

Stone pelting incidents in Kashmir have come down to zero: Amit Shah

CRPF played key role in restoring peace, no bullet fired in J&K after Art 370 abrogation | Success achieved in establishing peace at 3 hotspots in country | 2,270 CRPF jawans made supreme sacrifice to keep country safe | By March 31, 2026 country will be free from Naxalism

Sajid Raina

Guwahati, Feb 21: Crediting security forces, particularly the Central Reserve Police Force, for restoring peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that incidents of stone pelting in Kashmir have come down to "zero."

Addressing the 87th Raising Day parade of the force in Guwahati, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Stone pelting incidents in Kashmir have become zero. Industries are coming up, and development is taking place. CRPF, BSF and especially Jammu and Kashmir Police have a huge contribution in this," he said.

He said that after the abrogation of the Article 370 not a single bullet was needed to be fired in Jammu and Kashmir, with the CRPF playing an important role in ensuring that.

Shah said that 11-12 years ago, the country had three major hotspots—Jammu and Kashmir, Left-Wing Extremism-affected areas, and the Northeast—which had become sores for the nation's internal security. "Today, success has been achieved in establishing peace in all three places. In these three hotspots, bomb blasts, bullets, bandhs, blockades, and destruction were once prominent, but now all three regions have become engines of growth, driving the development of the entire country forward," he said, adding, "Without the sacrifice made by these CRPF martyrs, it would have been impossible to bring these three hotspots onto the path of development."



The Union Home Minister said that for 86 years, CRPF has been strengthening the country's internal security with its outstanding performance, valor, patience, bravery and sacrifices. "The internal security of the country cannot even be imagined without CRPF. Since its inception till date, over 86 years, the CRPF has stood as a strong pillar of the nation's internal security due to its dedication to duty and has been delivering results as well," he added.

Shah said that 2,270 jawans of CRPF have made the supreme sacrifice to keep the country safe, and the entire nation thanks and pays tributes to them. He emphasized that it is precisely because of this dedication to duty and sacrifices made that the CRPF jawans have protected the nation on numerous occasions.

The Union Home Minister said: "For the first time in the 86-year history of CRPF, Raising

Day celebrations are being held in the Northeast, in Assam, which is a matter of pride for all of us and the entire Northeast."

He said that in 2019, it was decided that the annual parade of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) would be held in different parts of the country, and today, the CRPF parade is being held in one of the most important parts of the country—the Northeast. "Today 14 CRPF jawans have been awarded the Police Medal for Gallantry, 5 jawans have received the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, and 5 CRPF battalions have been honored with medals for outstanding performance."

He said that the journey of the CRPF began in 1939 with just 2 battalions, and today, with 248 battalions and a strength of 3.25 lakh personnel, the CRPF has become the world's largest CAPF.

Shah emphasized that the CRPF has played a key role in protecting | More on P6

LG administers oath to Shantmanu as J&K State Election Commissioner

KNO Desk

Srinagar, Feb 21: Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, on Saturday administered the oath of office to Shantmanu as the State Election Commissioner at Lok Bhavan.

According to details available with news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the oath-taking ceremony was held after the Jammu and Kashmir Government announced his appointment to the constitutional post.

Earlier, the General Administration Department had issued an order



appointing retired IAS officer Shantmanu as the State Election Commissioner of

Jammu and Kashmir. He has been appointed for a tenure of five years or until he

attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. The order | More on P6

NMC approves 24 new super-specialty seats for 2025-26 academic session

Will boost advanced healthcare in J&K: Health Minister

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Feb 21: In a significant push towards enhancing advanced healthcare services and medical education in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has approved 24 new and enhanced DM and MCh super-specialty seats for the academic session 2025-26.

Health and Medical Education Minister Sakeena Itoo according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) termed the move a "major boost" to J&K's healthcare infrastructure and academic ecosystem.

She said that the newly sanctioned seats will be



distributed among leading institutions, including Government Medical College Srinagar, Government Medical College Jammu, and Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Soura.

The expansion is expected to significantly enhance the capacity of these institutions to offer super-specialty training and deliver advanced patient care. "This | More on P6

Srinagar records 21.0°C, all-time temp record for February shattered

Dry spell to continue till month end, predicts MeT

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 21: An all-time temperature record for February was shattered in Srinagar on Saturday, with the maximum temperature soaring to 21.0°C, independent weatherman Faizan Keng told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said, "The reading is now officially the highest ever recorded in the month of February in Srinagar. The previous all-time February record stood at 20.6°C, which was observed on February 24, 2016."

He said that what makes the development even more remarkable is the magnitude of the anomaly. "Today's temperature was a massive +10.0°C above normal, which is an



extraordinary deviation for late winter in the Valley," he said.

Keng said, "This is not an isolated spike but part of a broader, intensifying warm spell. With dry conditions likely to persist and no significant Western Disturbance in sight, maximum temperatures are expected to climb even further in the coming days."

Keng said that long-standing records | More on P6

NC 'betrayed' youth by outsourcing 24,000 jobs, misled on Art 370: LoP Sharma

Demands companies' credentials, recruitment mechanism be made public | Dismisses 'special status' claims | Warns of agitation if govt fails to deliver on promises

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Feb 21: Leader of Opposition (LoP) and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sunil Sharma on Saturday accused the ruling National Conference (NC) of deceitful politics and misleading the people of Jammu and Kashmir on Article 370, autonomy and "special status".

He further accused the NC of betraying unemployed youth by allegedly outsourcing 24,000 government jobs to a private company without a transparent recruitment process.

Addressing party workers and new entrants during the Bharatiya Janata Party's Mega Joining Programme at SKICC,



Srinagar, LoP Sharma said the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir is changing. He claimed that the real character of the NC has now been "exposed" before the people.

Sharma, as reported by the

news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), began by thanking BJP workers, particularly those who continued to work in Kashmir during challenging times.

Making employment the

central focus of his speech, he said the NC had promised to provide one lakh jobs within 180 days of forming the government, but has failed to deliver. "Time has passed. Where are those one lakh jobs?" he asked.

The BJP leader alleged that instead of initiating transparent recruitment drives, the government has outsourced around 24,000 posts.

"These 24,000 posts were handed over to a private company without open advertisements, written examinations or interviews," he claimed. "Parents work hard and educate their children with the hope that they will secure government jobs. Youth prepare for exams | More on P6

Fasting promotes stem cell regeneration, helps manage metabolic disorders: Doctors

Urge caution for those with pre-existing conditions

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Feb 21: Medical experts on Saturday highlighted "unlimited" health benefits associated with fasting. They said the practice not only strengthens mental discipline but also contributes significantly to physical well-being, including the regeneration of stem cells and reduced risk of metabolic and neurological disorders.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr Shakeel Ahmad Mir, a general physician at DHSK, said fasting plays a crucial role in improving overall health outcomes. "Fasting instils discipline and patience while reducing the likelihood of developing metabolic disorders such as diabetes, hypertension, and fatty



liver disease," he said.

Dr Mir said that individuals who fast regularly tend to have better metabolic profiles compared to those who do not. "There are comparatively fewer chances of metabolic diseases among people who fast. It helps regulate blood sugar levels by reducing insulin resistance and

promotes better cardiovascular health by improving blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglyceride levels," he added.

According to Dr Mir, fasting may also reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases and certain cancers. "Studies suggest that people who consume fewer calories often demonstrate better memory, improved neurological stability, and even increased lifespan," he said.

The doctor further said that fasting activates the regeneration of stem cells—cells that have the unique ability to develop into various types of tissues in the body. "These cells are essential for repair and renewal processes. Their activation during fasting helps in maintaining organ | More on P6

'International Mother Language Day'

'Saving our language means saving our identity': Poets, writers call for preserving dying Kashmiri

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Feb 21: On the occasion of International Mother Language Day, prominent voices from Jammu and Kashmir have expressed deep concern over the declining use of the Kashmiri language.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), they called for urgent collective efforts to preserve and promote it as a vital marker of identity and cultural heritage.

Noted writer Dr Tanveer Hayat emphasised the intrinsic connection between language and thought, stating that language is

fundamental to human identity.

"Language is the homeland of thought. Without language, thought is stateless. Homeless is always meaningless," he said, adding that language is not merely a medium of communication but a carrier of culture, traditions, and history. He stressed that every community must safeguard its linguistic roots to preserve its unique identity.

Echoing similar concerns, teacher Mudasir Ahmad described Kashmiris as the emotional and cultural backbone of the people. "Our mother tongue, Kashmiri, is not just



a language; it is our identity and the voice of our culture. It carries the love, emotions, and wisdom of our elders," he said. However, he lamented the growing hesitation among younger generations to speak the language, calling it a painful sign of cultural erosion.

He warned that the diminishing use of Kashmiri in homes and daily life poses a serious threat to the region's rich heritage. "On this Mother Tongue Day, let us promise to speak Kashmiri with pride, teach it to our children, and keep it alive. Saving our language means saving our identity," he added.

Poetess Nadim Shoqia also highlighted the historical and intellectual richness of the Kashmiri language, describing it as a legacy that has contributed significantly to literature and philosophy. "Kashmiri is not merely a language; it is a legacy. It has given the world philosophers, poets, and writers who brought glory to Kashmir and the entire nation," she said.

Addressing the youth, she urged them to embrace their linguistic roots without hesitation. "There is dignity in your roots. There is power in your language," she remarked, appealing to families to ensure that

Kashmiri is spoken and passed on to future generations.

Shoqia called on the government to take concrete steps, including the appointment of dedicated Kashmiri language teachers in schools and colleges. "A language survives when it is taught, protected, and honoured," she asserted.

The speakers unanimously stressed that the survival of a language is directly tied to the survival of a culture and civilization. They warned that continued neglect could lead to irreversible loss, urging society at large to recognise the urgency of the situation. (KNO)

DC Srinagar reviews alternate entry, parking works at Bone and Joint Hospital

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo along with the Principal of Government Medical College Srinagar, Dr Iffat Shah and SSP Traffic Srinagar, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat on Saturday conducted a comprehensive spot inspection to review traffic decongestion measures and infrastructure upgradation works around Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla.

The visit, as per an official statement, aimed at assessing the progress of various interventions undertaken to streamline vehicular movement and improve accessibility for patients, attendants and staff visiting the hospital.

During the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner and the Principal GMC Srinagar reviewed the development of an alternate entry gate to the Bone & Joint Hospital, construction of ramps and small Link Road connecting the main road with the Parking facilities through the Bund side along Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla aimed



at reducing congestion at the main gate and ensuring smooth passage for ambulances and other emergency vehicles.

They also undertook an on-site assessment of the new parking facility to address space constraints in the area. In addition, the Officers examined the progress of works related to the improvement of hospital entry and exit points to minimize bottlenecks to reduce roadside congestion, particularly during peak hours.

The DC along with the officers also took first-hand appraisal of newly constructed underpass connecting alternate access road of Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla and assess on

ground traffic flow and pedestrian movement.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and adhere to set timelines to ensure early completion of the works to facilitate safe pedestrian movement and reduce traffic interruptions in the larger public interest.

The DC emphasized that the combined measures including alternate access, enhanced parking space and improved traffic management will significantly streamline traffic flow and ensure hassle-free patient access to the hospital.

The DC stated that the District Administration has

pushed various traffic decongestion measures on priority across Srinagar, particularly around major healthcare institutions including SMHS Hospital and Super Specialty Hospital with the objective of easing patient movement and reducing congestion in surrounding areas. He added that the administration is committed to strengthening healthcare accessibility and improving traffic management infrastructure for the convenience and safety of citizens, besides for convenience of the doctors and staff working in Hospitals.

Administrator GMC, Srinagar, Mohammad Ashraf Hakak; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Superintending Engineer R&B Tatheer Manzoor; Executive Engineer R&B, Khalid Mehmood; Tehsildar South Sajjad, Tehsildar, Chanapora, Kifayat Ali; Medical Superintendent Bone & Joint Hospital, Dr. Adil and other concerned officers and officials accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the visit.

DC Baramulla finalizes arrangements for Khelo India Winter Games at Gulmarg



KT NEWS DESK

GULMARG, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Saturday conducted a comprehensive inspection of various venues and key locations at Gulmarg and finalized arrangements for the 6th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games.

