, cash, and black commando uniforms used in the crime. The accused specifically targeted trucks with registration numbers from outside the Union Territory, choosing desolate highway stretches during nighttime to execute their crimes. They intimidated drivers using dummy guns while dressed in black commando uniforms before robbing them of cash, ATM cards, and other valuables.

### On The Holy Occasion of "MahaShivratri" Rajat Sharma & Sahil Mahajan inaugurated Bhandara at Maa Vaishno Devi Mandir Shahidi Chowk Jammu

Jammu, Feb 26: On the holy Occasion Of "MahaShivratri" Rajat Sharma MD (Unique Outsourcing, Unique Jan Kalyan Sewa Simiti, Unique Voice & Sahil Mahajan (BJP JK UT Co-Convenor Sanskriti Art and Culture Cell, Maa Bawe Wali Records MD & Pushkar Kumar Sharma (Gadighar Mandal Adyakash) inaugurated Bhandara at Maa Vaishno Devi Mandir, Shahidi Chowk Jammu. Programs was organised by Swama Singh Munna (Auto Stand) They also performed seva at different Shivratri programs. In the program Firstly they paid Obeisance in the feet of Lord Shiva. After that they inaugurated Bhandara for general public performed langer seva and distributed Langer among people present there. Heavy number of devotees pay obeisance to Lord Shiva. Speaking on the occasion



people also perform kalash yatra and Maha Yagya which holds a very high importance since time immemorial and it literally means devotion, sacrifice, offering and worship and refers to any ritual done in front of sacred fire, often with mantras. He appreciated organisers and said on this day people organises various programs like bhandaras and Shiv vivah across

country which is highly appreciable and said Lord Shiva will bless all with health, wealth and prosperity. Sahil Mahajan greeted public on this holy occasion and said MahaShivratri is big festival of hindu which is Celebrated across whole country. On this day people performed Shiv Vivah at various different sites. BJP

devotes chants Shiva prayers. Fasting themselves and performs various religious function on this day. He also appreciated the Bhandara Organisers and said these types of social activities are boon to humanity and he thanked whole Organising committee and public for making this a successful event and he appealed the whole Public to come forward in big numbers and join this program.



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

JAMMU, Feb 26: In a landmark move towards global road safety, Rajeev Kapur, Managing Director of Steelbird Helmets, presented the 'Mission Save Lives' 13-point roadmap at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in Morocco.

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

The plan advocates for a universal helmet safety standard for all developing nations, eliminating the need for manufacturers to comply with multiple regulations. UN-WHO accredited helmet testing laboratories in every country are proposed to combat the sale of fake helmets, ensuring quality and safety. Key recommendations include mandating two certified helmets with every new two-wheeler, enforcing a 'No Helmet, No Fuel' policy, and making lightweight bicycle helmets compulsory for children under four years old. A nationwide crackdown on counterfeit helmets



and a traceability system for defective helmet components are also crucial aspects of the initiative. To encourage helmet affordability, Kapur calls for the elimination of import duties and taxes on helmets in countries lacking manufacturing facilities. He also urges governments to allocate 25% of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets to road safety initiatives, such as distributing subsidized helmets and launching awareness campaigns. In addition, the plan stresses the importance of mandatory ISO certification for helmet manufacturers, fully equipped in-house testing

laboratories, and helmet sensors in two-wheelers to remind riders to wear helmets. Delivery and ride-sharing companies must also test their helmets at certified labs in Europe and the U.S. With this ambitious strategy, Rajeev Kapur calls for global collaboration among policymakers, manufacturers, and governments to enhance road safety. By enforcing helmet regulations, eliminating fake products, and increasing public awareness, the 'Mission Save Lives' roadmap aims to make roads safer worldwide and significantly reduce traffic fatalities by 2030.

## SKUAST-TAJ performed Puja on eve of Mahashivratri

Jammu, Feb 26:

President SKUAST-TAJ Dr Vikas Sharma along with staff members / students performing hawan at Main Campus Chatha

Jammu, 26 February: A hawan puja with chanting of vedic mantras was performed at Main Campus Chatha of SKUAST-Jammu for the well being and further development of the Institution. On the occasion President SKUAST-TAJ Dr Vikas Sharma, General Secretary Dr. Vivak M. Arya, Joint Secretary Dr. P.K. Rai, President NTEA-J S. Kamaldeep Singh, other office bearers and senior faculty members Dr. Sanjay Guleria, Dr. B.K. Sinha,



along with other staff members and students from various divisions were present. All the teachers, non teaching staff and students present there, bowed to the

Lord Shiva, seeking the blessings and prayed for the long prosperity of the SKUAST-Jammu. A vishal bhandara was also organized after the puja.

## JKPDP leader Narinder Sharma felicitated for his outstanding social work on occasion of Shivratri

RS Pura: Management of Shiv Temple Simble Morh, RS Pura today felicitated JKPDP leader Narinder Sharma for his outstanding social work on the occasion of Shivratri. This recognition is a testament to his dedication and commitment to serving the community. Sharma has been actively involved in various social initiatives, and his efforts have made a positive impact on the lives of many.

Head of the Temple Committee, Shastri Bishan Dass Ji Maharaj speaking on the occasion said that as a leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (JKPDP), Sharma has been working tirelessly to address the needs and concerns of the people in his constituency. His social work has focused on improving the lives of marginalized communities, promoting education, and advocating for social justice. Sharma's felicitation on Shivratri is a well-deserved recognition of his selfless service to the community. It serves as an inspiration to others to follow in his footsteps and work towards creating a positive impact in society, said Shastri.

Speaking on the occasion, JKPDP leader Narinder Sharma reaffirmed his commitment to prioritizing and highlighting public issues that affect the community.



As a responsible and dedicated leader, Sharma recognizes the importance of addressing the concerns and needs of the people, he said. By prioritizing public issues, Sharma aims to ensure that the concerns of vulnerable sections of society are heard and addressed, demand answers from those in power and promote transparency in governance. Sharma said he would continue work towards finding solutions to pressing issues, such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and social welfare. Sharma's commitment to highlighting public

issues demonstrates his dedication to serving the people and upholding the principles of democracy. By keeping the needs and concerns of the community at the forefront, he aims to create a better future for all. Sharma has assured the public that he will continue to voice the grievances of the common man. This commitment was reaffirmed on the occasion of Shivratri, where Sharma reiterated his dedication to serving the people and addressing their concerns. Sharma recognizes the importance of being a voice for the voiceless and amplifying the concerns of the common man. He has pledged to hear the grievances and con-

cerns of the common man and understand their struggles, highlight the issues affecting the community and bring them to the attention of the authorities. I shall work towards finding solutions to the problems faced by the common man and push for policy changes that benefit the community. By assuring the public that he will voice their grievances, Sharma has demonstrated his commitment to being a true representative of the people. His dedication to serving the community and addressing their concerns is a testament to his leadership and character. Sharma has warmly invited the public to approach him with their concerns and grievances, stating that his doors are open 24x7. This welcoming gesture reflects Sharma's commitment to being accessible and responsive to the needs of the community. By keeping his doors open 24x7, Sharma is showing that he is answerable to the people and willing to listen to their concerns at any time, encouraging open communication and transparency in his interactions with the public. Sharma's invitation for the public to approach him at any time reflects his dedication to serving the community and being a leader who is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people.

## IIM Jammu Concludes Authors Workshop on Academic Writing for Higher Education in Indian Languages (Dogri) in Collaboration with Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti Under UGC, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

Jammu, 25th Feb 2025 - Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, in collaboration with the Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti under the aegis UGC, New Delhi, Ministry of Education, Government of India, concluded the Authors Workshop on Academic Writing for Higher Education in Indian Languages (Dogri) on 25th Feb 2025 at Vedanta MDP Block Jagti. This initiative, aligned with NEP 2020, aims to enhance academic content in Bharatiya languages and improve accessibility to quality education. The valedictory ceremony was graced by Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, IIM Jammu, along with Dr. Purnendu from Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, New Delhi. The workshop featured ses-



sions on NEP 2020 insights, textbook writing principles, quality assurance, terminology standardization, interdisciplinary development, and a panel discussion on future action plans. Dr. Garima Saini, Assistant Professor, IIM Jammu invited feedback from participants and discussed the roadmap for moving forward, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts in strengthening academic writing in Bharatiya languages. Shri Purnendu Debnath, Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti, New Delhi, interacted with participants and encouraged them to share their requirements, ensuring they could be effectively addressed and put forward.

The workshop concluded with a valedictory ceremony followed by certificate distribution recognizing participants' contributions, marking a significant step in promoting Bharatiya languages in academic writing, research, and higher education. The workshop includes sessions on insights from

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

## JU organized one-day training program on Plant Root Architecture Analysis



Jammu, February 26: The Department of Botany, University of Jammu, successfully organised a one-day training program on "Plant Root Architecture Analysis for Climate Resilience" under the DST-Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) project of Dr. Sikander Pal, Principal Investigator. The program, organized as part of the Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR) initiative of the Government of India, aimed to provide research training to faculty and scholars from the region, promoting expertise in climate resilience studies within plant sciences. The event commenced with an invited lecture by Prof. Gurdev Chand, Head of the Plant Physiology Division, SKUAST-Jammu, followed by an interactive session on trait identification for conventional versus molecular breeding. The inaugural ceremony was graced by Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies, University of Jammu, as the Chief Guest. In her address, Prof. Rohmetra emphasized the significance of such training programs in enhancing research capabilities, particularly in understanding climate change responses in crop systems. Earlier, Prof. Sushel Verma, Head, Department of Botany, welcomed the participants and extended his gratitude to the Chief Guest and Prof. Namrata Sharma, Dean, Faculty of Life Sciences, who attended as the Guest of Honor. Prof. Verma highlighted the importance of plant root trait analysis in agricultural research. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Namrata Sharma encouraged the participants to adopt advanced research methodologies in their respective domains.

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## DPAP demands regularisation of daily wagers

Follow the Ladakh policy till proper regularisation.

Srinagar- 26 February, DPAP Senior Leader Peer Bilal is advocating for the regularization of daily wagers in Jammu and Kashmir, citing the recent order by the Ladakh administration to enhance their wages. Bilal argues that daily wagers in J&K are facing immense hardships, with their families struggling to make ends meet due to starvation. These daily wagers play a crucial role in providing essential services in various departments, including "Jal Shakti", "RDD", "Health", "PWD", "PDD", and "Agriculture". Given Ladakh's decision to enhance wages, Peer Bilal questions why J&K, a Union Territory, cannot follow suit. In fact, daily rated workers in Kashmir Valley have been demanding regulariza-



tion and minimum wages for years, with many employed in government departments, agriculture, tourism, and other sectors. They face low pay, job insecurity, and lack of social security benefits, despite their essential contributions. Peer Bilal has urged the His Excellency LG to intervene in the matter on a top priority basis, seeking a solution to the long-standing issues faced by daily wagers in J&K.

Srinagar, Feb 26: To promote academic discussions on the evolving cultural, economic, and social landscape of the Trans-Himalayan region, the Centre of Central Asian Studies (CCAS), University of Kashmir (KU), hosted a two-day international conference on "Trans-Himalayan Borderlands: Dynamics of Connectivity, Culture, and Change." Scholars and academicians from prestigious institutions in India, including JNU, Pondicherry University, and Jamia Millia Islamia participated, besides International experts and academics from France, Australia, and Italy who joined the conference in online mode. Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofar Khan, who was the chief guest at the inaugural session, highlighted the strategic significance of



trans-himalayan borderlands in shaping regional histories, trade networks, and socio-political dynamics. "Conferences like these help us deepen our understanding of the intricate connections that have histori-

cally defined the Himalayan region and its neighboring cultures," she said. Keynote speaker, Prof. Parth Chauhan, Head, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, ISER Mohali, provided a detailed analysis of prehistoric mi-

grations, technological advancements, and environmental interactions in Kashmir and the trans-himalayas. Director, India Central Asia Foundation and Head, MERI Centre of International Studies, New Delhi, Prof. Ramakant Dwivedi, in

his special remarks, underscored the historical trade and cultural exchanges between South and Central Asia, emphasizing their relevance in contemporary times. A special lecture by Prof. Vijay Sathe, Deccan College, Pune, explored paleoanthropology, horticulture, and human evolution in the Himalayan borderlands, and shed light on the ecological and anthropological aspects of the region. Earlier Director CCAS KU Prof. Tabasum Firdous who is also Convenor of the conference welcomed the participants and highlighted the aims and objectives of the program. Dr. Mohammad Ajmal Shah, Coordinator of the Conference and faculty at CCAS KU delivered the formal vote of thanks at the inaugural session.