Officers from sports, tourism, health, police, civil administration, and other line departments accompanied the DC during the inspection.

During the visit, the DC inspected the Gulmarg Golf Club and other designated competition and accommodation sites to ensure that all necessary arrangements have been put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the prestigious winter sporting event starting from 23rd February.

Minga Sherpa, as per an official statement, reviewed venue

preparedness, lodging facilities for athletes and officials, transportation plans, medical facilities, emergency response mechanisms, sanitation, power and water supply, and security arrangements.

Earlier, the DC chaired a comprehensive meeting of officers from the concerned departments at Golf Club Gulmarg to review the status of preparations for ensuring a seamless experience for participants and visitors.

The DC directed all departments to remain alert, ensure prompt response to any requirement, and maintain high standards of hospitality and professionalism throughout the event.

Emphasizing the importance of the national-level event, the DC stated that hosting the Winter Games is a matter of pride for the district and showcases Gulmarg as a premier winter sports destination.

DC Budgam reviews Jal Shakti Abhiyan, stresses community participation

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Saturday chaired a comprehensive review meeting on the implementation and progress of Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain 2025 and Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) 2.0.

At the outset, a detailed presentation was given outlining the background, objectives, themes, and focused interventions under the ongoing campaign. The meeting deliberated on the theme for 2025 "Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Jan Jagrukta Ki Or Conservation towards Intensified Community Connect Campaign" with special focus on strengthening water security through community participation and convergence of departmental efforts.

The DC, as per an official statement, took a comprehensive review of works uploaded on the Jal Shakti Abhiyan portal and was informed that 61 works under JSJB 2.0 have been completed and uploaded till 15-02-2026. These include water conservation structures, recharge works, check dams, afforestation measures, catchment protection activities, and rejuvenation of traditional water bodies across various blocks of the district including Khag, Khan-Sahib, Surasay, Pakherpora, Sukhnag and Beerwah.

The meeting highlighted the special initiative under JSA-CTR 2025 'Jal-Jungle-Jan: Ek Pratikritik Bandhan Abhiyan', focusing on mapping of forest springs, protection of catchment areas, and forest community engagement in river basins including the Jhelum basin.

Entrepreneurship mela held in Bandipora under Mission YUVA

KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, FEBRUARY 21: District Administration Bandipora on Saturday organized a one-day Potential Entrepreneurship Mela under Mission YUVA at Government Higher Secondary School Mantrigram in Block Bonkoot. Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zaffar Hussain Shawl, presided over the event and highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship in generating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the youth. He emphasized that Mission YUVA aims to mobilize po-

tential entrepreneurs, disseminate information about various self-employment schemes, and provide necessary handholding support including financial and institutional guidance.

During the mela, various departments including DIC, Handicrafts and Handloom, Agriculture, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, NRLM, DE&CC, J&K Bank and RSETI set up stalls to showcase schemes and provide on-the-spot guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs. Help desks and advisory counters were established to facilitate interactions regarding credit facilities, training programmes, and institutional support.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION CHADOORA

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
ENIT NO. 91 OF R&B /CHADOORA/ 6475-84 of 2025-26 DATED: 21/02/2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In double cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/ Central Governments for the following works:-

| SN | Nome of Work | Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs) | Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees) | Earnest Money (In Rupees) | Time of completion (days) | M.H OF Account | Class Of Contactor |
|----|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Balance work by way of chain link fencing of Pre-fabricated Hut at Haijan Brenwar. | 2.20 | 200.00 | 4400.00 | 17 | HADP- 2025-26 | DEE |

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | Date of Issue of Tender Notice | 21/02/2026 |
| 2 | Period of downloading of bidding documents | 21/02/2026 |
| 3 | Bid submission Start Date | 21/02/2026 |
| 4 | Bid Submission End Date | 02/03/2026 upto 05.00 PM. |
| 5 | Date & time of opening of Technical Bids | 03/03/2026 at 10.30 AM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Chadoora |

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (deposited in MH: 0059) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Chadoora (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Chadoora (tender receiving authority).

Note:- The Date of Treasury Challan and Earnest Money / Bid security must be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date. Any deviation shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.

1.1 The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Chadoora within 07 (Seven) days after the date of receipt of letter of acceptance and shall be released after successful completion of DLP. The Bank Guarantee should be valid till DLP period.

1. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e., Executive Engineer R&B Division Chadoora. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the total cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period. In case of failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor for a period of 01 year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.

2. Unbalanced Bid:-

As per the Circular instructions of Finance Deptt. Issued Vide No. FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated:08.08.2025 & endorsed by Chief Engineer (R&B) Central Kashmir vide endorsement No. CE/R&B/CK/ WS/6375-96 dated 12/08/2025, which is reproduced as:-

i) Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the Project Cost put to bid, the additional Performance Guarantee/Security Percentage shall be incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

ii) Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

3. The date and time of opening of Financial Bids of a responsive bidder shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address.

4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

5. The bidders are advised to use legal registration card for e-tendering. If any bidder was found to have fake registration card for his bid, penalty under rules shall be imposed on the bidder for hurdling the tendering process and the fake registration card will be forwarded to concerned authorities for strict action.

6. The earnest money/ performance Security shall be forfeited if:-

a) Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.

c) Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

8(A). Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

8.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

Any other cause which in the absolute discretion of the accepting authority is beyond the contractor's desire.

a) On contractor's representation based on the grounds as detailed above the time for completion of the work may be extended by a period considered reasonable by the Department.

b) Extension of time shall be also admissible in the event of temporary suspension of work.

1. The tender/bid is liable to rejection if it does not fulfill the requirements as laid down in NIT.

2. 50% of the normal deposits (Deducted at 10% from running bills) to be released after virtual completion of the work and balance 50% after completion of DLP.

3. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

No. 6475-84
DATED: 21/02/2026

DIPK-11220/25
DATED: 21-02-2026

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Chadoora

HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF J&K GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG COLLEGE CAMPUS, DIALGARN ANANTNAG J&K-192210

EMAIL ID: PRINCIPAL-GMCA@JK.GOV.IN

Subject: Engagement of Senior Resident in the Department of General Medicine Govt. Medical College Anantnag.

Ref.: Advertisement Notice No. 09 GMCA of 2025 dated 24.11.2025

1. Selection Notification No. 12 GMCA of 2025 dated 27.12.2025
2. CID Verification Report received from CID J&K vide Form No. 145004 dated 17.02.2026
ORDER NO.: 124 GMCA OF 2026
DATED: 19-02-2026

Pursuant to the selection notification issued vide No. 12 GMCA of 2025 dated 27.12.2025, below mentioned candidate is provisionally engaged as Senior Resident under S.O 364 of 2020 dated 27.11.2020, in the Department of General Medicine, Government Medical College Anantnag initially for a period of one year which is extendable upto (03) years only on the basis of good performance to be certified by the concerned Head of Department.

| Name of Candidate | Parentage | Address | Whether In-Service |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Dr Hemayoun Altaf | Sheikh Altaf Ahmad | Sundoo, Anantnag | No |

The above candidate is directed to join in the office of the Principal, Govt. Medical College Anantnag within 21 days from the date of publication of this order and shall be allowed to join on production of following documents in original for verification.

1. Essential Qualification Certificate(s).
2. Registration Certificate(s) of Essential Qualification.
3. Date of Birth Certificate.
4. Domicile Certificate.

Terms and Conditions:

1. The above candidate shall have to execute an agreement with the institution on a prescribed format (Form A of S.O 364) with regard to the various terms and conditions applicable during academic arrangement. The candidate shall strictly ensure that he/she shall not leave the post (College) before the completion of tenure of six months, however abandoning/terminating after six months of the engagement in the specialty will require one-month prior notice on either side falling which the salary shall not be paid for one month to the incumbent which shall be released on completion of stipulated sanctioned term.

2. Before joining the Department, the selected candidate shall submit an affidavit in J the office of the Administrative Officer, Govt. Medical College Anantnag duly attested by the u

Magistrate (1st Class) to the effect that:

- a. I understand all the terms and conditions set out in the agreement (Form A of S.O 364 of 2020) and I shall be bound by all such terms and conditions (Form A of S.O 364) duly executed by me.
- b. If any of the information furnished by me to the college is found wrong at any point of time, I shall be liable to be punished under rules including confiscation of the Registration of the Doctor.
- c. I will not participate in any kind of strike during the period of my tenure engagement. In the event I proceeded on strike, my tenure engagement shall be terminated without any notice as this service is covered under ESMA Act.
- d. I shall remain disciplined during the tenure period; any kind of misconduct shall make me liable for termination without any prior notice.
- e. I am not involved in any criminal activity nor is there is any FIR/Court case pending/registered against me in any criminal department or police station/Hon'ble Court.
- f. My engagement is strictly provisional till the recipient of verification of documents/ testimonials and verification report for character and antecedents from CID. In case adverse report is received from CID, J&K, I shall have no claim for Senior Residency benefits i.e., experience certificate and salary/remuneration and my engagement shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio.
- g. I shall not claim any Experience Certificate in case I leave Senior Resident-ship before completion of first six months,
- h. I will not indulge in any private practice. In case I am found doing private practice my appointment shall be liable for termination without any notice.

3. Those candidates who are not in-service shall be engaged under S.O 364 of 2020 dated 27.11.2020 (Academic Arrangement Basis).

4. The Senior Residents (Non-PSC) appointed on Academic Arrangement Basis shall be paid as per S.O 364 of 2020 dated 27-11-2020. However, In-service (PSC confirmed) candidates shall be paid salary as per their LPC. The PSC confirmed appointees are required to furnish the NOC from Director Health Services concerned before their joining, failing which they will not be allowed to join and their selection will be cancelled.

5. The salary of the appointed candidate(s) shall be drawn/distributed only after recipient satisfactory report of verification of character & antecedents and documents/ testimonials from the concerned quarters.

No. GMCA/Estt/2026/1771-77

Dated: 19-02-2026

DIPK-11216/25
DATED: 21-02-2026

Principal/Dean,
Govt. Medical College, Anantnag

Staggered school timings on cards for Srinagar

Move aimed at easing Ramadan rush, say DC, SSP Traffic

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Feb 21: Anticipating a sharp rise in vehicular movement with the reopening of schools, colleges and offices, traffic authorities in Srinagar have proposed staggered timings for educational institutions to ease peak-hour congestion across key city routes, officials said.

They said the proposal gains significance amid Ramadan, when Sehri and Iftari hours already witness heavy traffic load, particularly along the Barzulla healthcare corridor. Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, the SSP Traffic City Aijaz Ahmad Bhat said a magnetised Bund road has been developed in Barzulla to improve connectivity to the newly constructed hospital block in the area. "The alternate Bund road has been completed in its first phase and is now functional. A ramp is also being proposed to create additional parking space, which will improve overall mobility," Bhat said.

He said the authorities are working on connecting the new Barzulla block to Chanpora via the Bund. "The DPR



has been forwarded by R&B authorities, and the work is expected to be completed within the current financial year," the SSP said, adding that the proposed stretch will extend towards the right bank and link with Sanat Nagar, creating an alternative traffic corridor.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who also spoke with the media, said decongesting hospital zones remains a top priority, particularly around Government Medical College Srinagar and Bone and Joint Hospital Srinagar, which witness heavy daily inflow of patients and attendants.

"To ease pressure on SMHS and super-speciality areas, an alternate Sonwar route has been developed. The work is progressing rapidly and is expected to divert nearly half of the existing traffic, ensuring quicker access for patients," he said.

At the Bone and Joint Hospital in Barzulla, three major interventions are underway. The first phase of the alternate Bund road has been completed.

Secondly, work has begun on creating an alternate entry point from the Bund side to facilitate trauma patients, doctors and medical staff. "Once completed, the hospital will not have to rely solely on the

main road for access. This will significantly reduce bottlenecks," the DC Srinagar said.

Additionally, an alternate parking facility is being planned for the Bund road, with a ramp and allied infrastructure to allow hospital staff to park vehicles without adding to roadside congestion.

Both the DC Srinagar and SSP Traffic said the Barzulla underpass has been completed for light motor vehicles (LMVs) and cleared by the traffic authorities. "The underpass will now be made operational for LMVs, which will help decongest traffic from Bulbul Bagh and adjoining areas," the DC said, adding that heavy vehicles will not be permitted.