## Indonesia calls for incentives to boost shipbuilding, renewable energy adoption in maritime sector

The Indonesian government is advocating for greater incentives to promote the growth of the domestic shipbuilding industry and encourage the adoption of new and renewable energy in the maritime sector.

The move aims to strengthen energy independence and align with the country's long-term commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. "Electric cars and electric motorcycles receive incentives. Ships should also be included in this scheme. The important issue is how ships built with new and renewable energy can get incentives, including refurbished ships," said Antoni Ari Priadi, Director General of sea transportation at the Ministry of Transportation, on Tuesday.



According to Antoni, Indonesia's shipbuilding industry currently lags behind other countries in new and renewable energy adoption. He cited Japan as an example, where hydrogen-powered vessels are already being developed, whereas Indonesia is still in the early stages of using biodiesel. "There are several shipping

companies that have started constructing ships with electric main engines rather than traditional combustion-based systems. However, Indonesia still relies on petroleum. The challenge now is to determine the most suitable new and renewable energy solution for our country," he said, Xinhua news agency reported.

## G20 meet on global poverty marred by disputes, absence of major economies

Cape Town, Feb 26: South Africa sought to salvage international talks on tackling global poverty on Wednesday as finance chiefs of several leading economies skipped a gathering of Group of 20 nations in Cape Town held against a backdrop of foreign aid cuts. The two-day meeting comes after the Trump administration announced plans to gut its USAID arm and Britain slashed its aid budget by 40 per cent to divert funds towards defence spending.

Disputes over trade, the Ukraine war and how to tackle climate change have long made it hard for the G20 grouping to make serious progress on global challenges, but the latest no-shows risk further undermining its credibility. After US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent confirmed he would not attend, finance ministers from Japan, India and Canada also pulled out. Others cut short their presence and the European Union's top economic official chose to stay away. "It is now more important than ever that the members of the G20 work together," South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said in opening remarks appealing for multilateral



cooperation.

"It is vital to ensuring that the rights and interests of the vulnerable are not trampled beneath the ambitions of the powerful," he said. The high-profile absences further reduced chances of agreement on a meaningful communiqué at the end of the meeting. There also seemed little hope of major progress on issues that Ramaphosa has hosted wanted to target: scant climate finance from rich nations and reform of a financial system that penalises poor countries, as well as widening inequalities.

## Trump announces 'Gold Card' program for wealthy foreigners, offering US residency for USD 5 million

Washington, Feb 26: US President Donald Trump announced on Tuesday (local time) that the United States will introduce a "gold card" for wealthy foreigners, granting them the right to live and work in the country, with a pathway to citizenship, in exchange for a USD five million fee, CNN reported.

The CNN report, citing Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick stated that the gold card will replace the existing EB-5 immigrant investor visa program. "They'll have to go through vetting, of course," the CNN report, citing the Commerce Secretary, said. "To make sure they're wonderful world-class global citizens." Lutnick added.

Trump made the announcement during a media availability in the Oval Office, where he also signed an executive action investigating the copper industry and answered questions on various topics. He stated that sales of the gold cards



would begin in about two weeks and suggested that millions could be sold. "From the legal standpoint, it's totally legal to do," he said.

When asked if Russian oligarchs would be eligible to buy the cards, Trump responded: "Yeah, possibly. I know some Russian oligarchs that

are very nice people," CNN report added. During the event, Trump also admired a map of the newly renamed Gulf of America, and said, "I'm just admiring it as I look at it. I'm getting teary-eyed — but I don't want you to say, 'Trump broke down and started crying.'"

Continuing his remarks, Trump slammed the Associated Press, calling it "radical left." "I think they're Radical Left. I think they're third-rate reporters... They don't treat us fairly," he said. Earlier, White House Press Secretary Karoline Levitt defended the administration's stance on the Associated Press, asserting that questioning the US President is a privilege, not a legal right. During the briefing, Trump was seen distributing pamphlets that read, "Trump was right about everything."

"Look. You see that? Trump was right about everything... Would anybody like one?" he said.

## Russia offers rare earth metals to US

Moscow, Feb 26:

Russia on Monday said that it is ready to strike a deal with the United States on rare earth metals. Speaking with media in Moscow, Dmitry Peskov, the Press Secretary of the President of Russia, said that the country has many rare earth metals that the United States needs and any possible deal in future will further boost cooperation between both nations. Earlier in the day, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia was ready to work with "foreign partners, including Americans" on developing reserves of rare and rare earth metals, including in parts in Ukraine that are now controlled by Russia.

"Russia is one of the undisputed leaders in these rare earth metal reserves. We have them in the north, in Murmansk, and in the Caucasus, in Kabardino-Balkaria, and in the Far East, in the



Irkutsk region, in Yakutia and Tyva (republics)," Putin said.

He further said the US-Ukraine agreement on rare earth metals and other resources does not concern Russia in any way. However, before concluding an agreement on rare earth metals, Putin said that US should first assess the resources. "Of course, it

would be necessary to assess this resource, how real it is, how many of these resources are there, how much they cost, and so on," Russia's leading news agency TASS quoted Putin as saying.

Ukraine and the US are currently in renewed negotiations to sign an agreement on rare earth met-

als. Ukrainian Minister Olha Stefanishyna took to her social media on Monday, posting "Ukrainian and US teams are in the final stages of negotiations regarding the minerals agreement."

The negotiations have been very constructive, with nearly all key details finalised. We are committed to completing this swiftly to proceed with its signature. We hope both US and UA leaders might sign and endorse it in Washington the soonest to showcase our commitment for decades to come".

In early February, Trump and Zelenskyy decided to strike a deal on rare earth metals but could not reach an agreement as Kyiv rejected Washington's proposal to help in exchange for Washington's right to 50 per cent of Ukraine's rare-earth metals, arguing that there was no security guarantee in the agreement.

## South Korean President Yoon says he is sorry, thankful to nation at final impeachment hearing

Seoul, Feb 26:

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said on Tuesday that he is sorry and thankful to the nation as he addressed the final hearing of his impeachment trial in connection with his short-lived imposition of martial law. "I want to first say that I am sorry and thankful to the people," he said at the Constitutional Court, reflecting on the months since his surprise declaration of martial law on December 3. "While feeling thankful, the reality of not being able to do my work in the time given to me by the people made me sorry and caused my heart to ache."

South Korean President's legal team called for the dismissal of his impeachment during final arguments before the Constitutional Court, saying the opposition party's unilateral actions necessitated his short-lived imposition of martial law.

Yoon was absent from the court-



room as the team of lawyers presented their final arguments on why the court should dismiss the President's impeachment of the president over his surprise declaration of martial law on December 3.

Earlier in the day, thousands of supporters of the impeached President gathered around the Constitutional Court amid the final hearing

of his impeachment trial, calling for the nullification of the impeachment.

At around 10 a.m., approximately 3,800 police officers were dispatched near the court's main entrance and near Anguk Station. Some 190 police buses were also parked to block the view of the court from the sidewalk.

The National Assembly's impeachment motion against Yoon accuses the president of violating the Constitution and laws by declaring martial law in the absence of a national emergency and ignoring due procedures, such as holding a Cabinet meeting and notifying parliament. Yoon has argued his declaration of martial law was an act of governance meant to send a warning to the opposition party over its repeated impeachments of government officials and attempts to cut the budget.

## Microsoft removes employees from meeting for protesting AI deal with Israel

Washington, Feb 26:

In a move to silence protesting voices within the company, tech giant Microsoft removed five employees from a live meeting after they protested against the company's contract with the Israeli military, according to a report by The Associated Press. According to the report, during the meeting with Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella, those employees were protesting for providing artificial intelligence and cloud computing services to the Israeli military, which it used to target civilians in war-torn Gaza. The incident of protest came into light after an investigation done by the news agency Associated Press. The report revealed that the sophisticated AI models from Microsoft and Open AI had been used in Israel's military actions in Gaza. These



AI models helped the Israeli military to select the bombing targets during the war with Gaza and Lebanon.

Notably, the attacks from the Israeli military, using AI models also included an errant air strike on a vehicle in 2023 where four civilians from Lebanon including three young girls and their grandmother were killed.

What happened in the meeting with the CEO?

At the meeting Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella was talking about new products

at a company meeting in Redmond, Washington. During his speech, a group of employees standing nearby revealed T-shirts that, when lined up, spelled out the message: "Does Our Code Kill Kids, Satya?"

The event was live-streamed across the company. Photos and videos show that Nadella continued speaking without acknowledging the protest. Two men quickly approached the employees, tapped them

## Sudan war at critical juncture as military advances in key regions

Cairo, Feb 26:

The war in Sudan appears to be reaching a critical juncture after nearly two years of fighting that has killed tens of thousands, driven millions from their homes and seen bloody atrocities.

For the first time, the military has been making steady advances against its rival, the notorious paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, and it could soon wrest back control of the capital, Khartoum.

The RSF responded by announcing at a gathering in Kenya that it and its allies will establish a parallel government.

What's happening on the ground?

The war erupted in April 2023 between the military and the RSF with battles in Khartoum and around the country. The leaders of the two forces had been allies who were meant to have overseen the democratic transition after a popular uprising in 2019, but instead worked together to thwart a return to civilian rule.

Since then, at least 20,000 people have been killed, though the number is likely far higher. The war has driven more than 14 million people from their homes and pushed parts of the country into famine.

In recent weeks, the military has pushed deeper into the Greater Khartoum area, which includes the capital and its two sister cities, Omdurman and Khartoum North. Its forces are aiming to retake districts still held by the RSF, including the presidential palace and key ministries. The military has also taken back much of White Nile and Gezira provinces, bordering the capital. In nearby North Kordofan province, troops broke a long RSF siege of the provincial capital, el-Obeid. The advances are the first time that SAF has reversed RSF momentum for any major period of time



since the start of the war, said Alan Boswell of the International Crisis Group, a research consultancy, using an acronym of the Sudanese Armed Forces.

Will the war end if the military retakes Khartoum? A military victory in Khartoum would likely just move the war into a new chapter, creating a de facto

partition of Sudan into military and RSF-run zones. That partition would not be stable or durable, Boswell said, meaning more fighting would ensue.

Military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan has shown no sign of engaging in serious peace talks. The RSF, headed by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, has seemed to be determined to keep fighting.

The RSF still holds much of western Sudan, particularly most of the Darfur region. On Monday, the RSF announced a new assault on El-Fasher, capital of North Darfur state, held by the military.

Heavy fighting in North Darfur this week forced the international medical aid group Doctors Without Borders to halt aid to the Zamzam camp, where some 500,000 displaced people are living and where authorities have declared a famine is taking place.

Boswell said a victory in Khartoum could also cause strains to break open in the military's coalition. The military has been backed by a collection of armed factions including former Darfur rebels and Islamist brigades that are historic rivals united only by the goal of fighting the RSF.

What is the significance of

the RSF's 'parallel government'?

The RSF and its allies signed a charter over the weekend in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, establishing a parallel government.

They are trying to achieve a victory politically that they cannot achieve militarily, Cameron Hudson, a senior fellow in the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, told AP. Burhan has also spoken of setting up a transitional government, raising the potential for two rival administrations jockeying for support as their forces battle entrenching Sudan's effective partition.



## North in News

## EDITORIAL

## PRAYAGRAJ MAHA KUMBH MELA-2025

This part of the planet where one of the perfect civilizations had/had ever existed is called ARYAVRAT VEDIC SANATAN SABHAYATA-rich, prosperous, safe and peace loving. SUJALAM -SUFALAM-MALAYAZ-SHEETLAM- so be happy and contented. The peaceful temperament of our generations had/had prevented us from challenging/inventing others. Truth-Beauty-Goodness being our faith and practice, have recurred for us, our cultural identity as the followers of Sanatan Dharam. We have achieved the best in Spiritualism and the State Management. We love and respect all that has been created by the Supreme Creator, sustainer and destroyer. We bow in respect. Fairs/gatherings and congregations are a part of our life that makes us to feel the warmth of our relations and human values. The 2025 Prayagraj Maha Kumbh Mela- A Hindu Pilgrimage festival marking a full orbital revolution of Jupiter around the Sun, began on 13th January 2025 and concluded on 26th February 2025, at the Triveni Sangam at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India. It has been termed as world's largest peaceful congregation of millions of people who have taken a dip in the river. This event marks the completion of a 12-year Kumbh Mela cycle. The Kumbh Mela has been organised since the periods immemorial. The sight of each Kumbh Mela is decided by the astrological alignment of Jupiter, the Sun and the Moon. As per astrological calculations, the 2025-edition is unique since the constellation alignment seen is witnessed once in 144 years. The Kumbh Mela has been recognised as part of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO. The Maha Kumbh Mela symbolises the victory of gods over demons. Millions of devotees immerse themselves in the Ganges, Yamuna and the Saraswati waters. The Hindus consider it as a pure water to be used for purification of the soul that leads to attaining of Moksha. The budget for the event was about Rs 63.62 billion. The event was expected to fetch a revenue of more than Rs 2 trillion. The 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela has made preparations for about 40 Crore visitors. The Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj has seen an unprecedented number of devotees participating in the sacred bathing rituals. A delegation of 118 diplomats, their spouses and also the diplomats from 77 countries had visited the Maha Kumbh. The President of India- Draupadi Murmu; Vice President of India- Jagdeep Dhankhar and The Prime Minister of India- Narendra Modi also took the holy bath. Bhutan King- Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk; spiritual leaders Chief Ministers/Union Ministers. Film and Media, Business Community/Sports. May God bless all with peace, happiness and prosperity

RAJNI SHARMA.....

## Sujatha Kshirsagar

Women academic leaders and entrepreneurs are not only shaping institutions but also fuelling India's socio-economic growth with their grit and determination

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

The current scenario and notable mentions

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

The good news is that the picture is drastically changing, especially over the last few years. Even in the past, the country has seen visionary

women leaders like Savitribai Phule, a pioneering social reformer who, alongside her husband Jyotirao Phule, established India's first school for girls in 1848, championing women's education and social justice.

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

Apart from that, women leaders in business and entrepreneurial space have also inspired aspiring Indian youth. Notable mentions include Kiran Mazumdar Shaw and Indra Nooyi. Women leaders are transforming Indian higher education through inclusive environments and innovation. More women in leadership positions increase diversity and bring new perspectives to academia. Through their efforts, they are paving the way for future generations to have a more progressive and equitable educational landscape in India.

The Challenges Faced by Women Leaders in Academia The challenges for women leaders include social stereotypes at one end and the barriers of an institution at the other. Several women are even still facing serious prejudices against them regarding their potential as leaders, especially in traditional fields. Women

lack opportunities to get mentors and network for their professional advancement.

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

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

## Women as Educators and Leaders

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

Female professors have formed the backbone for progressive educational policy and research quality. Many critical departments and significant research initiatives now have women running them, evidence of their burgeoning influence in university life. Programmes and fellowships dedicated to providing opportunities for girls and women, especially in these STEM fields, have helped a culture of creativity and excellence flourish within these disciplines.

At present, there are some of India's most high-profile universities and institutions, with women at the helm, spearheading the trend of making education more accessible and equitable. Women leaders are playing an important role in academics.

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

## Women as Catalysts or Agents of Change

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

The most deep-seated effect of women in education has been in adult literacy and skill development. Women educators have led the process of increasing rural and marginalised communities' literacy rates, greatly improving their socio-economic conditions. Female entrepreneurs also are revolutionising education delivery by coming up with innovative solutions for diverse learners across India. EdTech platforms of female founders have promoted flexible models, digital classroom applications, and AI-based analytics with their introduction; thereby, performance from students at high-quality education gets scaled up because access to more is also made easily feasible. Social development and the tech revolution

are mutually supporting each other.

## The Future of Women's Leadership in Higher Education

Increasing the number of women leaders in higher education is not only about gender equality; it is a strategic imperative for India's progress.

Women leaders in higher education institutions bring diverse perspectives and transformative decision-making into academic administration, which drives innovation and excellence. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has recognised the importance of women's participation in academia and thus proposed reforms, to ensure gender inclusivity. Through the incorporation of leadership training under the framework of higher education and initiating mentorship opportunities, India can usher in an optimum pipeline of women academic leaders. Furthermore, the vision of Viksit Bharat and Atmanirbhar Bharat is in line with the very need to absorb India's demographic dividend. Education is at the heart of this vision, and empowering women as educators and leaders would be crucial in realising India's aspiration to become Vishwaguru—that is, a global leader in innovation and knowledge.

Conclusion Women leaders are undeniably shaping the future of Indian higher education. Despite all existing challenges, their excellence is bringing innumerable positive transformations within the present academia, which will lead to a more inclusive, progressive, and innovative educational landscape. The overall transformation of Indian education and the socio-economic liberalization of India can be achieved by removing all barriers to leadership, implementing supportive policies, and championing women's participation in higher education.

## Women pioneering change in Indian higher education

## SHIVARATRI: THE NIGHT OF SHIVA AND SHAKTI

## ASHWANI GURUJI

On this sacred night, one can ignite the power of Shiv and Shakti within

Shivratri is the night of Shiv and Shakti, the night of merger, the night of completeness - Understanding this is a sadhana...which can span lifetimes or be accomplished in a moment just, a beautiful journey bestowing myriad siddhis en route...Shiv is an experience. This experience begins at the feet of the Guru and unfolds as per the capacity of the sadhak. Ravan composed the Shiv Tandav Stotram to describe it. Adi Shankaracharya said 'na paapam, na punyam, na saukham, na daukham...' to describe what it's not. These were the Shiv sadhaks of finest quality, a rare phenomenon. What they described was their experience of Shiv; Shiv however is beyond description, for what is limitless cannot be bound in words and meanings. So no amount of reading and writing can grant you the experience, to get that experience you need to tread the path of sadhana, under a Guru.

The first experience of Shiv is the Shakti of Guru. As you walk the path shown by Guru, something that you want manifests in your life. It could be health, relationship, job etc. That becomes your experience of the



Shiv tatva - that which has manifested the un-manifested. There are as many examples of such manifestations at Dhyana Ashram in present times as there are narratives from the past of sadhaks who were able to get the boon they desired. That 'boon' or manifested desire, however, is only an aspect of Shiv. 90 per cent of the people were satisfied with the experience and their focus shifted from Shiv to that 'thing' that they wanted. So the experience of Shiv for them gets limited to that. A thousand names of Shiv, stem from here. Those who don't let their focus shift, move further into the dimension of Shiv. Next, the subtler siddhis of yog start manifesting - clairvoyance, clairaudience, premonition, extrasensory perceptions etc. Many take this to be the ultimate and end their experience here. They immerse themselves in the siddhis and powers so acquired and forget that this too is just an aspect. The finer sadhaks progress ahead where they start interacting with the energies that run creation, aiding and assisting them in the process of Creation. Mentioned above are just some siddhis, the domain of Shiv however is endless. The key to accessing it is vairagya (detachment). The moment one gets attached to any aspect of Shiv or Siddhi that it bestows, the upward progression stops. Vairagya is possible only when

one has the gyan of reality and gyan is possible only when one can sit in dhyana. Dhyana happens only when one has accumulated good karmas, which are acquired from seva or service. Seva is the first step. It is through seva that one increases the size of their container or the experience of Shiv that one can hold.

This Shivratri, embark on the journey to increasing the size of your container...to experience Shiv. Shiv is real, not a myth. Shiv is all-encompassing. All are accepted in the abode of Shiv - bhoot, pret, pisach, yaksh, kinnar, naag, dev, danav and humans. You don't have to be of a special caste to experience the various dimensions of Shiv. Shivratri is the night of Shiv and Shakti, the night of merger, the night of completeness. Guru, on the night of Shivratri, awakens the power of Shiv and Shakti in each and everyone who follows the path shown, without exceptions. In my journey of 25 years,

I have yet to come across a sadhak who under Guru Sanidhya has not experienced Shiv. The seva and sadhana performed on this night grant one the experiences and siddhis of many lifetimes, in just one night. It is a 100 per cent science, not a religion. Try and test it for yourself.

# Afghanistan stun England; knock them out of Champions Trophy

Ibrahim Zadran's majestic 177 and pacer Azmatullah Omarzai's fifer trumped Joe Root's masterful hundred, as the brave Afghanistan registered a thrilling 8-run win to knock a largely-inspired England out of the Champions Trophy here on Wednesday. England are winless after two matches and in their last league match in Group B they will face South Africa, who already have three points along with Australia. Afghanistan now have two points and will have to beat the Aussies in their final group match to entertain the hopes of reaching the last four. For a long time, England's chase merely rattled along

as the dismissal of Phil Salt and Jamie Smith jolted them early. They were 30 for two then, and eventually ended up at 317 all out with a ball to spare as pacer Omarzai (5/58) struck at crucial junctures. But Root (120, 111x4, 1x6) brought stability to England's innings through two alliances, adding 68 runs with Ben Duckett (38), who was dropped on 29, for the third wicket and then an 83-run stand with skipper Jos Buttler for the fifth wicket. Shubman Gill will be a big player for India, says Wasim Jaffer. They were not really blazing partnerships but kept Eng-



land afloat, keeping them in the vicinity of the asking rate.

But the jettisoning of Duckett and Buttler prematurely curtailed those blossoming

joint ventures, as Root had to shoulder the burden all by himself.

Root's was a clever innings, as he hardly hit any ball in anger but still managed a

strike-rate close to 100, and at times above 100. But there were those little flourishes which are so central to a Root innings such as a reverse sweep four off wrist spinner Noor Ahmad or a scooped six behind wicketkeeper off Fazalshah Farooqi. He brought up his 17th ODI hundred with a single off Rashid Khan, and looked to stay on. But a rather tired ramp off pacer Omarzai ended in the gloves of keeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz. But England had another willing soldier in Jamie Overton (32, 28b), who added precious 54 runs for the seventh wicket, but a

feeble heave off Omarzai ended his stint. It also marked the end of England's journey in this tournament. Earlier, Zadran's remarkable innings helped Afghanistan pile 325 for seven. Zadran, whose hundred came off 146 balls (12x4, 6x6), had solid support from skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi (40, 67b, 3x4), with whom he raised 103 runs for the fourth wicket, and Azmatullah Omarzai (41, 31b) with whom he milked 72 runs for the fifth wicket. Later, he plundered 111 runs for the sixth wicket with Mohammed Nabi (40, 24b) to put England through the wringer.

## Battle 'Royale' in Copa as Real Sociedad entertain Real Madrid



Madrid, Feb 26: Real Sociedad entertain Real Madrid in the first leg of their Copa del Rey semi-final on Wednesday night in a tie from which Carlo Ancelotti's side is the favourite to come out unscathed and play either FC Barcelona or Atletico Madrid in the final. The game comes with Real Madrid in arguably the best form of the season after knocking Manchester City out of the Champions League and a comfortable

2-0 win at home to Girona. But Real Sociedad have drastically improved their home form in recent months, with 11 wins from their last 13 games in the Reale Arena, and their last win was a comfortable 3-0 at home against Leganes, whom Real Madrid beat in the Copa quarterfinals. Real Sociedad coach Imanol Alguacil will be able to call on forwards, Sheraldo Becker and Take Kubo, who are both suspended for this weekend's

game away to Barcelona, reports Xinhua. Kubo scored his side's second goal against Leganes and Real Madrid would still take 50 percent of any profit from a future sale of their former player. Jude Bellingham's suspension after his red card for swearing at referee Jose Luis Munuera Montero in Pamplona just over a week ago is only applicable in La Liga and he will return to the side on Wednesday, with Brahim Diaz likely to step down to the subs' bench. Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti is also likely to make changes in his defense, with Antonio Rudiger back in action, while Fran Garcia steps in at left-back. One player who looks likely to miss out is midfielder Fede Valverde, who was rested at the weekend.