With schools, colleges, and offices set to reopen and traffic flow expected to surge, especially during Sehri and Iftari hours in Ramadan, the Traffic Department has proposed staggered timings for educational institutions.

"We have submitted the proposal to the government. If approved, it will substantially ease peak-hour pressure across key city routes," SSP Traffic said—(KNO)

J&K judicial academy holds workshop on DDO roles, GeM training

KT NEWS DESK

Samba, Feb 21: Under the patronage of Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Arun Palli and guidance of Chairperson and members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the Jammu & Kashmir Judicial Academy on Saturday organised a one day Refresher Training Programme (A-061/25) on "Power and Duties of Drawing and Disbursing Officer including GeM Training" at its Janipur Campus, Jammu.

The programme was conducted for the Judicial Officers and Nazirs/Buyers dealing with Government e-Marketplace (GeM) of Jammu Province.

The programme commenced with registration of the participants followed by introduction by Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy.

In his address, the Director underscored the importance of financial discipline, accountability and digital procurement systems in strengthening the institutional efficiency and transparency within the

judicial system.

The first and second sessions conducted by Sarthak Khoda, GeM Trainer, who provided an in-depth overview of the Government e-Marketplace platform. The sessions covered registration and onboarding processes, procurement workflow, order placement, contract management, billing, invoicing and payment reconciliation.

The resource person also apprised the participants of recent features and policy updates on GeM and addressed practical challenges faced by stakeholders.

The technical sessions were also graced by Amir Ali, Senior Assistant Director, Government e-Marketplace, whose presence added value to the deliberations.

The third and fourth sessions were delivered by Er. Jagteshwar Singh, Accounts Officer, Civil Aviation Department, J&K. He elaborated on the legal and administrative framework governing the role of Drawing and Disbursing Officers, including powers and duties under General Financial Rules (GFRs), Treasury Rules and Financial Codes. The sessions further

focused on budgetary control, expenditure management, maintenance of financial records, preparation and submission of bills, advances and recoveries, pension matters, GPF/NPS issues, audit procedures, and common objections. The technical sessions were also attended by Sandeep Singh Manhas, FA/CAO, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, whose august presence enriched the deliberations.

The programme concluded with an interactive session, wherein the participants actively engaged with the resource persons, raised queries and shared field-level experiences.

The interactive deliberations enriched the learning experience and clarified practical aspects of financial compliance and procurement procedures.

The refresher programme forms part of the Academy's ongoing commitment to capacity building of judicial officers and ministerial staff, ensuring enhanced efficiency, transparency and accountability in financial administration and procurement processes within the judicial system.

Activist M M Shuja demands stronger RTI implementation in J&K

KNO

Srinagar, Feb 21: Prominent RTI activist and Chairman of J&K Peoples Forum, M.M. Shuja, has appealed to the Union Territory Government of Jammu & Kashmir to strengthen the provisions and implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2005 to ensure greater accountability and transparency in the administration.

In a statement, Shuja strongly criticized several Public Information Officers (PIOs) for denying or unnecessarily delaying the supply of information to applicants.

He said, "Even after sixteen years of the RTI Act being in force, some PIOs in various departments are wilfully delaying information."

Certain PIOs, due to lack of adequate knowledge and training, are misinterpreting the clauses of the Act to avoid furnishing information," reads the statement.

Shuja urged the Chief Secretary of the Union Territory to organize regular workshops and interactive training sessions for PIOs working across different departments to enhance their understanding of the Act and ensure its effective implementation. He also demanded the establishment of a separate Information Commission in Jammu and Kashmir, stating that hundreds of second appeals from the Union Territory have been pending before the Central Information Commission in New Delhi for over a year, causing undue hardship to applicants seeking information.

Furthermore, Shuja emphasized that all government departments in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir should proactively update their official websites with relevant records to facilitate easy and timely access to information for the public—(KNO)

BJP expands in Kashmir as several leaders switch sides

KNO

Srinagar, Feb 21: Several prominent leaders and grassroots workers from the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (NC), Indian National Congress (INC), Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Apni Party, DPAP and other political outfits formally joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at a grand function held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar.

The new entrants, according to a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), were welcomed by J&K BJP President and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Sat Sharma (CA), Leader of Opposition in the J&K Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma, and General Secretary (Organization) J&K Ashok Koul, along with General Secretary Anwar Khan, Secretaries Arif Raja (Program Incharge) and Mudaris Wani, All Cells Co-Convenor Bilal Parry & State & District Leaders welcomed the new entrants.

Among those who joined the party were Manzoor Ahmad Ganie (DDC Member, Aripal—Pulwama), Mansha Akhtar (DDC Member, Achgoza—Pulwama), Mehmooda Akhtar (DDC Member, Shadimarg), Danish Bhat (Former Corporator, Srinagar Municipal Corporation), Nazir Gilkar (Former Corporator), Altaf Mir (Former BDC Chairman), Khalid Rathore (Provincial President Youth, Apni Party J&K), Aga Syed Abbas Rizvi (State General Secretary, All India Shia Personal Law Board; Former State Secretary, DPAP), Former BMO Dr Yaseen Ul Hussain Bhat, Gulshan Begum Ex NC Sarpanch, Abdul Rashid Zargar (NC Block President Trehgam Kupwara, Aijaz Ahmad Mir (District Secretary PDP Srinagar), Manzoor Ahmed Thakur (District Vice President, PDP Srinagar), Mohd Ashraf Thakur (Secretary

PDP Srinagar) along with their supporters and associates joined the BJP on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Sat Sharma warmly welcomed the new entrants into the BJP family and said that their decision to join the party is a clear reflection of the growing public faith in the BJP's vision of development, transparent governance, grassroots empowerment, and inclusive growth in Jammu & Kashmir.

Sharma asserted that the BJP's leadership, experience, and strong public connect would significantly strengthen the party's resolve to serve the people with dedication and integrity, while further advancing peace, stability, and prosperity across the Union Territory.

Sunil Sharma said that the joining of senior political figures and grassroots representatives is a strong endorsement of the BJP's policies and governance model. He emphasized that the party's commitment to strengthening grassroots democracy, ensuring equitable development, and safeguarding the interests of every section of society would continue with renewed vigour.

Ashok Koul remarked that the steady influx of leaders and workers from different political backgrounds is indicative of the BJP's expanding organizational base and credibility across Jammu & Kashmir. He underlined that the party's disciplined cadre, clear ideological direction, and development-oriented approach are being increasingly recognized by the people of the region.

The newly inducted members expressed confidence in the leadership of the BJP and affirmed that they would make sustained efforts to contribute wholeheartedly toward the progress, peace, and overall development of Jammu & Kashmir—(KNO)

Drug peddler nabbed in Baramulla

KNO

Srinagar, Feb 21: Continuing its drive against drug trafficking, Police in Baramulla arrested a drug peddler and recovered contraband substance from his possession.

According to a statement, a Police team at a checkpoint established at Dhobiwan Crossing, intercepted a vehicle (Tavera) bearing registration number JK01BD-2547 driven by Adil Ahmad Dar son of Gulam Mohi-ud-din Dar resident of Hardu Aboora.

During search, approximately 28 grams of a charas-like substance was recovered from his possession. Accordingly, the accused was arrested and the vehicle was seized. In this regard, a case vide FIR No. 15/2026 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Kunzer, and further investigation is underway.

J&K Police reiterates its commitment to eradicating the menace of drugs from society and appeals to the public to cooperate and share information regarding drug-related activities—(KNO)

Boosting cooperatives with good governance at CTI Srinagar

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Feb 21: The Cooperative Training Institute, Srinagar, organized a programme on "Strengthening Cooperatives through Good Governance", followed by the felicitation and certificate distribution ceremony of the Diploma in Cooperative Management (DICM) for the trainees.

The programme highlighted the critical role of good governance in strengthening the cooperative institutions. Deliberations focused on transparency, accountability, professional management, statutory compliance and active member participation as the foundation for strong and sustainable cooperatives. The speakers emphasised that good governance is essential for improving the performance and public trust in cooperative institutions.

Babila Rakwal, Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative Department, Babila Rakwal, felicitated the successful

DICM trainees while distributing the diploma certificates among them.

Special Secretary, Cooperative Department, Ulfat Jabeen and Principal, Cooperative Training Institute, Srinagar, Dr Khalid Hussain Malik besides others were present on the occasion.

The dignitaries congratulated the trainees for successfully completing the diploma and encouraged them to apply their knowledge in strengthening the cooperative societies through ethical and efficient practices.

The Deputy Registrars, Assistant Registrars, District Audit Officers besides Auditors, Sub Auditors and Junior Supervisors were sensitised regarding the good governance for strengthening the co-operatives.

The Programme concluded with a reaffirmation of the Institute's commitment to capacity building, modernization of cooperative education and promotion of good governance within the cooperative sector.

Director Horticulture reviews implementation of schemes in Reasi

KT NEWS DESK

Reasi, Feb 21: Director Horticulture Jammu, Gul Syed on Saturday conducted an extensive tour of District Reasi to review the progress and on-ground implementation of various Centrally Sponsored and UT Sector schemes in the horticulture sector.

The Director was accompanied by the Chief Horticulture Officer Reasi, Rajinder Sharma; Assistant Director Horticulture, Sunil Gupta; Horticulture Development Officer, Reasi, Puvinder Gupta; along with other field functionaries of the Department.

During the visit, the Director inspected the orchard of a progressive beneficiary, Ganesh Dass S/o Kartar Nath, R/o Bhabha, District Reasi. The inspection was aimed at evaluating the benefits availed and assets created under different schemes such as CSS, MIDH, JKIP and HADP. The Director took a detailed review of



the various components established in the orchard, including the Vermi-compost Unit and Geo Tank developed under the MIDH-SURAKSHA component. The beneficiary has successfully established a mango orchard over an area of 20 kanals, reflecting the effective adoption of modern

horticultural practices, scientific orchard management and integrated nutrient management techniques.

While interacting with the beneficiary, the Director appreciated the progressive approach and effective utilization of departmental assistance. He emphasized the

need for optimum use of government support to enhance productivity, ensure sustainability and improve farmers' income. He directed the field officers to provide continuous technical guidance and handholding support to growers for achieving better results under the schemes.

Later, a comprehensive review meeting was held at the office of the Chief Horticulture Officer. The meeting was attended by MCC, Dheeraj Bailam and staff of the Department. Detailed discussions were held regarding field-level implementation of schemes, progress and strategies to strengthen monitoring and outreach activities.

The Director stressed the importance of timely execution of works, proper beneficiary selection and regular field visits to ensure effective implementation of all ongoing horticulture development programmes in the district.

FCS&CA Samba hosts public welfare awareness camp

KT NEWS DESK

Samba, Feb 21: The Department of Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Samba on Saturday organised an awareness camp in collaboration with various stakeholders, civil society representatives and line departments. The programme witnessed active participation from different sections of society.

The participants were sensitised about the importance of awareness regarding various government welfare schemes and the need for community-level outreach, followed by informative sessions by resource persons Dr. Nahida Chowdhary, Senior Resident, Department of Community Medicine, GMC Jammu and Dr. Sakshi Manhas, Senior Resident, Department of Community Medicine, GMC Jammu, who highlighted the growing health concerns, particularly the rising incidence of cancer and emphasised the importance of early detection and preventive measures.

Speaking on the occasion, the Assistant Director, FCS&CA Samba, Rahul Gupta said that under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Samba, Ayushi Sudan, the department remains committed not only to ensuring food security through flagship schemes but also to foster inter-departmental convergence so that beneficiaries are well-informed about various government initiatives and welfare programmes.

India's Youth Dividend In The AI Era: Building A Future-Ready Talent Ecosystem

India AI Impact Summit 2026 underscores how youth-led innovation, responsible AI adoption, and industry alignment are converging to drive inclusive and outcome-oriented growth

Press Information Bureau

The India-AI Impact Summit 2026 commenced on 16th February 2026 with a powerful vision, placing India's youth at the heart of the nation's Artificial Intelligence (AI) journey. Far from a futuristic dream, the Summit spotlights AI as a transformative force already reshaping jobs and livelihoods. India has the largest youth population in the world, with over 65% of its population under the age of 35, positioning this demographic powerhouse as an engine of economic momentum.