## Morning Football Club Crowned Champions at Poonch Futsal Cup 2025



Poonch: The Youth of District Football Association Poonch conducted a football tournament as Poonch Futsal Cup 2025 at Sports stadium Poonch where 14 teams all over the district took part in the event. The first match was held on 21st February between City FC and United FC. This was the opening match of the tournament and all the teams played brilliantly, well disciplined and professionally during the event. The final match of Futsal Cup was held on 25th February 2025 at sports stadium Poonch at 4 PM between PP FC Club and Morning Football Club Poonch, a tough competition was held between both the teams. Finally Morning football club won the final match and defeated PP FC

by kicking a penalty shot. Azam Rather TSWO Mandi are the chief Guest whereas Dy Sp Danish Javed was the guest of Honor. Sh Mohinder Bali Coach, Sardar Tarlochan Singh Coach, Jatin Sharma Coach, Sh

Mushtaq Ahmed Coach, Patez Malik Afridi and others were also present at the time of felicitation ceremony. While speaking on the occasion the guests highlighted the importance of sports in our society especially among the youth.

The speakers also appreciated the efforts of Morning football club Poonch the winning team. They received huge applause from the spectators and also from the players of other football clubs. The club was established for the last

four to five years ago with some employees, businessmen, retired persons and members of this club. Pertinent to mention here that with the continuous efforts of the whole club Morning FC registered their victory and made history. This is also a great message for youth of Poonch district especially for those who unfortunately indulge in drug addiction and other anti social activities. The runner up awarded to runner up team Purani Poonch football club with medal and track suit kit to every player whereas winner team Morning football club awarded with Futsal Cup 2025. The Proceeding was conducted by Dr Alamdard Adam Cultural officer JKAACL Rajouri Poonch.

## Kohli's heroics against Pakistan rewarded as India continue rankings dominance

NEW DELHI, Feb 26: India batting superstar Virat Kohli has moved back inside the top five on the list for ODI batters following the latest update to the ICC Men's Player Rankings. Kohli scored his 51st ODI century in a superb display of batting against Pakistan at the ICC Champions Trophy in Dubai on Sunday and as a result gained one place on the latest rankings for ODI batters to move back into fifth spot overall. It means three players from India occupy spots inside the top five, with opener Shubman Gill (first) and skipper Rohit Sharma (third) maintaining their places at the top of the batting rankings courtesy of



their own decent hauls at the ongoing Champions Trophy event. Gill actually increased his lead at the top of the rankings to 47 rating points, with former Pakistan captain Babar Azam still in second despite a lean run at the Champions Trophy so far. Kohli is the only player at the Champions Trophy

to make any ground inside the top 10 on the list for ODI batters, but there are a host of stars on the outskirts of the top 10 to make inroads on the latest rankings that were updated by the ICC on Wednesday. New Zealand's Will Young (up eight spots to 14th), England's Ben Duckett (up 27 places to equal 17th)

and Kiwi Rachin Ravindra (up 18 runs to 24th) are among the biggest movers after centuries at the tournament, while India right-hander KL Rahul (up two places to 15th) and South Africa dasher Rassie van der Dussen (up three places to 16th) also made some gains. Sri Lanka spinner Maheesh Theekshana remained atop the rankings for ODI bowlers despite the fact his side are not at the Champions Trophy, with Afghanistan tweaker Rashid Khan still his closest challenger in second place. South Africa spinner Keshav Maharaj (up one place to equal fourth), New Zealand quick Matt Henry (up two runs to sixth) and Australia veteran Adam

Zampa (up two spots to 10th) all make ground inside the top 10 for ODI bowlers, while Proteas pacer Kagiso Rabada (up four spots to 16th) and Kiwi Michael Bracewell (up 31 places to 26th) are among the biggest movers elsewhere. Bracewell also gained some ground on the latest list for ODI all-rounders, with the 34-year-old moving up 26 places to 11th following his four-wicket haul against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi at the Champions Trophy. His New Zealand teammate Ravindra (up six places to 15th) also made some movement in this category, with Afghanistan veteran Mohammad Nabi still leading the way.

## South Africa has to win Champions Trophy to get over the fear of failure: Herschelle Gibbs

NEW DELHI, Feb 26: Former South African cricket team opener Herschelle Gibbs has said that the South African team needs to win the first major ICC trophy after the inaugural edition's win in 1998 to shed the tag of chokers. In a free-flowing chat, Gibbs, who is a brand ambassador of India Corporate Cricket Bash, threw light on his favourite cricketer, Virat Kohli. Excerpts: We saw the South African team beat Afghanistan in the Champions Trophy opener. How do you rate the performance? They stand as good a chance as anyone to win the tournament. Obviously the game against Australia was rained out that put us



on the back foot with regards to the point tally but the game against England is a do-or-die and the winner of that game goes through. That's the equation and you have to get on with it. When I look back at it (and for me) it was always the

tournament that got the best out of me. It was not always the case with some of our players...feeling the pressure and that is what it is. It is the fear of failure and I have seen it many times and this is what happened at the Twenty20 World Cup as well. It was the same thing. You need cool heads and it will always be the issue until we end up winning one.

## Gill consolidates No. 1 position, Kohli re-enters top five of ICC Men's ODI Batting Rankings

Chandigarh, Feb 26: India opener Shubman Gill has consolidated his position atop the ICC Men's ODI Batting Rankings after playing a big role in his team qualifying for the semifinals of the ICC Men's Champions Trophy. Gill, who scored a match-winning '101 not out' against Bangladesh and 46 against Pakistan in Group-A matches played in Dubai this past week, has gained 21 rating points and moved up to 817 rating points, increasing the gap with second-placed Babar Azam from 23 to 47 points. Virat Kohli's unbeaten 100 against Pakistan has helped him overtake Daryl Mitchell of New Zealand to the fifth position while KL Rahul has moved up two places to the 15th position after notching an unbeaten 41 against Bangladesh. New Zealand batters Will Young (up eight places to 14th) and Tom Latham (up 11 places to 30th) have moved up after scoring centuries against Pakistan while Rachin Ravindra's ton against Bangladesh has lifted him 18 places to 24th. Glenn Phillips is another Kiwi batter to gain, up 12 places to 28th position. Australia duo Alex Carey (up four places to 50th) and Josh Inglis (up 18 places to 81st), plus Bangladesh's



Towhid Hridoy (up 18 places to 64th) and Jaker Ali (up 64 places to 94th) have also moved up in the latest weekly rankings update that considers performances till Tuesday. In the bowling rankings, Keshav Maharaj and Matt Henry break into the top five while Adam Zampa has moved to the 10th position after picking up two wickets against England in their thrilling Group B match. Kagiso Rabada's haul of three for 36 against Afghanistan has lifted the South Africa pacer four places to the 16th position while New Zealand spinner Michael Bracewell's four-wicket haul against Bangladesh has helped him advance 31 places to 26th.

## Job cuts at Man Utd are due to 'lack of success' at the club: Ruben Amorim

Madrid, Feb 26: Manchester United, on Monday, announced that they will be making 200 additional job cuts, after 250 Manchester United, had already been let go by the club last season, as part of a series of additional measures to improve the club's financial sustainability. The transformation plan aims to return the club to profitability after five consecutive years of losses since 2019. The Red Devils currently sit in 15th place in the Premier League table and head coach Ruben Amorim believes the job redundancies have to be credited to lack of success at the club. "We have to address all the problems in the club but one important piece is how we got into this situation. It has to do a lot with the lack of success of the football team. We are the engine of the club. I want to help the team with my job which is to help the team, help the players



and the success," said Amorim in a press conference. Last week the club revealed a loss of 27.7 million pounds in their second quarter financial results and the Red Devils have lost more than 300 million pounds over the past three years.

"It's always hard for everybody. They see their friends and teammates losing their jobs but again, I have to focus on what I can do to help the club in this moment and we as a club have to understand what we did wrong to get in this situation," he added.

The Ruben Amorim-led side will be hoping to improve their results when they face Ipswich Town in the league on Thursday (IST). The Red Devils are coming of a 2-2 draw against Everton, after trailing by two goals at the end of the first half. Amorim acknowledged the lack of intensity by his side in the game. "It's hard, it's hard when we see the game. I know, you know guys, and even the players know that we had a lack of intensity. We improved, not a lot, in the second half but the small things - of second balls, we didn't lose so many possessions without any pressure. "We were more aggressive, even when we defend and when we are with the ball. We changed a little bit of the energy that we play football with, so I understand all the critics. If you watch the game you have to accept it and try to change that," he said.



# JKSSAAT holds second governing body meet, reviews future roadmap

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 25: The Jammu and Kashmir Society for Social Audit, Accountability & Transparency (JKSSAAT) held its second governing body meeting under the chairmanship of its Chairperson, Ravi Kesar (former IFS). The meeting was aimed to review the performance, address key issues and strategise future initiatives of the social audit unit.

The meeting was attended by Principal Accountant General (PAG), J&K, K.P. Yadav; Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad; Director Finance, Umar Khan; Additional Secretary, Waseem Raja; former Director General, Accounts and Treasuries,

J&K, Dr. Mohammad Ishaq Wani; Former State Information Commissioner J&K, Professor Sudesh Kumar Sharma; Head of Centre for Rural Development & PR, IMPARD, J&K, Dr. Reva Sharma and representatives of School Education and Social Welfare Departments.

The governing body discussed the ongoing activities and future plans of JKSSAAT, including performance of the Social Audit Unit in auditing various government schemes such as MGNREGA, PMAY(G), SBM(G) and PMAY(U). It appreciated the Social Audit Unit, J&K, for achieving complete coverage of Gram Panchayats (GPs) for the fiscal years 2022-23 and



2023-24, earning the Union Territory a top rank nationally. The agenda also covered issues reported under MGNREGA including financial discipline, adherence to scheme guidelines and grievances. The governing

body reviewed the progress in financial recoveries with a focus on transparency and accountability in implementation of various government initiatives.

Chairman, JKSSAAT, Ravi Kesar, appreciated the Social Audit Unit's dedication,

noting that they delivered outstanding results despite facing a manpower crunch. Secretary RDD, Aijaz Asad, appreciated the progress saying that by conducting thorough audits and engaging the community, the Social Audit Unit has

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

creased public trust in government initiatives. Principal Accountant General (PAG), J&K, K.P. Yadav, emphasized the need to prioritize and clear the oldest social audit cases. He called for hiring additional manpower to support the unit's growing responsibilities. Director, Social Audit Unit, J&K, Shafia Naqshbandi, while presenting the performance overview of the unit, highlighted the key achievements and milestones for the current financial year. One of the major highlights of the presentation was the Social Audit Unit's achievement of 100% Gram Panchayat (GP) coverage in the fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

The SSAAT was informed that in order to strengthen the capacity of social audits, approximately 600 Village Resource Persons (VRPs) have been trained over the years across 20 districts. The meeting also discussed issues such as the staff structure of JKSAU, the proposed budget for FY 2025-26 and plans to extend the scope of social audits to centrally sponsored schemes being implemented by other departments.

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

## Panel at Advantage Assam 2.0 discusses Assam's blueprint to reach renewable energy goal

Guwahati (Assam) [India], February 26 (ANI): "The Advantage Assam 2.0 - Investment & Infrastructure Summit 2025" hosted a pivotal session on "Decarbonizing Energy in Assam - Present Scenario", underscoring Assam's commitment to advancing a sustainable, low-carbon energy future.

This forward-looking session, held on February 26, 2025, brought together several luminaries to explore Assam's current energy landscape, ongoing decarbonization efforts, and future opportunities in clean energy transition.

The session featured Prasanta Phukan, Minister of Power, Government of Assam, Jishnu Barua, Chairperson, CEREC; Vivek Kumar Dewangan, CMD, REC Ltd; Kaushik Sanyal, National Head - Renewables,



Tata Power Company Limited, Dr. K.K. Dwivedi, Principal Secretary, Power Department, Government of Assam, Syedain Abbasi, Chairman, APDCL, and Samit Mitra, Managing Director - Country Delivery, India, GEAPP.

The session commenced with a welcome address by Dr. K.K. Dwivedi, who emphasized the crucial role of clean energy in Assam's development journey. Noting that the power scenario in Assam has improved immensely, Dwivedi shared that several new projects have been taken up in solar power and other areas and lot of efforts are being made to enhance power generation.

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## India needs to maintain tax buoyancy in 1.2-1.5 range for 6.5-7% growth: EY

New Delhi, Feb 26: To achieve a growth of 6.5-7%, India has to maintain a tax buoyancy in the range of 1.2-1.5, a EY report said on Wednesday. The report further said that the government may need to strengthen revenue mobilisation, particularly by increasing the tax-to-GDP ratio from the estimated 12% in FY26 (Budget Estimates) to 14% by FY31.

The EY said that India's fiscal strategy must focus on enhancing tax buoyancy, prudent expenditure management, and continued structural reforms to ensure sustainable growth.

The EY India Economy Watch report noted that over the past three years, gross tax revenue buoyancy has gently moderated, from 1.4 in FY24 to 1.15 in FY25



(RE) and projected to be 1.07 in FY26(BE). EY India Chief Policy Advisor D K Srivastava said the

FY26 budget strategically balances fiscal consolidation with growth imperatives. "However, for India to

achieve a medium-term growth trajectory of 6.5-7.0 per cent and realize its Viksit Bharat vision, it must

ensure tax buoyancy remains in the 1.2-1.5 range. This would help create the necessary fiscal room to accelerate infrastructure expansion, enhance social sector spending, and maintain fiscal discipline," he added.

The EY report further said that over the past decade, the government has reduced its fiscal deficit to GDP ratio from 4.1% in FY15 to 3.4% in FY19, with the ratio expected to adjust to 4.4% by FY26.

It needs to be steadily reduced to the FRBM consistent level of 3%, it added. Notably, the Indian economy is projected to grow in the range of 6.3-6.8% in the next fiscal, and in the current fiscal, the GDP growth is estimated to be 6.4%.

## DPIIT signs MoU with Paytm to foster innovation, accelerate fintech startups growth

New Delhi, Feb 26: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Paytm to foster innovation and accelerate the growth of manufacturing and fintech startups in India.

The DPIIT, in a statement, said the partnership aims to support fintech hardware startups through mentorship and innovation guidance, helping them develop and scale payment and financial technology solutions.

It also focuses on regulatory and compliance assistance by organising workshops and providing guidance in collaboration with industry and government bodies.

The partnership offers infrastructure and market access



support, enabling startups to test, validate, and refine their products while leveraging Paytm's extensive merchant network, the Fintech company said.

As part of its Paytm for Startups initiative, Paytm will launch dedicated programmes to support fintech hardware manufacturers, such as Soundbox and PoS/EDC device makers, in scaling efficiently.

These initiatives include mentorship programs, access to funding through investor connections and incubation programs, regulatory guidance with industry-focused workshops, and periodic tracking and impact assessments.

Through its CSR arm, Paytm Foundation, the company is nurturing deep-tech startups in Climate Tech, Web3, AgriTech, and Mobil-

ity. Speaking on the development, Sanjiv Singh, Joint Secretary, DPIIT, emphasised the significance of this collaboration. "This partnership with Paytm marks a crucial step in strengthening India's startup ecosystem. By leveraging Paytm's fintech expertise and infrastructure, we aim to support entrepreneurs in overcoming challenges, scaling their ventures, and contributing

to India's emergence as a global innovation hub," he stated. Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Founder & CEO, Paytm, said, "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, this is the best time for startups to launch and scale. Paytm is committed to empowering entrepreneurs through mentorship, financial support, and access to cutting-edge technology." "Through this collaboration, we will ensure that startups receive the necessary tools to succeed from inception to growth." MoU was signed by Dr Sumet Kumar Jaranag, Director, DPIIT, and Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Founder & CEO, Paytm, in the presence of senior officials from both organisations.

## Knowledgeum Academy: A Leading IB School in Bangalore for International Education

Bangalore (Karnataka) [India], February 26: In an increasingly interconnected world, the demand for high-quality, globally recognized education is paramount. Knowledgeum Academy (KA), recognised as one of the top IB Schools in Bangalore, stands at the forefront of this educational revolution by offering the prestigious IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). This two-year intensive pre-university course is meticulously designed to prepare students for further studies at renowned international colleges and universities. Powered by the JAIN Group (JGI), Knowledgeum Academy is committed to fostering academic excellence, personal development, and a holistic learning experience. Why Choose the IB Diploma Programme



(IBDP)? The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), headquartered in Switzerland, is a globally renowned educational body that administers four academic programs, including the IBDP. Designed to cultivate critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and ethical responsibility, the IB curriculum equips students with essential skills for success in an ever-evolving global landscape.

Scholarships and Financial Assistance

Understanding that financial constraints should not hinder academic aspirations, Knowledgeum Academy offers the Founders Scholarship, which provides tuition fee waivers for top performers in the Knowledgeum Admission Test (KAT).

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## New India Coop Bank vault had capacity for Rs 10 crore but book showed Rs 122 crore: Economic Offences Wing

New Delhi, Feb 26: New India Cooperative Bank's Prabhadevi branch here had a capacity to keep Rs 10 crore at a time, but the cash in hand book showed there was Rs 122.028 crore in the safe on the day of RBI inspection, police have said.

The Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) is conducting a probing into the embezzlement of Rs 122 crore at the New India Cooperative Bank and has so far arrested three persons, including two former top executives of the lender.

The Reserve Bank of India's

(RBI) inspection team visited the corporate office branch of the bank at Prabhadevi on February 11, where they found Rs 122 crore cash was missing from the safe, an official said on Tuesday.

The balance sheet at the corporate office branch was showing Rs 133.41 crore at the bank's safe at Prabhadevi and Goregaon branches, and Rs 122.028 was the figure on the balance sheet of Prabhadevi branch on that day, he said. During the probe, the EOW found the capacity of the safe at the corporate office

to store cash was only Rs 10 crore, and they actually found Rs 60 lakh in the vault. At the Goregaon branch safe, they found Rs 10.53 crore cash on the day of the RBI inspection, according to the official.

Piyush Goyal joins Maharashtra CM Fadnis for key distribution ceremony of 15 self-redeveloped housing societies in North Mumbai.

The vault at the Goregaon branch also had a capacity to store Rs 10 crore. The EOW is now probing why auditors looking into the safe at the corporate office



not raise an alarm over the missing cash from the bank, he said.

Various CA firms audited the balance sheets, daily reports and the books of cash in hand. It was their role to verify the cash, which was

kept in the safe, he said. Meanwhile, the EOW has summoned representatives of half-a-dozen firms which conducted audit of the fraud-hit lender at different times, another official said. These financial services

firms were involved in statutory, concurrent or internal audits during 2019-2024, the period when the alleged embezzlement took place, he said.

As the initial audit of the lender was done by M/s Sanjay Rane Associates, a partner in the firm Abhijeet Deshmukh, is being quizzed by the EOW for the last four days. Now, the probe agency has summoned another partner in the chartered accountancy firm, Sanjay Rane, to record his statement, the official said. Representatives of all auditing firms linked to the

lender have been called to record their statements, the official informed.

"If needed, the EOW will seek forensic audit of the bank's financial records to ascertain how Rs 122 crore was misappropriated," he said.

Bank's former CEO Abhinav Bhoan, who is among three persons arrested so far for the alleged fraud, had signed all audit reports and balance sheets of the bank, the official said. Bhoan was part of the conspiracy as he was aware how much cash was in the

bank's vaults, the official said.

Besides the former CEO, the bank's ex-general manager Hitesh Mehta and real estate developer Dharmesh Paun have been arrested in the case. The alleged misappropriation of funds came to light following an inspection by the RBI.

As per the police, Devarshi Ghosh, the bank's acting chief executive officer, lodged a complaint against Mehta and others at the Dadar police station in central Mumbai nearly two weeks ago for alleged misappropriation.



## Jharkhand's opium crackdown: Genuine reform or political facade?

Ranchi, Feb 26: The recent destruction of 9,871 acres of illicit opium cultivation and the arrest of 86 individuals in Jharkhand have ignited a political firestorm.

While the state government and law enforcement agencies tout it as a decisive crackdown on narcotics, the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has dismissed it as mere eyewash, alleging direct government involvement in the illegal trade.

The controversy raises a pressing question: Is this a genuine effort to combat the drug menace, or a calculated move to control the narrative?

The official stance paints a picture of proactive law enforcement. According to state police and narcotics officials, the operation was carried out across multiple districts, including Khunti, Ranchi, Saraikela-Kharsawan, and Chaibasa—areas notorious for illicit poppy cultivation.



Authorities claim that intelligence-driven efforts are intensifying, focusing on dismantling supply chains and offering farmers alternative livelihood options.

A senior police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated, "This is not just about uprooting crops. We are targeting networks involved in cultivation, processing,

and trafficking."

However, BJP leaders challenge this version, leveling serious allegations against the government. Party spokesperson Ramakant Mahato claims that the crackdown was dismissed more to divert attention than to dismantle the trade.

He alleges that law enforcement intervenes only after the valuable

latex has been extracted and smuggled. "If the government is serious, why do these fields flourish under its watch for months before operations begin? The answer is clear—this trade is state-sponsored," Mahato asserted.

The BJP's accusations go deeper, pointing to an alleged nexus between law enforcement, local administration, and organized crime syndicates, where political patronage ensures that only small-scale cultivators face action while major players remain untouched.

The party has called for an independent probe into the alleged financial links between government officials and the illegal opium trade. While the government has dismissed these claims as politically motivated, certain inconsistencies remain hard to ignore. The timing of the crackdown—often occurring only after the crop has been processed—raises concerns about delayed intelligence action or possible administrative complicity.

## With seven new ministers, BJP holds 21 berths in Nitish's 36-member cabinet

Patna, Feb 26:

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expanded his cabinet on Wednesday by inducting seven new faces from the BJP, raising the number of ministers to 36, the maximum permissible limit in the state with a 243-strong assembly.

With this expansion, the number of BJP ministers has increased to 21 against the JDU's 13. One minister is from the Hindustani Awam Morcha (S) while another is an independent MLA, Sumit Kumar Singh.

Through the expansion, the state chief minister has tried to give representation to every caste and region with an eye on the upcoming elections in the state.

The new ministers are Raju Singh (Rajput), Jivesh Mishra (Bhumihar), Vijay Mandal (backward class), Krishna Kumar Mantu



(Kurmi), Sunil Kumar (Kushwaha), Sanjay Saraogi (Vaishya) and Motilal Prasad (Tel).

Two MLAs from the Darbhanga district have been made ministers. Similarly, two other MLAs have been made ministers from the Tirhut division. Apart from this, one MLA each from Patna, Purnia, and Saran divisions has got a place in the Nitish cabinet.

The cabinet expansion, which was long overdue, has been delayed due to the preoccupation of the Central BJP leadership with parliamentary and assembly elections in various states.

The party decided to induct seven new faces in the cabinet after a meeting with BJP President J P Nadda during his Patna visit on Tuesday.

## Tragedy-hit Mahakumbh concludes with the final holy dip on Mahashivratri



Mahakumbh Nagar, Feb 26:

The 45-day-long Mahakumbh ended on Mahashivratri here on Wednesday with a record over 66 crore Sanatan devotees converging at the sacred Sangam.

Beyond caste distinctions, this holy bath was a powerful emblem of the eternal beauty and unity of Sanatan Dharma. On the concluding day on Wednesday, the India Air Force (IAF) held an impressive air show over Sangam as choppers showered flower petals on devotees.

Many devotees said that the '144-year factor' played a major role in their decision to attend this Mahakumbh at all costs.

Amid a surge of pilgrims, the Ma-

hakumbh witnessed a number of tragedies in which more than 150 people lost their lives.

Opposition leaders were on their toes over these tragedies and slammed the government for covering up the deaths and not disclosing the names of the victims.

The major tragedy was struck on the pre-dawn of January 29 on the main Amrit snan of Mauni Amavasya, when 30 pilgrims lost their lives and 60 were injured during a stampede at the Sangam Nose.

Though there were reports of two more stampedes on that day at other ghats when over 8 crore people thronged the Mahakumbh, there was no official confirmation of it.

Similarly, on February 15, at least 18 people were killed and 15 others sustained injuries at the New Delhi railway station when some passengers slipped on a footbridge between platforms 14 and 15, leading to a stampede at the already overcrowded station.

Besides, more than 100 people either on their way to Mahakumbh or returning also lost their lives in road accidents in UP during the period.

## 341 children in Punjab get new lease of life with free heart surgeries

Chandigarh, Feb 26:

In an initiative aimed at safeguarding the health of its youngest citizens and ensuring a healthier future, the Punjab government has successfully provided free heart surgeries to as many as 341 children suffering from congenital heart disease during the financial year 2024-25 so far.

According to Punjab Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Balbir Singh, as per the information, congenital heart disease is a birth defect that affects the heart or blood vessels near it and often requires costly surgeries that are out of reach for many families.

Recognising this challenge, the state government has stepped in to cover the



entire cost of treatment, offering these children a second chance at life.