The Summit reflects a shift from passive learning to active participation, redefining employment across sectors, spotlighting new skills, and the urgent need to sync education with industry needs. The focus is on boosting employability, enhancing productivity, and forging seamless bridges from classrooms to AI-driven careers.

At the India-AI Impact Summit 2026, young innovators are driving the agenda through hands-on platforms such as innovation challenges, startup pitches, and live solution demonstrations. These structured engagements connect skills with market needs and channel India's youth potential into productive capacity. The Summit serves as a catalyst to accelerate job creation in emerging sectors, including Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics, which are projected to generate nearly 2 million jobs by 2030. By blending global insights with youth skilling and job creation, India is cementing the demographic dividend as the cornerstone of its AI strategy and a future-ready workforce.

AI as an Opportunity for India's Talent Pool

AI is rapidly emerging as a transformative opportunity for India's vast talent pool. By reshaping the employment landscape, AI is generating new roles, enhancing productivity, and expanding pathways for inclusive growth. India sees AI as a key lever to expand youth jobs and skills, blending emerging technology with inclusive growth and talent development.

Rising Demand for AI Skilling

Rising demand for AI skills and jobs is reshaping opportunities for young Indians. Between January 2023 and March 2025, AI-related job postings in South Asia increased from 2.9% to 6.5% of all vacancies, with demand for AI skills growing 75% faster than for non-AI roles. This shift signals a structural transformation in India's labour market—one that increasingly rewards digital fluency, advanced technical capability, and interdisciplinary expertise. For India's youth, AI is not merely a technological trend but a clear pathway toward skill-intensive, future-ready employment across technology and adjacent sectors.

Policy Push for AI-Ready Youth Skills

Recognising AI as a strategic employment driver, the Union Budget 2026-27 reinforced the government's focus on AI skilling and talent development. The budget prioritised the Orange Economy, which overlaps with AI-driven fields like Animation, Gaming, Digital content, and Immersive media. It allocated support for the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT), Mumbai to establish AI-aligned Content Creator Labs in 15,000 schools and 500 colleges, opening pathways for youth to gain future-ready skills and enter AI-centric job roles. This initiative is projected to generate around 20 lakh new jobs, directly boosting employment prospects for students, creators, and young professionals across India.

The Budget also highlighted AI and emerging technologies as central to shaping jobs and skills across sectors. It proposed an Education to Employment and Enterprise Standing Committee to assess how AI and related tech affect jobs and skill requirements, aiming to bridge education, work and enterprise demand.

Democratising Access to AI Infrastructure

Expanding opportunity within India's talent pool also requires equitable access to digital infrastructure. Under the IndiaAI Mission, the Government has allocated over 10,300 crore to strengthen AI capabilities and expand compute capacity beyond the existing 38,000 GPUs, with an additional 20,000 high-end GPUs to be added. Offered at a subsidised rate of 65 per cent per hour, this compute access reduces entry barriers for startups, young innovators, and public institutions. By democratising access to compute, datasets, and model ecosystems, India is ensuring that AI opportunity is not confined to metropolitan hubs but is accessible to aspiring talent nationwide. The planned expansion to over 58,000 GPUs reinforces a national commitment to inclusion, responsible innovation, and broad-based participation in the AI economy.

By aligning skilling, innovation, and access, AI is becoming a powerful engine for



youth-driven economic growth and global competitiveness.

National Efforts to Build a Skilled AI-Ready Talent Pool

The Government of India is building a comprehensive AI talent pipeline through coordinated interventions across school education, vocational training, higher education, and professional upskilling. These initiatives aim to equip youth with foundational, intermediate, and advanced AI capabilities aligned with industry demand.

Foundational AI Literacy in Schools

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: The NEP 2020 prioritizes digital and AI literacy as essential competencies, embedding computational thinking and AI concepts across all educational levels to prepare the next generation for rapid technological evolution. This holistic approach ensures early exposure to data-driven decision-making and ethical AI principles, fostering a culture of innovation from primary schooling onward and positioning Indian students as future-ready contributors to the global AI ecosystem.

Artificial Intelligence and Computational Thinking (AI & CT): The AI & CT initiative redefines educational paradigms by reinforcing learning, thinking, and teaching methodologies, starting from Grade 3 and progressively advancing toward "AI for Public Good." This foundational initiative organically integrates ethical AI practices into curricula, enabling young learners to grasp algorithms, problem-solving, and societal applications early, thereby building cognitive resilience for an AI-dominated future.

YUVAi (Youth for Unnati with AI): MeitY's YUVAi, launched with the National e-Governance Division (NeGD), empowers Classes 8-12 students to design practical AI solutions across eight thematic sectors.

YUVA AI for All: YUVA AI for All offers a free national AI literacy course in 11 languages (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu) accessible via DIKSHA, iGOT Karmayogi, and FutureSkills Prime, targeting 1 crore citizens for foundational AI proficiency. This mass-scale initiative democratizes knowledge, bridges urban-rural divides, and instills AI as a core life skill, amplifying public engagement and readiness for widespread technology adoption.

Vocational and Industry-Aligned Training Skill India Mission and SOAR Initiative: The Skill India Mission, led by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), integrates AI into vocational training, with the SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness) initiative enrolling 1.34 lakh students and teachers by December 2025 through partnerships with Microsoft, HCL Technologies, and NASSCOM. Complemented by the President's #SkillTheNation challenge, it delivers foundational and applied AI courses, accelerating workforce transitions and boosting employability in high-demand tech sectors.

FutureSkills Prime Initiative: The initiative, a collaboration between MeitY and NASSCOM, focuses on upskilling professionals in AI, big data, cloud computing and other emerging technologies. The initiative is aligned with National Occupational Standards (NOS) and National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), enabling learners to acquire in-demand skills that are highly valued by employers. With over 25.3 lakh registered learners and 3,000+ courses and pathways, the platform directly contributes to workforce transformation, enhancing employability and productivity across sectors.

Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH): MSDE's Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) unifies skill development on a single digital platform, providing AI and machine learning courses from introductory to advanced levels tailored to diverse learner proficiencies. By streamlining access to quality training, it supports lifelong learning, regional inclusion, and scalable upskilling, ensuring every aspiring professional can pivot toward AI-centric careers regardless of background or location.

Advanced AI Talent and Research Ecosystem

IndiaAI FutureSkills: Under the IndiaAI Mission, IndiaAI FutureSkills builds an elite AI ecosystem through fellowships for undergraduates, postgraduates, and PhDs, alongside specialized skill-enhancement courses, supporting 500 PhD scholars, 5,000 postgraduates, and 8,000 undergraduates as of December 2025. This targeted intervention nurtures research talent, spurs innovation, and creates a sustainable supply of advanced AI experts to anchor India's leadership in cutting-edge technologies.

IndiaAI Data and AI Labs: IndiaAI Data and AI Labs, with 27 facilities established via NIELIT in Tier-2/3 cities and approvals for 174 additional labs in IITs and Polytechnics across 27 States/UTs, emphasize AI coursework, data curation, annotation, cleaning, and applied data science. These hubs decentralize high-end resources, foster grassroots research, and enable hands-on training, ensuring equitable distribution of AI capabilities beyond metros.

From classrooms to advanced labs, this multi-tiered architecture guarantees broad access, regional equity, and industry alignment, empowering India's youth for ethical AI innovation and active participation in the AI-driven economy.

Empowering Youth at the India-AI Impact Summit 2026

The India AI Impact Summit 2026 has positioned youth and inclusive talent development at the centre of India's AI transformation journey. Through global challenges, innovation showcases, and policy dialogues, the Summit is highlighting how young innovators and women entrepreneurs are shaping responsible, scalable AI solutions for public good.

Youth at the Core of India's Sovereign AI Vision

At the India AI Impact Summit 2026, youth empowerment is embedded within the broader vision of advancing India's Sovereign AI capabilities. The session on "Scaling Impact from India's Sovereign AI and Data" highlighted the need to cultivate deep research talent, sustained innovation ecosystems, and indigenous AI models tailored to India's linguistic and developmental contexts. Leaders stressed that young innovators must be equipped to build transparent, explainable, and nationally aligned AI systems that address real challenges. By connecting advanced AI research with priority sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, and financial inclusion, the Summit is positioning India's youth as key drivers of globally competitive and socially impactful AI solutions.

From Algorithms to Outcomes:

At the Summit, youth engagement is being reinforced through a strong emphasis on building AI that delivers measurable public impact. In the session "From Algorithms to Outcomes," Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, highlighted that the India AI Mission is designed to address real-world challenges by translating compute, models, and data into deployable applications. With over 600 startups and companies

showcasing AI solutions across healthcare, agriculture, education, and manufacturing, the Summit offers young innovators direct exposure to scalable use cases and public sector problem-solving. Discussions with global experts underscored the importance of rigorous evaluation, responsible scaling, and evidence-based implementation, positioning youth not just as technologists, but as contributors to outcome-driven and citizen-centric AI systems.

YUVAi Global Youth Challenge:

YUVAi Global Youth Challenge, a flagship initiative under the IndiaAI Mission is empowering young innovators aged between 13-21 to build AI solutions aligned with the objectives- People, Planet and Progress. With over 2,500 applications from 38 countries, the Challenge showcased 70 high-potential teams addressing critical sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, climate resilience, accessibility, digital trust and smart mobility. Winning teams received national recognition along with financial awards and structured ecosystem support, including mentorship, incubation and industry linkages. Through rigorous evaluation focused on technical robustness, deployment readiness and social impact, the Summit is demonstrating how youth-led AI innovation can transition from prototype to scalable public-good solutions, strengthening India's leadership in responsible and inclusive AI.

AI by HER Global Impact Challenge:

The AI by HER Global Impact Challenge positioned women and young innovators at the forefront of India's responsible AI movement. Through panel discussions, startup showcases, and rapid spotlight pitches, the programme demonstrated how empathy-driven innovation can translate into scalable solutions across healthcare, climate resilience, education, fintech, security, and digital public infrastructure. From school-level problem solvers to deep-tech founders, participants highlighted how AI anchored in trust, sector-specific design, and strong digital public infrastructure can deliver measurable societal outcomes. The announcement of a dedicated capacity-building programme for 150 women-led AI startups further reinforced the Summit's commitment to moving from access to acceleration, ensuring that youth and women innovators are supported from ideation to scale.

Global Dialogue on AI Usage - Data for Labour Market Resilience:

The session on "Global Dialogue on AI Usage - Data for Labour Market Resilience" on the second day of the India AI Impact Summit 2026 focused on the changing nature of work and job scenarios in the context of accelerating artificial intelligence adoption and the policy choices required to manage this transition. Drawing on emerging international evidence, the discussion noted differentiated impacts across age groups, sectors, and geographies, with early trends indicating employment pressures for younger workers in roles with higher AI exposure.

AI Impact Startup Book:

The launch of the AI Impact Startup Book marked a significant step in empowering young entrepreneurs by providing a consolidated repository of over 100 AI solutions developed across India. The compendium highlights innovation across healthcare, agriculture, education, foundation models, and edge AI, showcasing the growing maturity and global footprint of Indian startups. By creating a structured mechanism to evaluate and scale impactful use cases across ministries and states, the initiative enables young innovators to transition from pilot projects to population-scale

Key Takeaways

- India's demographic advantage is powering its AI transformation, with over 65% of the population under the age of 35 positioned at the centre of the country's digital and innovation strategy.
- AI skilling is accelerating at scale, supported by national initiatives spanning schools, vocational platforms, advanced research fellowships, and industry partnerships.
- Affordable AI infrastructure and policy support under the IndiaAI Mission are democratising access to compute, data, and innovation opportunities beyond metropolitan cities.
- Youth-led innovation is moving from experimentation to global impact, positioning India as an emerging hub for responsible, inclusive, and use-case driven AI leadership.

deployment. Emphasising the goal of making India the "use-case capital" over the next 12-18 months, the Summit reinforced its commitment to converting youth-led AI innovation into measurable, real-world outcomes.

Collectively, these initiatives reaffirm India's commitment to building a future-ready, inclusive AI ecosystem powered by youth leadership and gender diversity. By combining innovation platforms with policy engagement and ecosystem support, the Summit strengthened pathways for young talent to drive sustainable growth and global AI impact.

Global Indicators of India's Talent-Pool Leadership in AI

India, on the path of the vision- Viksit Bharat by 2047, has over 50% of the startups now emerging from beyond metropolitan cities, dispelling the myth that innovation is confined to metropolitan cities in India.

Global Indicators Reflecting Youth-Led AI Leadership:

High penetration of AI skills: According to the Stanford Global AI Index Report 2025, India's relative penetration of AI skills is 2.5 times higher than the global average across comparable occupations, reflecting the impact of early and broad-based skilling initiatives.

Widespread enterprise adoption: As per the NASSCOM AI Adoption Index, 87% of enterprises in India are actively using AI solutions, creating sustained demand for AI-ready youth and strengthening school-to-work linkages.

Demographic advantage: India possesses one of the world's largest pools of digitally adaptable youth, enabling large-scale participation in AI learning and innovation programmes such as YUVAi.

Guinness World Record at the India-AI Impact Summit

Youth engagement extended beyond innovation to responsible AI adoption, as India set a Guinness World Record with over 2.5 lakh AI Responsibility Pledges in 24 hours. Led under the IndiaAI Mission in collaboration with Intel India, the nationwide campaign mobilised students and citizens to commit to ethical, transparent, and accountable AI use. By encouraging reflection on data privacy, misinformation, and accountability through interactive scenarios, the initiative positioned young people as stewards of trustworthy AI. The overwhelming participation underscores a growing culture of responsible digital citizenship, reinforcing India's vision of a human-centric and ethically grounded AI ecosystem.

Together, these indicators underline how YUVAi operates within a broader national ecosystem that is globally competitive and future-oriented. By linking early AI exposure with strong global rankings, enterprise adoption, and demographic scale, India is positioning its youth as active participants and future leaders in the global AI landscape, reinforcing the country's role as a trusted hub for responsible and inclusive artificial intelligence.

Conclusion

India's youth dividend is emerging as a defining strength in the age of Artificial Intelligence. Through sustained policy support, large-scale skilling initiatives, and democratised digital infrastructure, the country is transforming its demographic advantage into a globally competitive talent ecosystem. The India AI Impact Summit 2026 underscores how youth-led innovation, responsible AI adoption, and industry alignment are converging to drive inclusive and outcome-oriented growth. As India advances towards a Viksit Bharat, empowering its young population with AI capabilities will remain central to long-term productivity, resilience, and global leadership.

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

KU set to host 21st convocation, Vice President chief guest

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Feb 21: The University of Kashmir (KU) is all set to hold its 21st Convocation on February 26, 2026, at the Convocation Complex of the varsity, marking a significant academic milestone for the institution and its graduating students and scholars.

As per a university's official statement, the Vice-President of India, C. P. Radhakrishnan, will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest and deliver the convocation address. The visit will mark his maiden official visit to the Valley after assuming the office of the Vice President lending special significance to the ceremony. Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, UT, and Chancellor KU, Manoj Sinha will preside over the convocation, and Chief Minister, Jammu & Kashmir UT and Pro-Chancellor KU, Omar Abdullah will attend the convocation as Guest of Honour. In addition, Minister for Higher Education UT J&K, Sakina Masood (Ito), senior officers of the civil administration, police department, faculty members and officials of the University administration will



also be a part of the event.

While expressing her happiness over the upcoming convocation, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, "The 21st Convocation is a moment of collective pride for the University community. It celebrates the academic accomplishments of our students and reaffirms our commitment to quality education, research and public engagement."

She further noted that the presence of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India at the ceremony reflects the growing national recognition of the

shall be conferred during the 21st Convocation.

The University of Kashmir continues to strengthen its national academic profile. It is the only University from Jammu and Kashmir to feature among the top 50 universities in the country. The institution holds NAAC A++ accreditation, is ranked 34th in the NIRF rankings, and is placed among the top 08 State Public Universities in India. With the highest enrollment among State and Central Universities in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the varsity caters predominantly to local learners while also attracting students from outside the region.

Over the decades, the Convocation has evolved into a key academic event, bringing together students, faculty, alumni and dignitaries to mark the culmination of years of academic pursuit.

The University authorities in collaboration with the UT administration has made comprehensive arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the ceremony, which is expected to witness wide participation from the academic community and invited guests.

University's academic and research contributions.

Held under the provisions of the Kashmir University Act, 1969, the convocation is a formal academic ceremony to confer degrees, gold medals and certificates of merit upon deserving students and scholars. The Act prescribes the formalities and order of the academic procession, which will be observed during the ceremony.

A total of 59558 degrees which includes 44910 Undergraduates, 13545 Postgraduates, 461 MD/MS, 04 MCH, 18 M.Phil and 620 Ph.D

SANJY 2026: DC Kathua chairs meeting to review preparations

KT News Desk

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma on Saturday chaired a meeting to discuss preparatory arrangements for the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY), 2026.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed in detail the logistics to be put in place at the Lakhampur Yatra Facilitation Centre and allied locations to ensure smooth movement and comfortable stay of pilgrims. Threadbare discussions were held regarding augmentation of basic amenities including sanitation, water and power supply, lodging facilities, traffic management and healthcare arrangements.

The meeting also deliberated on strengthening and upgrading facilities at the identified lodgement centres to cater to the anticipated influx of yatri. The concerned departments were directed to prepare a comprehensive and time-bound action plan, clearly outlining the activities



and works to be undertaken so that timely projections could be submitted to higher authorities for necessary approvals and support.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the officers of Municipalities, PWD, PDD, PHE, RDD, Animal Husbandry and Information Department to work in close coordination and ensure meticulous planning for seamless execution of arrangements, aimed at providing a pleasant and hassle-free yatra experience to the pilgrims.

Among others, ADC Vishavjeet Singh, CPO Ranjeet Thakur, ACD Akhil Sadotra and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Handicrafts department holds capacity building programme in Kulgam

KT News Desk

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 21: A one day capacity building program on Design, Packaging and Branding for Artisans, weavers and other producer groups engaged in GI/ODOP/DEH products of Kashmir division was organised Saturday at Conference Hall Mini Secretariat Kulgam under RAMP (Raising & Accelerating MSME Performance) Scheme by Handicrafts and Handloom (H&H) department Kulgam.

The program witnessed enthusiastic participation of more than 100 Artisans/Weavers and other producer groups from across the Kulgam district.

Experts, as per an official statement, in design and marketing from JKEDI Kulgam delivered detailed presentations on the importance of product value addition through improved eco-friendly packaging, labelling standards and Brand Creation.

Participants were sensitized about the role of social media platforms, e-commerce opportunities in promoting traditional Kashmiri Crafts.

Interactive session was held wherein the participants shared their experience, challenges and suggestions about marketing and packaging of products.

Entrepreneurship mela organized in Dooru under Mission YUVA



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 21: To mobilise the aspiring entrepreneurs and enhance grassroots awareness of the flagship initiative Mission YUVA, a day long Potential Entrepreneurship Mela was held Saturday at GMHSS, Dooru.

Organised by the Employment Department in collaboration with the District Administration, the event witnessed active participation of aspiring entrepreneurs, Self Help Group (SHG) members, unemployed youth, and representatives of various line departments.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Dooru, Parvez Rahim, who was the chief guest of the event inaugurated the program. He inspected the departmental stalls and interacted with participants, highlighting the objectives and benefits of the Mela.

SDM, as per an official statement, emphasized that such initiatives aim to bridge the

gap between unemployed youth and self-employment agencies, adding that Mission YUVA seeks to promote entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihood generation at the grassroots level.

The event was hosted by the Career Counselling Officer, who outlined the key features of the programme including registration, mentorship support, financial linkages, and departmental convergence under one platform.

Assistant Director Handloom and the Employment Officer briefed the participants about SHG-related schemes, financial assistance, skill development programmes, and employment generation opportunities. Various departments established facilitation counters to provide on-the-spot counselling and registration support.

The Mela concluded with a commitment to further strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and empower youth through self-employment initiatives under Mission YUVA.

SWD Srinagar organizes sensitization programme on "Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat"



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 21: Social Welfare Department (SWD) Srinagar, through SANKALP-Hub for Empowerment of Women (Mission Shakti), organized a comprehensive sensitization programme on "Bal Vivah Mukht Bharat" at Hamidi Kashmiri Memorial Government Degree College with the aim of fostering awareness, responsibility, and collective action against child marriage.

The programme, as per an official statement, was designed to educate students about the social, legal, psychological, and health-related consequences of child marriage while reinforcing the importance of continued education, gender equality, and informed decision-making. It sought to empower young minds to recognize their rights and responsibilities and to actively contribute towards building a just and equitable

society.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, and distinguished guests, reflecting the strong commitment of the academic community towards social reform. A keynote address was delivered by a representative from the District Legal Services Authority Srinagar, who elaborated on the legal safeguards available under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. The speaker emphasized the legal age of marriage, penalties for violations, and the role of youth in reporting and preventing such practices within their communities.

Interactive sessions formed a key highlight of the programme. Students actively engaged in discussions, shared perspectives, and participated in poster presentations and speeches that creatively conveyed powerful messages against child marriage. The vibrant exchange of ideas not

only enhanced understanding but also encouraged critical thinking and social responsibility among participants.

Addressing the gathering, officials from SANKALP-Hub underscored that education is the strongest weapon to eradicate deep-rooted social evils such as child marriage. They reiterated that sustainable change begins with awareness and collective action, stating that youth play a vital role in transforming society.

The programme concluded with a collective pledge by students to spread awareness, uphold gender equality, and support initiatives aimed at making India free from child marriage. The initiative reflects the continued commitment of the Department of Social Welfare, Srinagar, towards empowering women and safeguarding the rights and dignity of children through sustained community engagement and awareness campaigns.

Entrepreneurship mela held at Tral to promote self-employment



KT News Desk

PULWAMA, FEBRUARY 21: District Administration Pulwama Saturday organised a Potential Entrepreneurship Mela under Mission YUVA at Tral.

The mela aimed to promote entrepreneurship, facilitate on-boarding under Mission YUVA, provide market linkages and showcase successful enterprises, particularly women-led ventures.

The mela was inaugurated by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Tral, Sajad Yehaya Naqash, and witnessed enthusiastic participation from local youth, entrepreneurs, Self-Help Groups and members of the public.

On the occasion, various departments, as per an official statement, including Industries, KVIB, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Horticulture, Handicrafts & Handloom and

NRLM set up stalls to disseminate information regarding different welfare and livelihood schemes, providing on-the-spot guidance and awareness to participants.

A dedicated Help Desk/Grievance Redressal Desk was also established by the District Employment and Counselling Centre, Pulwama to facilitate onboarding, provide assistance and address grievances related to Mission YUVA.

During the mela, the ADC distributed sanction letters among beneficiaries under Mission YUVA. Addressing the gathering, he urged the youth to take full advantage of government schemes and transform their innovative ideas into sustainable enterprises. He reiterated that Mission YUVA serves as a transformative platform for nurturing entrepreneurial talent and strengthening the local economy.

Market checking drives intensified across Kupwara

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 21: In view of the ongoing holy month of Ramadan, on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, extensive market checking drives were conducted across various tehsils of district Kupwara.

These drives, as per an official statement, aimed to ensure strict monitoring of prices and quality of essential commodities.

In Kupwara town, Tehsildar Kupwara, Niyaz Ahmad Bhat, led a comprehensive inspection team comprising officials from the Food Safety Department, Police, and Municipality. The team thoroughly checked multiple shops and establishments for displayed rate lists, adherence to prescribed prices, quality standards, and regulatory compliance.

During inspection, expired stock of vegetable oil was

seized and destroyed on the spot to protect public health. A fine of 3,000 was also imposed on violators.

Similar drives covered Handwara Sub-Division, including Handwara town, Magam, Langate, and Zachaldara, where fines totaling 1,650 in Zachaldara and 3,800 in Handwara town were recovered.

Inspections extended to Doniwari and Cherkote in Lolab Sub-Division, as well as border Tehsil Karnah, ensuring compliance even in remote areas.

Traders have been directed to maintain quality standards, prominently display rate lists, avoid hoarding or selling expired/substandard items, and refrain from the overcharging.

Market checking drives will continue in the coming days to uphold fair trade practices, protect consumers, and ensure availability of quality essentials during Ramadan.

MC Frisal launches sanitation awareness drive under Swachh Survekshan

KT News Desk

KULGAM, FEBRUARY 21: As part of the ongoing field preparedness for Swachh Survekshan 2025-26, the Municipal Committee (MC) Frisal, falling under the jurisdiction of Kulgam Municipal Council, Saturday carried out an extensive Community Awareness Programme.

The initiative, held in collaboration with the IEC Team, was designed to eliminate open defecation and urination while promoting a permanent shift in public hygiene habits under the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0.

The outreach, as per an official statement, effort involved a series of structured community meetings and door-to-door visits aimed at reaching every household and business in the town. A significant focus was placed on commercial establishments and religious sites, where the IEC Team engaged directly with traders and Masjid Imams. These religious and community

leaders played a vital role in the drive, helping to sensitize the public on the importance of maintaining the sanctity and cleanliness of places of worship and marketplaces alike.

By involving diverse stakeholders, including residents and local shopkeepers, the Municipal Committee Frisal is working to ensure that the town's ODF (Open Defecation Free) status is sustained through collective action. The program highlighted the critical link between responsible public behaviour and the overall health of the community. The intensive mobilization is a key component of the current monthly action plan, focused on closing service gaps and ensuring that sanitation infrastructure is utilized effectively.

Through these efforts, the Municipal Committee Frisal and the Kulgam Municipal Council remain committed to delivering a clean, healthy, and dignified environment for all residents ahead of the national assessment.

DC Kathua rolls out action plan to mark International Women's Day

KT News Desk

KATHUA, FEBRUARY 21: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma chaired a meeting to roll out a comprehensive action plan for the celebration of Women Week across the district from March 2 to March 8, 2026 to mark International Women's Day.

The meeting, as per an official statement was attended by ADDC, Surinder Mohan Sharma, CPO, Ranjeet Thakur, PO ICDS, Mohammed Syed, ACD, Akhil Sadotra, DSWO, Varun Chaudhary and other district and sectoral officers. Besides, ADCs and SDMs joined the meeting virtually.

During the meeting, a structured and result-oriented framework of activities was deliberated and finalised to ensure meaningful and impactful observance of the week. The action plan envisages active participation of all line departments, educational institutions and civil society organisations to promote women's empowerment and gender equality at



the grassroots level.

As per the schedule, the week-long celebrations will include cultural performances showcasing the achievements and contributions of women, dedicated sports activities such as Walkathon and Marathon to encourage fitness and participation, legal and safety awareness programmes, cyber security awareness sessions, free medical camps, motivational lectures and felicitation of women achievers from various fields.

Special emphasis will be laid on activities under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative, with awareness drives, interactive sessions in schools and colleges and outreach programmes to reinforce the importance of girl child education

and protection.

The DC stressed the need for coordinated and sustained efforts to ensure that the celebrations go beyond symbolic observance and translate into tangible outcomes. He directed all departments and field functionaries to ensure effective convergence of schemes, extensive outreach in rural and urban areas and maximum community participation.

The DC called for a multi-pronged approach and seamless coordination among departments for successful conduct of the week-long programme. The meeting concluded with directions to finalise the detailed calendar of events and ensure wide publicity across the district.

Shashi Tharoor conferred honorary D.Litt by St Xavier's University, his first in India

PTI
Kolkata, Feb 21: Diplomat-turned-Congress MP Shashi Tharoor was on Saturday conferred an honorary Doctor of Letters (D.Litt) degree at the seventh convocation of St Xavier's University, Kolkata, which he described as his first honorary doctorate in India. The ceremony was held at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre in New Town, where degrees were awarded to 1,052 undergraduate and postgraduate students. Twenty-five PhD

scholars were felicitated and 17 students received gold medals. In a post on X, Tharoor said he was "incredibly honoured and humbled" to receive the Doctorate of Literature (Honoris Causa), recalling that he had been the university's first convocation speaker seven years ago. "I have earned one doctorate the hard way and received a couple of others honoris causa, but this is my first honorary doctorate in India, and it is all the more precious to receive it as a Xaverian," he said. A four-term MP since 2009,

Tharoor said he spoke about the values he imbibed during his education at Jesuit institutions, including intellectual curiosity, mental rigour, respect for hard work, self-discipline and the willingness to question received wisdom within a moral and ethical framework. He underlined that education must go beyond information to formation and beyond competence to conscience, and emphasised that its ultimate worth lies in service to society. The Thiruvananthapuram MP also expressed happiness

at witnessing the strides made by women in academics, noting that most of the gold medalists were women. "India's future will not be written by slogans. It will be shaped by citizens prepared to combine skill with sensitivity, confidence with humility, and success with service," he said, urging students to prioritise civic responsibility. A former student of St. Xavier's Collegiate School in Kolkata between 1969 and 1971, Tharoor described the recognition as deeply special.

KU VC, Chairman IOCL call on LG Manoj Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Feb 21: Prof Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, on Saturday called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and

discussed the preparations for the forthcoming Convocation of the University. A S Sahney, Chairman, Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), also called on the Lieutenant Governor.

'Shirtless' protest: Court sends arrested IYC workers to 5-day police custody

PTI
New Delhi, Feb 21: A court here on Saturday allowed Delhi Police to question in its custody four Indian Youth Congress (IYC) workers who were arrested for holding a 'shirtless' protest at the AI Impact Summit venue a day ago.

On Friday, Krishna Hari, national secretary of Youth Congress from Bihar; Kundan Yadav, state secretary of Bihar; Ajay Kumar, state president of Uttar Pradesh; and Narasimha Yadav from Telangana were arrested after the protest inside an exhibition hall at the Summit.

The arrested persons and others were holding T-shirts printed with images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump along with slogans against the government and the India-US deal.

They also allegedly engaged in a protracted scuffle with security personnel and police staff deployed at the venue.

On Saturday afternoon, the four were produced before Judicial Magistrate Ravi, following which Delhi Police sought five days of custodial interrogation.

The court reserved its order after hearing the arguments. Around 2 PM, it allowed the plea seeking police custody.

A reasoned order of the court was not made public till late evening.

During the proceedings, Delhi Police sought five-day custody

arguing that they raised anti-national slogans and wore T-shirts with objectionable images of Prime Minister Modi.

The public prosecutor said that the mobile phones of the accused persons were required to be recovered and that, as they were from different states, custodial interrogation was necessary.

He argued it was a "serious" matter and that an attempt was made to stop the police, following which three police officials were injured.

Besides, the conspiracy of organising the protest, the source of funding, the identity of other protestors, and where the T-shirts were printed needed to be ascertained, the prosecutor added.

The prosecutor claimed that the country's prestige was harmed as the incident occurred in the presence of foreign delegates.

Countering the arguments seeking police custody, the counsel for the accused argued that they were associated with a political party and had exercised their democratic right to peaceful protest at Bharat Mandapam.

"Bail is the rule and jail is an exception. All are degree holders. All alleged offences have a punishment of less than seven years," the counsel said.

The advocate claimed their arrest greatly diminished the dignity of democracy and that if arrests are to be made for protesting, then MPs protesting in Parliament should also be arrested.

SC flags uneven compliance with Solid Waste Management Rules, issues pan-India directions

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 21: Flagging the "uneven" compliance with the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules across India, the Supreme Court has said the present generation cannot afford to wait for further legislative refinement while existing implementation gaps persist.

Observing that the right to a clean and healthy environment is an "inseparable part" of the right to life, the court issued a slew of pan-India directions to ensure that the executive has the requisite mechanism required to enforce the SWM Rules, 2026, which will be effective from April 1.

A bench of Justices Pankaj Mishra and S V N Bhatti said neglecting municipal solid waste will affect health as much as the economy and India must be fully-compliant with the 2026 Rules when the world looks at the country in technology-related activities.

"Compliance of MSW/SWM Rules meant to govern waste management remains uneven across India. While mandated at source, the segregation at source into wet, dry and hazardous streams is still not fully realised in many urban and rural areas," the bench said in its February 19 order.

It said massive dumpsites remain active in metropolitan areas, though bio-remediation efforts have been initiated under the latest mandates. The court passed the order while hearing two appeals arising from two separate National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders concerning environmental compliances by the Bhopal Municipal Corporation under the SWM Rules, 2016. "It is now or never. Expecting high results without fundamental spadework of source segregation and infrastructure would be unreasonable. Every stakeholder is duty-bound to ensure the realisation of a waste-free India," the bench said.

It said the surge in economic waste is also linked to the country's evolving economic landscape.

The bench said courts have repeatedly reminded that the State has a duty to protect the environment and ensure the well-being of citizens.

"The councillors/mayors and their chairpersons, corporator or ward member, being the primary elected representative of the people, are hereby designated as the lead facilitators for source-segregation education. It is their statutory duty to enrol every citizen within their ward in the implementation of the 2026 Rules," the bench said.

It said infrastructure audits of solid waste management



should be carried out through the district collectors.

The judges said the district collectors shall communicate the identified problems and steps taken by stakeholders to the chief secretary in a time-bound manner.

They directed that every local body must establish and communicate an outer time-limit within which 100-per cent compliance will be achieved.

"The district collectors be directed and given power to oversee the establishment, execution and handling of municipal solid waste by the corporations/municipalities/gram panchayats within their jurisdiction and the non-compliance report by any of the local bodies/areas be communicated to the parent department in the state and at the central levels," the court said.

It directed local bodies to e-mail photographic evidence alongside their compliance reports to the offices of district collectors to verify the actual

progress in waste removal and infrastructure readiness.

It directed pollution control boards to identify and expedite the commissioning of the infrastructure facilities required for the four-stream segregation, including bulk (wet, dry, sanitary and special care).

The bench said the local bodies must immediately communicate the 2026 Rules and a copy of the apex court's order to all the identified bulk-waste generators, all of whom must be fully statutory compliant by March 31.

The court said the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in terms of Rule 33 of the 2026 Rules, should issue appropriate directions to ensure that solid-waste-management practices are appropriately included even in the school curricula.

"To bridge the awareness gaps, the summary of the SWM Rules, 2026, specifically the portions involving individual households/citizens, shall be translated into the local languages of the respective states/Union territories," it directed.

The court said a failure to comply with these rules shall no longer be treated as a mere administrative lapse and there will be three tiers of enforcement, including immediate imposition of fines for initial non-compliance by generators

or local authorities.

It said a continued disregard will result in criminal prosecution under environmental laws and it will extend to all persons responsible for contributing, abetting or neglecting their statutory obligations, including officials who fail to exercise their oversight duties.

"Under the environmental laws, the offences related to the mismanagement of solid waste are penal in nature and punishable. The deployment of mobile courts is also under consideration to address real-time violations," it said.

The apex court said the directions are being issued as part of ensuring the preparatory work before the effective date of April 1, 2026.

"We treat our courts and tribunals as responsible institutions and request the chief justices of the high courts and chairpersons of the tribunals to ensure compliance with the SWM Rules, 2026, by all the courts and tribunals within their jurisdictions with effect from April 1, 2026," it said.

The bench mandated the local bodies to launch public-awareness campaigns for educating waste generators and said the latter must be educated on minimising waste, practising home composting, wrapping sanitary waste securely and handing over segregated waste.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Stone pelting

internal security and sovereignty of the entire country. "On 9th April 1965, in the Rann of Kutch, CRPF displayed great bravery while confronting the Pakistani Army at Sardar Post, and therefore 9 April is observed every year as Shaurya Diwas," he added.

Shah said that Naxalism had spread across 12 states and countless districts of the country, and when the Government of India resolved to uproot this menace, personnel of the CRPF and the CoBRA force played the most crucial role in this effort. "Such a huge, complex, and difficult task was completed in just three years, and it is because of the CRPF personnel that we can confidently say that by 31 March 2026, the country will be completely free from Naxalism."

The Union Home Minister said that under Operation Black Forest against Naxalites, CRPF personnel carried out operations for 21 days in extremely challenging geographical conditions, enduring temperatures of 45 degrees Celsius under the scorching sun, and eliminated the Naxalites' stronghold. "Displaying exceptional courage, CRPF jawans did not retreat even an inch while operating for 21 days on rocky hills heated by 45-degree temperatures, ultimately dismantling the strategic base of the Naxalites."