The success of this initiative is part of the broader Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), a national program aimed at

these life-saving procedures, performed at prestigious empaneled hospitals across the state.

To ensure effective implementation of the RBSK program, he said the state Health Department has deployed mobile health teams across the state. "Each team comprises four members—two doctors (one male and one female), a nurse, and a pharmacist skilled in data management," he added.

The health minister said that these teams are equipped with all the required testing tools, medicines, and vehicles, and regularly visit government schools and anganwadis to screen children for health issues.

A unique feature of the

program is the health card maintained for each child, which tracks their medical history, growth, and development. This digital record ensures continuous monitoring and timely intervention, helping children stay on the path to good health.

"We are determined to make our state a model for healthcare excellence, and this achievement is a significant step toward that goal," he added.

## Rat miners reach last point of the Srisaillam tunnel but find no trace of trapped men

Hyderabad, Feb 26:

A 20-member rescue team comprising rat miners and NDRF and SDRF personnel was, though able to reach the last point of the Srisaillam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel last night, returned empty handed unable to locate anyone among the eight trapped workers.

However, with the sludge solidifying the rescuers are hopeful of using sniffer dogs to locate the men who might be trapped under the debris of the broken-off part of the Tunnel Boring Machine.

It was the rat miners with simple tools without much safety gear who were able to reach the last critical 50 metres of the 14 km long SLBC tunnel in search of the eight men on the night of day four. They found the area filled with the debris of the machine and the concrete slabs and slits.

Videos taken by the rat miners



showed the challenges they faced, particularly due to reduced oxygen levels inside the tunnel. Munna Qureshi, one of the rat miners, pointed out that this was far more challenging than the Uttarakhand tunnel where the team had rescued

more than 41 people trapped inside.

He said the situation was very critical at the accident spot as the tunnel was very unstable. "We cannot take a risk with the lives of the rescuers. Right now, the debris is holding up but once we start re-

moving it to look for the men, it can be very critical and everything can come down. So, we are going to find the men and bring them out but we first need to seal the roof and stabilize the structure. There will be three to four teams working in tandem. We will start once the collector sir gives us the go-ahead," said Qureshi.

He said water was still steadily seeping in the tunnel in spite of the continuous dewatering.

The unified command overseeing the rescue work also saw Border Roads Organisation joining in to suggest ways to stabilise the tunnel. The Geological Survey of India has collected soil samples from the tunnel. The state government is keen to complete the tunnelling work despite the setback. Only 9 km of the 44 km long tunnel remains to be completed.

## Fadnavis appoints Ujjwal Nikam as special public prosecutor in Massajog sarpanch's murder case

Mumbai, Feb 26:

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis issued an order on Wednesday appointing senior lawyer Ujjwal Nikam as the special public prosecutor and Advocate Balasaheb Kolhe as the assistant special public prosecutor in Massajog village sarpanch Santosh Deshmukh's murder case.

"Senior lawyer Ujjwal Nikam has been appointed as the special public prosecutor by the Maharashtra government in the Santosh Deshmukh murder case in Beed district, while Advocate Balasaheb Kolhe has been appointed as the assistant special public prosecutor," Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said.

Reacting to the Chief



Minister's order appointing him as the special public prosecutor, Ujjwal Nikam said, "I was very upset to hear that the villagers of Massajog had begun a hunger strike to have me appointed as a government lawyer. On Tuesday, I informed Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis that I was ready to prosecute the case, following which the Chief Minister's Office issued the order. I appeal to the resi-

dents of Massajog to end the hunger strike. Law and justice are supreme in this country. No one should do anything that harms health. As soon as the police file a charge sheet in this case, we will take up the case immediately."

However, anti-corruption activist Anjali Damania said, "Only one of the demands made by Pannanag Deshmukh and the villagers of Massajog has been accepted. But for that, they had to go on a hunger strike. This is very unfortunate. One of the many demands made by the Deshmukh family and the villagers of Massajog through the hunger strike was that this case should be handed over to Ujjwal Nikam. After the protest, this demand was accepted.

## Karnataka Congress leader and Dy CMD DK Shivakumar dismisses speculations of heading towards BJP

New Delhi, Feb 26:

The optics for the Congress cannot be worse—after a speculative threat from Kerala party leader Shashi Tharoor hinting he has other options, another big Congress leader from South, Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president DK Shivakumar's recent actions have given the jitters to the supporters of the grand old party.

Even as Shashi Tharoor matter is under the realms of speculation, of whether he could shift out of the party if sufficient provocation was provided, the Karnataka leader who is said to be at loggerheads with Chief Minister S Siddaramaiah, going by media reports over the past few



weeks, said he will be going to Sadhguru's ashram in Coimbatore for Mahashivratri celebrations. He said he was grateful for the invite from Sadhguru and that no politics should be read into his personal decision relating to a matter of faith.

"There is no rebellion, no personal differences with anyone. I have been invited by Jaggi Vasudev and I will go there. I am a

Hindu and have faith in a religion and it does not mean that I am coming close to the BJP at all," Shivakumar said in an interaction with the media after his return from Delhi where he called on the Water Resources Minister with a slew of proposals on behalf of the state. But, political analysts here see in this acceptance of an invite from Jaggi Vasudev

Mumbai, Feb 26:

A Bombay High Court bench comprising Justices BP Colabawalla and Firdosh Pooniwalla stated on Wednesday that its ruling will be limited to only whether the show cause notice (SCN) issued by the customs authorities to Skoda Auto Volkswagen India is time-barred or not.

Earlier, Volkswagen's lawyer Arvind Datar had argued that the customs duty demand of USD 1.4 billion is a matter of "life and death for us", which meant that it could make survival difficult for the company in India. Datar criticised the 14 billion USD (approximately Rs 12,000 crore) demand as "unreasonable", questioning how the company could be expected to pay such a sum after more than a decade of consistent classifications.



After six days of extensive arguments, the bench stated that its ruling will be limited only to whether the show cause notice issued by the Customs authorities against the automotive company was time-barred.

"Although we have heard extensively on all the issues, we will pass orders only on the issue of limitation," the court stated. It also indi-

cated that even if the petition filed by the German auto giant is allowed and the court decides against the customs authorities, they are free to take action under Section 28 of the Customs Act for suppression of facts. The court granted customs authorities time until March 10 to file their reply on certain factual aspects, particularly Volkswagen's claim that no communications were

made before 2023 requesting further documents. Volkswagen has blamed Customs authorities for taking as long as 12 years to review some shipment records, but customs authorities stated that the investigation was delayed because the company did not provide necessary documents on time. Volkswagen's lawyer Arvind Datar also argued the customs duty demand is contradictory to Indian tax laws on imports of car parts. Government lawyers and Volkswagen lawyers presented arguments in court hearings about how imports should be classified. Last week, Additional Solicitor General N Venkataraman had told Volkswagen's lawyer Arvind Datar in court, "Don't be the victim here. If you don't follow the law then we will initiate action."

## International Training Programme on Urban Governance for the Delegates from Nepal at NIRDPR, Hyderabad from 26th February to 7th March 2024

Jammu, Feb 26:

As sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, a 10 days' Training programme for delegates from selected urban local bodies of Nepal has commenced at NIRDPR, Hyderabad on 26th February 2025. The delegation consists of 3 Mayors and 2 Chairpersons of urban / rural Municipalities and 7 senior Government Officers from different parts of Nepal.

The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950, that had formed the bedrock of the special relations, are continuously and encouragingly sustained by both the nations through multiple multi-lateral forums such as BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal) and SAARC (South Asian Association



for Regional Cooperation. The present support by the Ministry of External Affairs for the International Training Programme being conducted by NIRDPR is a sequel to the continuous bond of fraternity between India and Nepal.

Extending warm greetings to the participants, particularly the Nepalese dele-

gation, and appreciating the celebration of Maha Shivratri led by the delegation as a significant inception of the programme, Shri Manu Mahawar, IAS, Additional Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, emphasized a strong partnership between India and Nepal and highlighted development cooperation as a key pillar of

their relationship. His brief keynote underscored the importance of capacity building, particularly in human resource development with focus on agriculture and horticulture and areas of special interest as felt necessary by the delegation. Shri Mahawar expressed his confidence that the programme would surely be

productive and beneficial to both the countries through sharing of experiences and lessons to be learnt through the programme. He reaffirmed India's commitment to fostering further collaboration through focused training programmes and exchange of visits.

Dr. Anjan Kumar Bhanja, Associate Professor & Head of the Centre for Panchayati Raj, Decentralised Planning & Social Service Delivery (CPDP&SSD), NIRDPR, explained the design and objectives of the Training Programme. Expressing his gratitude to Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General of NIRDPR for encouraging such International Training programmes, Dr. Bhanja requested the delegates to convey their expectations from the Training Programme.

## Dy CM attends Shivratri festivities at Rajouri, Jammu

Prays for peace, prosperity of JK



JAMMU, FEBRUARY 26: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today attended several festivities held to mark Maha Shivratri celebrations at various places in Rajouri district. At the main function held at Bhambla, the Deputy Chief Minister prayed for peace and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that these festivals are a strong projector to

the composite culture of the region in which people from all communities participate since ages.

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

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

## Seminar on Tourism transformation in Kashmir held at KU

Varsity committed to strengthening tourism through interdisciplinary collaboration: KU VC  
Strategic planning key to unlocking J&K's tourism potential: MLA Gulmarg

Srinagar, Feb 26: To promote collaboration between academia, industry, and policymakers in shaping the future of tourism in Jammu & Kashmir, the Department of Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure Studies (DTHLS), University of Kashmir (KU), organised a one-day national seminar on 'Infrastructure, Industry and Academia: Driving Tourism Transformation in Kashmir'. The seminar aimed to discuss strategies for improving tourism infrastructure, enhancing visitor experiences, and promoting sustainable tourism practices in Kashmir. It provided a platform for stakeholders to deliberate on challenges, explore innovative solutions, and strengthen the link between academic research and industry needs.



Speaking at the inaugural event, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her presidential address, highlighted the university's commitment to contributing to the tourism sector through research, innovation, and industry collaboration. "Tourism is a vital part of our economy and through interdisciplinary partnerships, we can enhance visitor experiences while ensuring

sustainable growth," she said. Guest of honor, Mr. Farooq Ahmad Shah, MLA Gulmarg J&K, appreciated the department's efforts in engaging with stakeholders to drive tourism development in the region. "It is our responsibility to ensure that Jammu & Kashmir reaches its full potential as a world-class tourist destination through proper planning, infrastructure enhancement,

and quality experiences for visitors," he stated. Keynote speaker, Mr. Sandeep Raturi, Vice-President, Distinct Destinations, Delhi, stressed on the importance of integrating cultural experiences with tourism, stating that Kashmir's rich culture has the potential to enhance the overall visitor experience. He noted that strategic planning and innovative approaches are essential for the sustainable growth of the hospitality sector. Mr. Mohammad Saleem Beigh, Convenor, INTACH, and former Director General, Tourism J&K, highlighted the need to adapt tourism strategies in response to changing customer preferences and evolving with current trends while ensuring that environmental sustainability remains a priority. Earlier, Head DTHLS KU, Dr. Reyaz Ahmad Qureshi, in his welcome address, stressed on the importance of academia-industry collaboration, emphasizing the need to balance tourism development with resource preservation. The event was attended by Mr. Manzoor Ahmad Wagonoo, Chairman, Nigen Lake Conservation Organization (NLCO); Mr. Farooq Ahmad Kuthoo, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI); Mr. Rouf Tramboo, President, Adventure Tour Operators Association of Kashmir (ATOAK); various faculty members, scholars, and students from the campus. The inaugural event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Shah Nawaz Ahmad, DLU faculty at DTHLS KU.

## Religious Fervour marks Maha Shivratri Celebration across Ramban

Grand Shoba yatra taken out

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 26: The holy festival of Maha Shivratri was celebrated with religious enthusiasm and traditional gaiety across Ramban district. Maha Shivratri, known as the 'Great Night of Shiva,' holds immense significance in Hindu tradition and is observed on the new moon day in the month of Maagha as per the Hindu calendar. On this auspicious occasion, temples across the district were beautifully decorated and witnessed a massive influx of devotees since early morning. A grand Shiv Shobha Ya-

tra was also taken out amid participation of members of the Maha Shivratri Celebration Committee, including Neelam Langhe, Kunal Magotra, Gopal Raina, and Raju Sharma, along with numerous religious and political leaders and prominent citizens. The Yatra commenced from Pracheen Shiv Mandir, Maitra, passing through Govind Pura Maitra, Boli Bazaar, and Main Bazaar, before culminating at Raghnath Mandir. The district and police administration had made elaborate security and

logistical arrangements to ensure a smooth and peaceful celebration. People from different communities, including men, women, and children, stood alongside the procession route, welcoming the Yatra with great devotion. To mark the occasion, Langars were organized at Maitra by Sanatan Dharma Sabha and at Ramban by local residents, offering Prasad to devotees. The festival witnessed widespread participation, reflecting the spirit of unity and devotion among the people of Ramban.

## MANUU Student Anam Zafar Secures All India Rank 1 in UGC NET JRF

Jammu, Feb 26:

Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) continues to shine in the academic arena as its student, Anam Zafar, MEd 4th sem student, has secured All India Rank 1 in the UGC-NET JRF examination. This remarkable achievement has brought immense pride to the university. In recognition of her outstanding success, the Department of Education and Training, felicitated Anam Zafar in a special event held in the Department. The faculty members, students, and university officials gathered to celebrate her exceptional accomplishment. During the felicitation ceremony, all the faculty members extended their heartfelt best wishes to Anam for her future academic and research pursuits. They praised her dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence, highlighting her as a role model for aspiring researchers. Speaking on the occasion, prof. Shaheen A. Shaikh, Head of the Department commended



her hard work and stated, "Anam Zafar's achievement is a testament to the high academic standards and research culture at MANUU. Her success will inspire many students to aim for excellence." Along with Anam Zafar, the department also felicitated other students who successfully qualified for UGC-NET and JRF. Their accomplishments were celebrated as a collective success of the university's academic environment and the faculty's dedicated mentorship.

## Time for NC to deliver on its manifesto .Malhotra

People anticipating reforms in state budget .

Jammu, Feb 26: Addressing party functionaries on Budget pe Charcha program at Sunderbani Party office Vikram

Malhotra Spokesperson BJP said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have very high expectations from the Chief Minister Umar Abdullah and are expecting a budget in line with the promises made by the National Conference in its election manifesto. Malhotra added that the recent statements made by the Chief Minister have been discouraging for the masses as he seems to express his inability to provide relief to the common man by citing his helplessness in wake of Jammu and Kashmir being an UT while he



very well knew the realities before contesting the elections. Explaining the budget in details Malhotra Highlighted the key achievements of the

Union Budget and termed it as futuristic and holistic. The major tax relief of increasing the limit for non taxable income to 12 lakhs will provide a lot of dispo-

able income to the middle class which will speed up the economic growth. The increase in Kisan Credit Card limit from 3 to 5 lakhs will boost agricultural pro-

duction. Like wise MSME sector also has been given a major flip. Exemption of 100 lakhs in rental income upto 6 lakhs has also been welcomed by the middle class. Others who were present on the occasion included DDC member Rajinder Pritham Sharma, EX Distt Pr Captain Bal Krishan, Captain Sohan Sharma, Captain Ramesh Chander, Mandal Pr Sukhdev Singh, EX Mandal Pr Naseeb Singh, Mandal Pr Sehote Vikas Sharma, Anil Khajuria, Ashok Singh, Naresh Singh, Mahila Morcha members, Dr Anjana Verma, Anita Sharma, Renu Sharma, Usha Raina.

## Two-day Pahari Literary & Cultural conference concludes

Jammu, Feb. 26: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages successfully organized a two-day Pahari Literary and Cultural Conference in Jammu. Held at the Hall of the Arts, the conference featured sessions including poetry recitals, short story readings, scholarly papers, music performances, and drama presentations. Additionally, two significant books were launched during the event.

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

session was graced by Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Thanamandi, Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, as the chief guest. Academy's Secretary, Harvinder Kaur, former Secretary of the Pahari Advisory Board, Showket Ali Kazmi, Senior SSP Rashid Bhatt, Pahari leader Jamaat Ali Shaheen, and Cultural Officer and Pahari Editor, Mohd Ayub Mir Naem (Karnai) also shared their



while Ayub Mir presented a descriptive speech highlighting the Academy's Pahari Sections' achievements. The chief guest emphasized the importance of organizing such events to promote Pahari language and literature and assured full support. He also pledged to raise issues related to the

Academy in the legislative assembly. Following the inaugural session, a music session was held where artists like Master Kartar Chand and his team, Ashfaq Ahmed Mir and his team, and Parvez Malik presented various Pahari musical pieces. Table player Prabhat Bali and

flutist Rakesh Basotra enhanced the musical ambience. The most significant session on the second day was Mehfil-e-Mushaira, where approximately twenty poets presented their latest Pahari poetry. The session was chaired by senior poet and writer Rashid Qamar, with

SSP Rashid Bhatt as the chief guest and Sheikh Azad Ahmad Azad as the guest of honor. The session was moderated by renowned poet, writer, and senior principal Anwar Khan. Participating poets included Rashid Qamar, Sheikh Azad Ahmad Azad, K.D. Mani, Parvez Manos, Sheikh Zahoor, Swami Antar Nirro, Parvez Iqbal Malik, Anwar Khan, Bashir Ahmad Lohar, Mahmood Tahir, Sadiq Ahmad Siddiqui, Dr. Arif Iqbal Malik, Malik Zakir Khaki, Sameena Sahar, Syed Ishaq Tabassum, Khalid Awan Rahat, Bilal Ahmad Bilal, and Zulfiqar Rahat. The final session featured a Pahari drama titled "Betti Te Doctor" (Daughter and Doctor) (Daughter and Doctor) under the banner of Pakiza Cultural Club, Dera

Hall, directed by Parvez Malik. Former MLA Ravinder Raina was the chief guest, with DDC member Iqbal Malik, former MLC Mohammad Rashid Qureshi, and renowned historian and researcher K.D. Mani as guests of honor. During the conference, Iqbal Malik's short story collection "Terraan" and Parvez Manos's Pahari novel "Qabeela" were launched. Advocate Altaf Hussain Janjua, Dr. Abdul Haq Naemi, Javed Haqumi, and Saleem Bukhari presented scholarly papers. Zafar Khokhar, Sardar Rattan Singh Kanwal, Iqbal Shal, and Sheikh Azad Ahmad Azad presented short stories. The conference was attended by notable personalities, including Rtd Director

Gulzar Qureshi, former DC Gulam Ahmad Khwaja, former Secretary of the Pahari Advisory Board Dr. Ikram, Prof. Abdul Rashid Munhas, Professor Dr. Javed Iqbal, Prof. Abdul Qayoom, Prof. M.K. Wagar, Sarwar Chohan, DSP Manzoor Haq Kalaiwi, Dr. Shah Nawaz Chaudhry, Iqbal Shal, Prof. Mohd Imran Khan, Prof. Natan Sharma, Dr. Rajiv Chaddha, Rakesh Khajuria, DSP Crime Affair Bukhari, KAS officer Nasir Khan, Preeti Sharma, Dr. Abdul Haq Naemi, Saima Akzi, Advocate Murtaza Akker, Advocate Sheikh Altaf Hussain, Gohar Hafeez Wani, Dr. Kifayat Rizvi, Trade Union leader Babu Hussain Malik, Tauseef Sabri, and Mushtaq Ahmad Shawl.



## I Create India Celebrates Empowering Indian Army Veterans Through Entrepreneurship Training

Jammu : 26 Feb 2025

I Create India, a leading non-profit organization dedicated to entrepreneurship development, commemorated its 25th anniversary with a Silver Jubilee celebration on February 26th at the Manekshaw Centre in Delhi. Founded with the mission of transforming job seekers into job creators, I Create India has spent the last quarter-century fostering entrepreneurial skills, particularly amongst army veterans and un-deserved communities. The organization's Silver Jubilee event highlighted the achievements and felicitation of over 40 Indian Army Veteran entrepreneurs, who have successfully transitioned to business ownership following I Create's comprehensive

training and mentorship programs. Key component of I Create's success is its collaborative partnership with the Directorate of Indian Army Veterans (DIAV), formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This partnership has facilitated the establishment of Business Incubation Centres (BICs) at 13 Regimental Centres and 04 more Regimental centres are in the process to be on boarded under this initiative. The Chief Guest for the event, Lieutenant General Ranjeet Singh, the Director General of Discipline, Ceremonial, and Welfare of the Indian Army, honoured the outstanding contributions of over 40 Indian Army veteran entrepreneurs. He took a moment to commend each of them for



their remarkable dedication and perseverance in achieving self-reliance. Lt Gen Singh expressed his deep appreciation for their entrepreneurial spirit and emphasized the importance of their efforts in inspiring other veterans to pursue self-employment and economic independence. Moreover, he highlighted the crucial role that these veteran entrepreneurs

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

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

trained nearly 14,500 Indian Army Veterans across various Business Incubation Centres established throughout the country. Upon retiring from the Indian Armed Forces, these veterans have successfully launched micro and small businesses in diverse sectors such as grocery stores, various types of agricultural farming, travel agencies,

dairy farms, poultry farms, cosmetic stores, medical stores, gyms, hardware stores, coaching centres, restaurants and real estate ventures. Among these veterans, 1,687 have already become successful entrepreneurs, while nearly 3,000 others are currently in the mentoring phase or working on their business plans. These veterans, typically aged 35-40 years, were acknowledged for their entrepreneurial achievements during the event. Mr. Harsh Bhargava, the Founder of I Create India, highlighted the organization's unwavering dedication to tackling India's employment challenges. He stated that for the past 25 years, I Create has been steadfast in addressing India's employment crisis through entrepreneurship.

Our Army veterans leverage their disciplined approach to overcome business obstacles, our women entrepreneurs uplift entire communities and our youth embrace self-reliance to become job creators. As we commemorate this Silver Jubilee, we pay tribute to those who are shaping India's future, one business at a time. Indian Army veteran entrepreneurs are making significant contributions to nation-building through their disciplined approach and leadership skills acquired during their service. Through their dedication and perseverance, these veterans are playing a crucial role in strengthening the nation's economic growth and social stability, ultimately contributing to a more self-reliant and Viksit Bharat.

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

Rajouri : 26 Feb 2025

The Kakora Cricket League (KCL) 2025 culminated in a thrilling final match at the breathtaking Kaniyal Gali Cricket Ground, delivering an electrifying contest between Mafia 11 and DSK Mafia 11, wherein batting first, Mafia 11 put up a total of 90/10 in 11.4 overs. Their innings was driven by an explosive knock from Mohd Sami (34 off 18 balls, SR 188.8) and a solid contribution from Fazan (44 off 7 balls, SR 200.0). However, disciplined bowling from DSK 11, led by Pervaiz Ahmed and Mukhtar Prince, kept them in check. Chasing 91, DSK domi-



nated with a stunning innings from their captain Rukhsar Anjum, who played a match-winning knock of 80 runs off 41 balls at a strike rate of 195.1. Supported by Anaz Khan (26 off 4 balls), DSK comfortably secured victory at 94/1 in 11.4 overs, lifting the KCL

2025 Trophy in style.

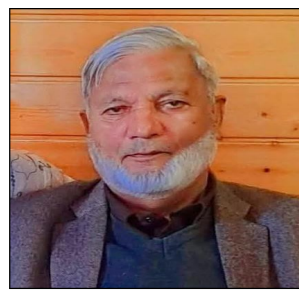
The grand finale was a testament to the fierce competition and sportsmanship that defined KCL 2025, organized by Indian Army. Cricket fans can now look forward to even bigger and better action in next year's edition.

## Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari mourns the passing of Kitchama's Bashir Ahmad Shah

*Describes the demise as a personal loss, extends solidarity with the bereaved, and prays for the departed*

Srinagar, February 26: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari has expressed profound grief over the passing of Bashir Ahmad Shah, a retired Chief Horticulture Officer and a resident of Kitchama Narvar in the Baramulla district.

In a statement issued here, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari described Shah's passing as a personal loss. He said, "I am deeply saddened and grieved by the death of Bashir Ahmad Shah Sahib, as I re-



call the cherished moments we have spent together over the years. Our families have shared a close relationship and a decades-long history of association. I vividly remember the memorable moments we spent together on various occasions over a long period."