He said that the CRPF and the CoBRA force have made a very significant contribution in freeing the country from red terror. The Home Minister said that CRPF jawans have made a significant contribution to the successful conduct of several religious festivals, the Mahakumbh, and the Amarnath Yatra. He added that the CRPF has consistently strengthened and safeguarded the country's internal security.

LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF ASSAM POLICE HEADQUARTER

The Union Home Minister also laid the foundation stone of the headquarters of 10th Battalion of the Assam Police in Kamrup, Assam, and addressed a public gathering.

In his address, he said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has developed Assam in every sector and in the next five years, Assam will become the industrial hub of eastern and North-Eastern India.

Shah said that PM Modi possesses the courage, determination, and firm resolve to free the country's land from infiltrators. He stated that the support of the state government is essential to remove infiltrators, which would never be possible if the opposition party comes to power.

Shah alleged that infiltrators have become a vote bank for the opposition party. He added that once our party's government is formed, within the next five years they will remove infiltrators not only from the electoral rolls but also from the country.

He said that the Election Commission is conducting the SIR because the process will help identify infiltrators. "The Leader of the Opposition has launched an agitation against it. The country will certainly be freed from infiltrators," he said.

Shah said, "Under our government, the country is becoming free from Naxalism, and in the same way, Assam and the entire nation will also become free from infiltrators." (KNO)

LG administers oath

further stated that the appointment would take effect from the date he assumes charge of the office. (KNO)

NMC approves

expansion will strengthen tertiary care, build specialist capacity, and create more opportunities for our young doctors within J&K," Itoo said, adding that the initiative will also help reduce the burden on patients who currently travel outside the Union Territory for specialized treatment.

In a post on X, the minister reiterated the government's commitment to upgrading healthcare institutions and improving access to quality medical services. "A major boost to advanced healthcare and medical education in J&K. NMC has approved 24 new/increased DM and MCh super-specialty seats for AY 2025-26 across GMC Srinagar, GMC Jammu, and SKIMS. This expansion will strengthen tertiary care and create more opportunities for our young doctors," she stated.

Officials said that the addition of super-specialty seats will not only improve the doctor-to-patient ratio in critical disciplines but also contribute to the long-term goal of making Jammu and Kashmir self-reliant in advanced medical care. (KNO)

Srinagar records

may fall before the month concludes for other parts of Kashmir as well. "February 2026 is now firmly on track to rank among the warmest — if not the warmest," he added.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department said there is no forecast of any major rain or snowfall activity across Jammu and Kashmir till the end of February, with dry weather likely to

prevail over most parts of the Union Territory. The MeT office, as per KNO said that weather is expected to remain generally dry from February 21 to 25. On February 26, conditions are likely to be partly to generally cloudy, while on February 27 and 28, the weather will remain partly to generally cloudy with chances of light rain or snow at isolated places.

"The outlook for the first week of March indicates generally cloudy weather from March 1 to 3, with light rain or snow over higher reaches at isolated to scattered places. From March 4 to 7, the weather is expected to remain partly cloudy," the MeT said.

The department said maximum day temperatures have remained 9-10 degrees Celsius above normal in many parts of Kashmir division and 4-9 degrees above normal in several areas of Jammu division during the past 24 hours.

Qazigund recorded maximum temperature of 21.0 degrees against 10.1 degrees normal. Pahalgam recorded a high of 16.5 degrees compared to the normal of 7.5 degrees, and Kupwara settled at 19.8 degrees against 10.1 degrees normal. Gulmarg recorded a maximum of 11.6 degrees Celsius, about 9.6 degrees above normal.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum of 26.2 degrees Celsius against the normal of 22.3 degrees. Kathua registered 26.0 degrees against 22.5 degrees normal, while Baderwah recorded 19.0 degrees compared to 14.2 degrees normal.

Night temperatures have also remained above normal at most places. Srinagar recorded a minimum of 1.8 degrees Celsius against the normal of 1.5 degrees, while Pahalgam registered minus 2.0 degrees. Jammu city recorded a minimum of 12.1 degrees Celsius against the normal of 11.1 degrees.

The MeT office has advised farmers to continue farm operations and said a further rise in both minimum and maximum temperatures is likely during the next six days. No major weather warning has been issued for the coming week. (KNO)

Fasting promotes

health and may even delay age-related diseases like dementia," he said.

Dr Mir added that fasting supports the body's natural detoxification processes and helps "reset" the immune system. "It may enhance the effectiveness of treatments like chemotherapy and play a role in cancer prevention," he said.

Another health expert, Dr Najeeb, said that

fasting has been shown to reduce body weight, particularly among men, and significantly lower LDL cholesterol—the so-called 'bad cholesterol' linked to heart disease and stroke.

He said fasting reduces chronic inflammation, a key factor behind many serious illnesses. "Lower inflammation levels can decrease the risk of conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and rheumatoid arthritis," he said. "Fasting stimulates the release of growth hormone, which is vital for metabolism, muscle strength, and fat loss. "It not only aids in weight management but also enhances brain function and overall vitality."

Doctors said fasting offers psychological and lifestyle benefits. It encourages mindful eating, improves self-control, and fosters a balanced routine. Many experts believe that when practised correctly, fasting can serve as a powerful preventive health strategy.

However, medical professionals cautioned that fasting should be done wisely, particularly for individuals with pre-existing health conditions. They recommend consulting healthcare providers before adopting prolonged or intensive fasting routines. (KNO)

NC 'betrayed' youth

and wait for advertisements. But these posts were allegedly outsourced without giving deserving candidates an opportunity," Sharma described the move as an injustice to unemployed youth and demanded full disclosure.

"The government must make public the name of the company involved, its credentials, whether it has been blacklisted anywhere and what recruitment mechanism it has adopted. What is the credibility of the company? What is the recruitment process? Why were these posts not advertised publicly?" he asked.

Calling it a "betrayal of 24,000 youth", Sharma warned that BJP workers would not remain silent if the decision is not reversed. "We will fight for unemployed youth both inside and outside the Assembly. If needed, BJP workers will take to the streets and launch an agitation," he said, asserting that the issue would be pursued politically and legally.

Recalling earlier years, he said there was a time when organising political programmes in Srinagar was marked by fear and uncertainty, but the present gathering reflected a shift in public confidence and political mood.

He said BJP workers in Kashmir have stood firm despite pressure and threats, and asserted

that the increasing participation in party programmes indicates a growing acceptance of the BJP's agenda.

Referring to the 2024 Assembly elections, Sharma alleged that the NC sought votes in the name of restoring Article 370.

"Article 370 is history. It has been buried and will not return," he said, adding that the Chief Minister himself has publicly stated that nothing can be expected from the BJP regarding its restoration.

He accused the NC of knowingly raising the issue during elections to mobilise votes despite being aware of the constitutional position.

The LoP also took strong exception to the repeated use of the term "special status" by NC leaders. The term, as projected politically, does not exist in the Constitution of India with respect to Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

"I have openly challenged them in the Assembly to show where 'special status' is mentioned in the Constitution in the manner they claim. If they prove it, I am ready to face any consequence," he said.

The "vague terminology" is being used to create confusion among people after the abrogation of Article 370, he added.

Sharma further alleged that while NC leaders publicly criticise the BJP and RSS in Jammu and Kashmir, they have historically aligned with the BJP for political power at the Centre.

He referred to past political arrangements and participation in central governments and urged people to examine what he described as contradictions in the party's political stand.

The BJP leader also revisited past promises related to autonomy resolutions and large financial packages, alleging that such commitments were used as electoral tools but not effectively implemented.

The LoP further criticised the government over its promise of providing 200 units of free electricity, alleging that it was attempting to attribute benefits to central schemes rather than fulfilling its own commitment made during elections. He said promises made to the public must be implemented transparently and not rebranded.

Urging party workers to intensify outreach at the grassroots level, Sharma said the BJP would continue to raise issues of governance, employment and transparency in the Assembly and among the public.

He asserted that the party would expose what he termed as misinformation and hold the government accountable for its commitments. (KNO)

TMC govt in West Bengal will have to fully support SIR now: Rijiju on SC directive

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 21: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday described the Supreme Court's order for the deployment of judicial officers to assist in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in West Bengal as a "very significant directive" and said the Mamata Banerjee government will have to fully support the exercise now.

Rijiju said the apex court's directive in the matter has also "completely exposed" the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal, which he alleged wants to win the upcoming state Assembly polls by including illegal infiltrators in the voter list.

Dismayed over the ongoing tussle between the West Bengal government and the Election Commission (EC), the Supreme Court issued an "extraordinary" direction on Friday, asking the state to deploy serving and former district judges to assist the poll panel in the controversy-ridden SIR process.

Ruining the "unfortunate blame game" and "trust deficit" between the EC and the "democratically-elected" TMC government, a bench of Chief



Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi passed a slew of fresh directions to ensure the completion of the SIR.

Asked about the court order, Rijiju said, "The Supreme Court's directive was very necessary and significant for democracy. The Congress and the TMC will now have to extend full support to the SIR for democracy."

"This is very good news for West Bengal and the country. The Supreme Court has given very strict directives. The West Bengal government, the DGP and the entire state machinery will have to abide by the Supreme Court's decision," the senior BJP leader

told reporters at the party headquarters here.

He alleged that the TMC is against the SIR because it wants to "rig" the state Assembly polls, due in the next few months.

"It wants to win the election by adding the names of illegal ghuspaithiyas (infiltrators) in the voter list. The TMC government stands completely exposed now," he said.

The top court has ordered the deputation of judicial officers for the adjudication of claims and objections of those put under the logical-discrepancy lists and facing removal of their names from the electoral rolls.

Infiltrators to be removed not only from electoral rolls but also from country in next 5 yrs: Shah

PTI

Guwahati, Feb 21: Asserting that if India can be free of Naxals, it can also be free of infiltrators, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the illegal immigrants would be removed not only from the electoral rolls but also from the country in the next five years. Shah was addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for a new campus of the Assam Police 10th Battalion, which he said would be constructed on land freed from encroachments by infiltrators.

"It is, however, not enough to evict the infiltrators from



the encroached land as they will go and settle elsewhere... They must be removed from the country," he said. Attacking

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Shah said that the Congress leader had once said that infiltrators would

be removed, but the "Congress can't do so as illegal immigrants are its votebank".

Congress' policy of protecting the infiltrators has threatened Assam's 'jati' (people), 'mati' (land) and 'bheti' (foundation), he alleged.

"If the Congress is committed to get rid of infiltrators, I challenge Rahul Gandhi to mention it in its manifesto," he said.

Shah said that Assam will become the industrial hub of eastern and northeastern India in the next five years.

Elections to the 126-member Assam Assembly are expected to be held in March-April.

India, Brazil set bilateral trade target of over USD 20 billion in 5 years



PTI

New Delhi, Feb 21: India and Brazil on Saturday set a bilateral trade target of more than USD 20 billion in the next five years, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-ranging talks with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva, focussing in the areas of critical minerals and security.

Modi said the relations between India and Brazil have long benefitted from President Lula's visionary outlook and inspiring

leadership. He also noted that Brazil is India's largest trade partner in Latin America.

"We are committed to taking the India-Brazil trade beyond USD 20 billion in the next five years," the prime minister said in his media statement after the talks.

He asserted that when India and Brazil work together, the voice of the Global South becomes stronger.

Modi also said both countries agree that terrorism and its supporters are enemies of the entire humanity.

'Protest at AI Summit a well thought out conspiracy against India'

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 21: Union minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday launched a blistering attack on the Congress, alleging that the party has committed a "big sin" against the country by deploying its youth wing workers to hold a protest at India AI Impact Summit.

Terming the protest as "shameful", Rijiju alleged that Congress youth wing's protest was not a mistake but a well thought out conspiracy by the party to attack India.

The Congress committed a "big sin against the country" by deploying its youth wing to hold a protest at the AI Summit, he said at a press conference at the BJP headquarters here. "Congress using youths to defame the country, there could be nothing more shameful than this," he said.

Rijiju said while the entire country is condemning what the Congress did at the summit, the party and its leaders remain unapologetic. "When India progresses, Rahul Gandhi and Congress become sad. Congress leaders and workers keep hatching conspiracy round the clock to defame India," the BJP leader said.

Central forces to be deployed in poll-bound WB from March 1

PTI

Kolkata, Feb 21: As many as 480 companies of Central Armed Police Forces will be initially deployed in poll-bound West Bengal for area domination, confidence-building measures and other election-related duties from March 1, an EC official said on Saturday.

They will also guard EVMs at strong rooms and counting centres during the election process.

The assembly elections in the state are due in a few months. The official said that the

first batch of around 240 companies will be inducted by March 1, while an equal number of companies will join them by March 10.

The contingents will include personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police and the Sashastra Seema Bal.

The final electoral roll after the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is scheduled to be published on February 28, while the election schedule is expected to be announced in March.

Law must evolve from 'fortress to forum' to make it more accessible: CJJ Kant



PTI

Jodhpur, Feb 21: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday said that "law cannot remain a fortress erected to protect society from arbitrariness", and called on the young lawyers to make it a "forum" where differences are debated, rights articulated and power is reasoned with.

Kant, during his address -- "From Fortress to Forum: Law in an Unfinished Republic" -- at the 18th Convocation of National Law University here, urged the professionals to see law not as a closed citadel but as a living, evolving public space.

The CJJ invoked the Mehrangarh Fort as a powerful metaphor for the historical journey of law.

"A fortress is built to defend, to guard against disorder and uncertainty. In its earliest conception, law resembled such a structure, erected to protect society from arbitrariness and chaos," he said.

"But in a constitutional democracy, he said, law cannot remain a fortress alone. It must transform into a forum where differences are debated, rights articulated and power reasoned with," he added.

Kant reiterated that the shift, from

fortress to forum, captures not only the evolution of legal systems but also the responsibility awaiting the graduating class.

The CJJ cautioned students against viewing law as a finished product. Unlike the settled principles of certain sciences, law admits no finality.

Quoting Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, he reminded that the life of the law has not been logic but experience.

Law evolves because society evolves, and its legitimacy depends on its ability to engage with change, he added.

Tracing this to history, he referred to the 'Magna Carta' as an early assertion that power must answer to law.

"What began as a limited safeguard against arbitrary imprisonment eventually expanded into doctrines of due process, equality and dignity," he asserted.

In India, he noted, Article 14 of the Constitution, as a guarantee of equality before the law, has similarly developed from a formal assurance into a dynamic instrument of substantive fairness.

The CJJ warned, "Law, having once liberated, may distance itself again, wrapped in jargon and complexity, accessible only to a privileged few."

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Watch List Sunday, 22nd Feb

O'ROMEO (A)
HINDI - 11:00 AM, 02:30 PM, 06:00 PM

ASSI (A)
HINDI - 12:00 PM, 06:35 PM

DO DEEWANE SEHER MEIN (U/A 13+)
HINDI - 11:05 AM, 01:55 PM, 06:55 PM

BORDER 2 (U/A 13+)
HINDI - 02:45 PM

GOAT (U)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
04:45 PM

Supreme Court struck down Trump's tariffs. Now comes hard work of issuing refunds

AP

Washington, Feb 21: The Supreme Court on Friday struck down President Donald Trump's biggest and boldest tariffs. But the justices left a USD 133 billion question unanswered: What's going to happen to the money the government has already collected in import taxes now declared unlawful?

Companies have been lining up for refunds. But the way forward could prove chaotic.

When the smoke clears, trade lawyers say, importers are likely to get money back — eventually. "It's going to be a bumpy ride for awhile," said trade lawyer Joyce Adetutu, a partner at the Vinson & Elkins law firm.

The refund process is likely to be hashed out by a mix of the US Customs and Border Protection agency, the specialised Court of International Trade in New York and other lower courts, according to a note to clients by lawyers at the legal firm Clark Hill.

"The amount of money is substantial," Adetutu said. "The courts are going to have a hard time. Importers are going to have a hard time."

Still, she added, "it's going to be really difficult not to have some sort of refund option" given how decisively the Supreme Court repudiated Trump's tariffs.

In its 6-3 opinion on Friday, the court ruled Trump's attempt to use an emergency powers law to enact the levies was not valid. Two of the three justices appointed by Trump joined the majority in striking down the



first major piece of his second-term agenda to come before them.

At issue are double-digit tariffs Trump imposed on almost every country in the world last year by invoking the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). The Supreme Court ruled that the law did not give the president authority to tax imports, a power that belongs to Congress.

The US customs agency has already collected USD 133 billion in IEEPA tariffs as of mid-December. But consumers hoping for a refund are unlikely to be compensated for the higher prices they paid when companies passed along the cost of the tariffs; that's more likely to go to the companies themselves.

In a dissenting opinion, Justice Brett Kavanaugh dinged his colleagues for dodging the refund issue: "The Court says nothing today about whether, and if so how, the

Government should go about returning the billions of dollars that it has collected from importers."

Borrowing a word that Justice Amy Coney Barrett — who sided with the majority — used during the court's November hearing on the case, Kavanaugh warned that "the refund process is likely to be a mess."

"I guess it has to get litigated for the next two years," Trump told reporters at a press conference Friday, in which he decried the court's decision and said he was "absolutely ashamed" of some justices who ruled against his tariffs. "We'll end up being in court for the next five years."

The end of the IEEPA tariffs could help the economy by easing inflationary pressures. The tariff refunds — like other tax refunds — could stimulate spending and growth. But the impacts are likely to be modest.

Most countries still face steep tariffs from the US on specific sectors,

and Trump intends to replace the IEEPA levies using other options. The refunds that do get issued will take time to roll out — 12 to 18 months, estimates TD Securities.

The US customs agency does have a process for refunding duties when importers can show there's been some kind of error. The agency might try to build on the existing system to refund Trump's IEEPA tariffs, said trade lawyer Dave Townsend, a partner with the law firm Dorsey & Whitney.

And there has been a precedent for courts making arrangements to give companies their money back in trade cases. In the 1990s, the courts struck down as unconstitutional a harbour maintenance fee on exports and set up a system for exporters to apply for refunds.

But the courts and US customs have never had to deal with anything like this — thousands of importers and tens of billions of dollars at once.

"Just because the process is difficult to administer doesn't mean the government has the right to hold on to fees that were collected unlawfully," said trade lawyer Alexis Early, partner at the law firm Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner.

Ryan Majerus, a partner at King & Spalding and a former US trade official, said it's hard to know how the government will deal with the massive demand for refunds. It might try to streamline the process, perhaps setting up a special website where importers can claim their refunds.

5 European nations pledge millions to use Ukrainian know-how to make cheap drone defenses



AP

Warsaw, Feb 21: Five European nations have announced a new program to produce low-cost air defense systems and autonomous drones using Ukrainian expertise hard-won over the past four years of war against Russia.

Friday's initiative of the E5 nations — France, Poland, Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy — comes as one of many European efforts to bolster defense along their borders, like a "drone wall" with Russia and Ukraine to better detect, track and intercept drones violating Europe's airspace.

Both Moscow and Kyiv have cutting-edge drone warfare capabilities forged in the grim laboratory of war where battlefield innovations have rewritten modern battle tactics. Poland is already working

with Ukraine on drone technology in joint military training programs and manufacturing projects.

Those efforts were sparked by a spate of incidents in which Europe's borders and airports have been tested by rogue drones. Russia has been blamed for some of them but denies that anything was done on purpose or that it played a role.

"The UK and our E5 partners are stepping up — investing together in the next generation of air defense and autonomous systems to strengthen NATO's shield," said Luke Pollard, Britain's minister for defense readiness and industry.

"We have some of the best kit on the entire planet for shooting down air threats. The problem is to be effective at shooting down relatively low-cost missiles, drones, and other

threats facing us," he said. "We need to make sure that we're matching the cost of the threats with the cost of defense."

Poland's defense minister, Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, said the group of countries signed an agreement to jointly invest in the production and procurement of drone-based strike capabilities as well as cheap drone defense systems in a program called Low-Cost Effectors and Autonomous Platforms, or LEAP. "Combat technologies and techniques are changing rapidly — we must respond quickly and appropriately," Kosiniak-Kamysz said. "We also signed a crucial commitment regarding the joint development of drone-based strike capabilities, low-cost joint production, and joint procurement of drone effectors, i.e. combat payloads, using artificial intelligence."

When Russian drones entered Polish airspace in September 2025, Warsaw and its NATO allies used multimillion-dollar jets to respond to drones that cost thousands and that ended up crashing into the Polish countryside. Low-cost kinetic or electronic effectors would allow the detection and destruction of drones at a fraction of the price.

Super 8s: Tilak & Surya's guarded batting approach to face its first real test vs SA

PTI

Ahmedabad, Feb 21: Skipper Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma's rejigged philosophy of dropping anchor rather than going for big strokes will be tested by a quality South African side that seems ready to find chinks in the Indian armour during their opening Super Eight match of the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

The Proteas team boasts of a formidable bowling line-up comprising Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj and Aiden Markram and the defending champions will be mindful of the challenge.

The two teams would be playing for the sixth time in the last two months and it remains to be seen for which side the familiarity works better on Sunday night.

India have not exactly been asked probing questions at the group league stage but the home favourites are well aware that their batting has left a lot to be desired.

Save for opener Ishan Kishan (two fifties and Strike Rate of 202), the other three batters in the top four haven't exactly set the stage on fire till now.

Abhishek Sharma is literally out of runs with three ducks and as much as Suryakumar and Tilak justify playing an anchor role, the Mumbai Indians colleagues have looked far from smooth on tracks where



the ball is gripping.

India's run-scoring has needed brute power that Hardik Pandya (Strike Rate of 155) and Shivam Dube (Strike Rate of 178) are providing at the back-end. With Abhishek falling to off-spinners twice in a row, it will be interesting to see whether skipper Markram decides to bowl off-breaks in the Powerplay.

While Abhishek's form remains a concern, Tilak's scratchy batting throughout the first leg cannot be brushed under the carpet.

Against Pakistan, he scored 25 off 24 balls while against Namibia it was 25 off 21 and versus Netherland, it was a painstaking 31 off 27 balls.

His strike rate in the tournament is just above 120, which is significantly less than his career average of 141.

Save his match-winning 84 not out off 49 balls against a US attack, which lost two of its bowlers to hamstring strain, Suryakumar hasn't

displayed a lot of smoothness in his batting either against Pakistan or Netherlands.

His tournament strike rate of 136 plus is way below his career strike rate of 163 plus.

An Indian team that plays with eight batters and believes in going all out irrespective of opposition and surface, cannot afford to have two batters who are not able to score freely on tacky surfaces. In tournaments like the T20 World Cup, discretion isn't always the better part of valour.

The overall quality of this team is undeniable which is the reason that good teams score 200 on their good days and this Indian team conjures near 200 on its average days.

But what makes India a scary proposition and still a runaway favourite is the bowling attack with Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakravathy bowling those eight out of 20 overs.

Tomb more than 1,000 years old found in Panama

AFP

Panama City, Feb 21: Archaeologists have discovered a tomb more than a thousand years old in Panama containing human remains alongside gold and ceramic artifacts, the lead researcher told AFP on Friday.

The discovery was made at the El Cano site in the Nata district about 200 kilometers (124 miles) southwest of Panama City.

Scientists and archaeologists have already unearthed other remains of pre-Hispanic cultures in the region that has been excavated for two decades.

The skeletal remains were found

surrounded by gold objects and pottery decorated with traditional motifs, pointing to these being "high-ranking" individuals, archaeologist Julia Mayo told AFP, adding that the tomb was built between 800 and 1000 AD.

"The individual with the gold was the one with the highest social status in the group," she said.

That body was found with two bracelets, two earrings, and pectoral jewelry that featured bats and crocodiles, she added.

The El Cano archaeological site is linked to the societies that inhabited the central provinces of Panama between the 8th and 11th centuries.

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DUA FOR SEHRI

وَبَصَوْمِ غَدِ نَوَيْتُ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ
I intend to keep the fast for tomorrow in the month of Ramadan

DUA FOR IFTAAR

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي لَكَ صُمْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ [وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ] وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ
O Allah! I fasted for You and I believe in You and I put my trust in You and I break my fast with Your sustenance

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