"Like his esteemed father, Mohammad Yousuf Shah Sahib, Bashir Sahib was a noble soul, known for his integrity and dedication. I pray to the Almighty to grant him the highest place in Jan-

nah and to shower his grave with His blessings," he added. Expressing solidarity with the bereaved family, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, "In this hour of grief, I stand in solidarity with his bereaved family, extending my heartfelt sympathies, especially to his sons—Irshad Ahmad, Aijaz Ahmad, Tariq Ahmad, and Tanveer Ahmad—and to all his loved ones. May Allah grant them strength and patience to bear this immense loss.

*Let us Pledge to Make Bharat Viksit:*

## Pathania inaugurates 29th Mahashivratri Mela at Shri Apshambhu Temple Khoon (Majalta).

Majalta 26th Feb:- As part of the annual celebration of Maha Shivratri, a grand mela was organized, showcasing stalls from various departments with the aim of encouraging public participation and promoting awareness in different spheres of life. This vibrant event took place at the Apshambhu Temple Khoon, where thousands of devotees gathered to seek the blessings of Lord Shiva. Various stalls were set up to inform people about key government schemes, including PM Vishwakarma, PMAY (G) (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Grameen), and other initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission, Ayushman Bhumi, and Ujjwala Yojana. Later, Mr. Pathania also paid obeisance and became part of grand celebrations at Apshambhu Temple Matt, Manwal, Shiv Temple Meneh, Shiv Temple Seen Thakran, Shiv temple Lehnu, Battal and Shiv temple Mand. The occasion, marked by joyous celebrations, also serves as a platform to



inform the public about critical developmental schemes. Pathania, in his address, emphasized the significance of such events, stating that they are not just about spiritual observances but also about progressing towards a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) by 2047. "This is a time to realize our 'Sankalp Pe Siddhi'—to ensure our goals for a prosperous and progressive future are met. In the coming years, India is poised to become an economic superpower, ranking in the top three

globally. The goals of doubling farmers' income, providing insurance for all, and fostering inclusive growth will be achieved in the near future," he added. Furthermore, Pathania spoke about the importance of Maha Shivratri as a time for spiritual growth and rejuvenation. "Such festivals symbolize not just our devotion but our commitment to national development. They are reminders of the unity and strength of our nation, showing that together we can reach new heights of progress.

The mela is a perfect example of how culture and development can go hand in hand, educating citizens about the government's initiatives while celebrating the rich heritage of our nation."

Each year, the mela is organized as a feature of Maha Shivratri by DAHWA, led by its chairman Surat Singh, who also manages the proceedings center. Mr. Kripal Singh, Ramesh Chander Gupta, Ved Sharma, Sudesh Sharma, and other prominent local residents were present, contributing to the festive spirit and the shared goal of advancing the community's welfare. Such events not only help to raise awareness about government schemes but also foster community spirit, making them essential in building a strong, informed, and empowered society. The congregation of local residents at this mela reflects a growing collective commitment to development and well-being for all.

## Indian Army Conducts Medical Patrol at Thanna, Rajouri

Rajouri : 26 Feb 2025

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

The medical patrol is a testament to the Indian Army's commitment to serving the nation and supporting local communities, particularly in



remote and underprivileged areas. The Indian Army's efforts to provide essential medical services have been well-received by the local population, who appreciate the Indian Army's dedication to their welfare. By conducting medical patrols, the Indian Army is not only providing medical aid but

also promoting health awareness and education among the local population. This initiative has helped to foster a sense of goodwill and cooperation between the Indian Army and the local community, while also ensuring the overall well-being of the people.

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

*Ved Pathshala Students Impress with Sacred Chants and Chhau Dance*

Jammu, February 26: The grand Maha Shivratri Mahotsav 2025, held at the revered Panjvaktra Mahadev Mandir, concluded today, leaving behind a legacy of profound spiritual experiences and artistic excellence. The event, organized in collaboration with Directorate of Tourism, Jammu, and the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages, drew thousands of devotees and art enthusiasts from across the region.

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



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

Tabla and Er. Amarjeet Singh on the violin. Adding to the spiritual ambiance, the students of the Panjvaktra Mahadev Ved Pathshala performed sacred Vedic recitations. The Ved Pathshala, operating as a traditional Gurukul within the temple premises, not only imparts Vedic knowledge but also focuses on holistic development through yoga and ancient traditional art forms. Demonstrating their versatility, the students of the Ved Pathshala, under the

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

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

beautifully depicted the divine narratives associated with Lord Shiva through intricate footwork and graceful expressions.

A special segment of the performance paid tribute to the life of Ahilya Bai Holkar, portraying her devotion and contributions through expressive movements and storytelling. Additionally, the group performed a captivating piece in Dargi, celebrating the region's rich cultural heritage and deep spiritual traditions.

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

## Awareness Lecture on Drug Abuse Conducted at Sangiot Poonch



Poonch : 26 Feb 2025

The Indian Army conducted an awareness lecture on Drug Abuse at Government high school, Sangiot. The primary objective of the awareness lecture was to educate the local population especially the youth and students about the dangers of drug addiction and its far-reaching consequences. The session emphasized the importance of a drug-

free society and highlighted preventive measures to curb substance abuse. The lecture covered crucial topics such as the psychological and physiological impact of drug abuse, social and legal repercussions, and the role of families in rehabilitation and prevention. Real-life examples and interactive discussions helped in effectively con-

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

## Sakeena Itoo reviews performance, functioning of JKMSCL

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

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 26: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the performance and functioning of Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCL).

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed; Managing Director, JKMSCL, Principals of all GMCs, Principals of Dental Colleges, CMOs of all districts and other concerned officers, either in person or virtually. Addressing the officers, Sakeena Itoo underscored the need for further strengthening monitoring system of medical supplies for enhanced healthcare service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir. She called for bringing added transparency and efficiency in medicine distribution for patients in all district and Sub-district hospitals as well as health centres.



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

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

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

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

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

While reviewing the status of Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS) portal, Sakeena Itoo stressed on the management of JKMSCL for physical monitoring of drugs being distributed among various health facilities. She asked them to constitute teams for conducting surprise inspections of drugs and medicines being delivered to hospitals and other facilities. She further asked the management of corporation to take action against officers who are yet to on-board on DVDMS portal. During the meeting, MD, JKMSCL provided a detailed presentation on procurement mechanisms, supply chain management, availability of medicines as well as financial position of the Corporation.

## DC discusses creation of institutional business support mechanism in Udhampur

**Mission Yuva Project**

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 26: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Saloni Rai convened a meeting with Small Business Development Units (SBDU) and Business Help Desk (BHD) members to discuss their strategic role and responsibilities in implementing the Institutional business support mechanism under the Mission Yuva project to leverage self-employment potential in the district.

At the outset, Priyanka Gupta, AD Employment delivered a detailed Power-Point presentation, elaborating on the specific roles and responsibilities assigned to each Committee member.

Stress was laid on creating a dependable system to support potential entrepreneurs, create new jobs and



micro-enterprises and drive economic growth by creating self-employment opportunities.

The DC informed the participants that a Committee has been constituted to oversee the successful implementation of the project, ensuring that all stakeholders clearly understand their individual responsibilities. She emphasized that every

member must have a clear understanding of their individual responsibilities to enhance coordination, improve efficiency and ensure smooth execution of the Yuva project in the District.

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

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

**Reviews measures for seamless power supply during Holy Month of Ramzan**

ANANTNAG, SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 26: The Managing Director (MD) of Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), accompanied by the Superintending Engineer of South Circle Bijbehara and concerned Executive Engineers and other officials, visited South Kashmir to assess the ongoing revenue realization efforts, progress under the RDSS (Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme), the PM Surya Ghar Yojana, and measures taken to ensure a reliable power supply during the Holy month of Ramzan.

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

He emphasized the importance of achieving the revenue targets in full and underscored the continued need



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

He also reviewed the progress made

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

While reviewing PM Surya Ghar Yojana, he highlighted the need to

increase awareness about the scheme and to encourage more consumers to avail themselves of the government subsidy. He called for focused efforts to cover the maximum number of beneficiaries under the scheme.

As part of his visit, the MD toured the Receiving Station Sangam and directed all Sub-Transmission and Distribution level officers to strictly adhere to the curtailment program. He stressed the importance of efficient power supply management to ensure seamless and reliable power during Ramzan particularly during Sehri and Ifthar.

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

## Thousands throng Poonch Shiv Khori Mandir on Maha Shivratri

**DC Vikas Kunal pays obeisance at Temple shrine**

POONCH, FEBRUARY 26: The local Shiv Khori Temple witnessed the influx of thousands of devotees on the eve of Mahashivratri. Men, women and children adorned in colorful attires filled the temple, taking part in special prayers held on the occasion.

Visitors also enjoyed local cuisine at food stalls set up along the route to the temple shrine, enhancing the festive atmosphere of the day. Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kunal also paid obeisance at the temple shrine and sought the blessings of Lord Shiva.

The Deputy Commissioner exchanged Maha Shivratri greetings with the pilgrims. He said that the auspicious occasion embodies the true spirit of India's composite



culture, fostering brotherhood and harmony among all communities. Earlier, the Management Committee of the temple extended a warm welcome to the Deputy Commissioner.

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

**Directs for population estimation of rare species in Pir Panjal**

POONCH, FEBRUARY 26: Minister for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, today impressed upon the officers of Wildlife department to undertake innovative conservation measures for protection of rare and endangered species, that have been recently spotted in the Pir Panjal region.

He issued these directions during his visit to the Pir Panjal region where he discussed various conservation measures with the

officers of the wildlife department. Wildlife Protection (Poonch-Rajouri) had last year captured Brandt's Hedgehog from Nowshera and Shachera. They were released into the natural habitat after taking proper sampling and completing all other studies. They had also confirmed the presence of smooth coated Otter from Ghambir Mughlian, Rajouri in October 2024 and critically endangered Pangolin in

January 2025 from Nowshera. The Minister said that these findings are a great news for the wildlife department and calls for their protection and conservation. "We need to take conservation steps in these areas where biodiversity supports Brandt's Hedgehog, Pangolin, Otters and other rare and endangered species," the minister said. He called upon the officers to evaluate the activities that threaten the biodiversity and re-

search possible solutions that weigh environmental, economic and social concerns. He said that environmental conservation has become a global priority due to the growing concerns of climate change and increasing pollution. "To restore environmental balance, it is crucial to adopt a more sensitive approach toward nature and wildlife conservation as each species has an important role to perform in the ecosystem. If we want to protect them we

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

area and to survey other areas for their presence. "Population assessments provide the foundation for evaluating the status and threats to endangered species and plan and implement species recovery and conservation plans accordingly," he added. Rana also called for involvement of local communities in the conservation of endangered species and their habitats. These communities play a significant role in shielding endangered species

from hunting, while protecting the places these animals live, he said. He further called for strengthening enforcement mechanisms like wildlife monitoring activities, mitigating human-wildlife conflict which form an integral part of conservation achievements. "There is need to design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment and biodiversity," he said.

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

POONCH, FEBRUARY 26: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, today emphasised efficient service delivery and timely implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Pir Panjal region. He made these remarks during his visit to the region conducted to assess the progress on developmental activities including JJM in Pir Panjal region.

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

He also reviewed the measures to



maintain continuous supply of water in remote areas and called for proactive initiatives, including a robust complaint redressal mechanism, to address public grievances effectively.

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

nomic prosperity.

Rana expressed hope that the forest fraternity shall work in tandem with communities to conserve and protect forests and environment. He exhorted upon the officers to work with dedication and sincerity to solve public issues and concerns. He further said that there is a need to attach high importance to addressing the challenges of climate change. He also laid stress on forest fire prevention and management mechanisms that have gained added significance due to the adverse climatic conditions and mitigation measures need to be taken beforehand.

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

## DC reviews achievements under HADP initiatives in Doda District

DODA, FEBRUARY 26: Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh took a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) in the District here at a meeting held in the Conference Hall DC Office Complex, the other day. The meeting focused on evaluating the progress of key agricultural and allied sector initiatives. The district nodal officer, along with officials from Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Floriculture, and Fisheries, provided a comprehensive overview of



the progress made so far. Both physical and financial aspects, as well as the processing of applications on various portals, were discussed in detail. The DC urged all departments to expedite registrations and ensure effective implementation of schemes to create a robust and profitable agricultural ecosystem. The meeting

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

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All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Jammu City

