

## MANN KI BAAT

# World got to see India's amazing capabilities in AI: PM Modi

### Prime Minister's Exam Warriors message: 'Your worth isn't determined by your mark sheet'

KT News Desk

New Delhi, Feb 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday highlighted the success of the Global AI Impact Summit held in Delhi.

In this special Mann Ki Baat address, PM Modi emphasised how this summit showcased India's burgeoning capabilities in artificial intelligence, with leaders from around the world witnessing groundbreaking innovations rooted in Indian culture and technology.

Modi shared his pride in the two standout products demonstrated at the summit—one supporting animal treatment and farming, and the other preserving India's ancient knowledge through AI—underscoring India's emerging role as a global leader in AI development.

The Prime Minister reflected on the significance of India's achievements in the AI sector, including the launch of three indigenous AI models, and celebrates the enthusiasm of Indian youth driving these advancements. He draws a parallel with India's rich cultural heritage, mentioning the upcoming celebration of 'Rajaji Utsav' and the unveiling of a statue of C. Rajagopalachari at Rashtrapati Bhavan, symbolizing the nation's efforts to honor its own heroes and foster a sense of pride rooted in Indian history. Modi also touches upon the importance of safeguarding our cultural symbols and promoting self-reliance.

Modi shifted focus to the human stories that exemplify India's spirit of service and resilience. He paid tribute to organ donors and inspiring individuals who have transformed their lives through medical breakthroughs. He also offered



encouragement to students preparing for exams, emphasizes the importance of festivals like Holi and Ramzan, and advocates for swadeshi products to foster self-reliance.

Full speech of PM Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' address:

My dear countrymen, Namaskar.

Welcome to "Mann Ki Baat". Heartiest greetings. "Mann Ki Baat" is a powerful platform for highlighting the achievements of the country and her citizens. The country recently witnessed a similar such achievement during the Global AI Impact Summit held in Delhi. Leaders from many countries, industry leaders, innovators, and people associated with the Start-up sector came together at Bharat Mandapam for the AI Impact Summit. This summit proved to be a turning point in the trajectory of how the world will utilize the power of AI in the future.

Friends, At the summit, I also had the opportunity to meet world leaders and Tech CEOs. At the AI summit exhibition, I showed myriad things to world leaders. I want to mention two things

in particular. These two products at the summit greatly impressed leaders from around the world. The first product was at Amul's booth. It explained how AI is helping us in the treatment of animals... and how farmers keep track of their dairy and animals with the help of 24x7 AI assistance. Friends,

The second product was related to our culture. Leaders from all over the world were amazed to see how, with the help of AI, we are preserving our ancient texts, our ancient knowledge, our manuscripts and adapting them in accordance with today's generation. Friends,

Sushrut Samhita was selected for display during the exhibition. In the first step, it was shown how, with the help of technology, we are improving the image quality of manuscripts and making them readable. In the second step, this image was converted into machine-readable text. In the next step, the machine-readable text was read by an AI avatar. And further, in the next step, we also demonstrated how, with the help of [More on P6](#)

## 6th edition of Khelo India Winter Games

# LG Sinha inaugurates Laser and Mashaal show in Gulmarg

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaie

Gulmarg, Feb 22: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha formally inaugurated the Laser and Mashaal show at 6th edition of the Khelo India Winter Games in Gulmarg on Sunday.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the opening ceremony was attended by Minister Satish Sharma, Chief Secretary Atal Dullo, Commissioner Secretary to the Government Youth Services & Sports, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, MLA Gulmarg Farooq Ahmad Shah, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, Secretary Youth Services & Sports Nuzhat Gul, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa and other senior



officials. The event featured vibrant cultural performances,

laser shows, and other entertainment activities, adding grandeur to the inaugural

ceremony. An official told KNO that more than [More on P6](#)

Photo: Naveed ul Haq Ganaie

## Today world feels India can provide solutions to 21st century challenges: PM

### » Inaugurates India's first Namu Bharat RRTS » Dedicates Delhi-Meerut Namu Bharat Corridor to nation

KT News Desk

New Delhi, Feb 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Namu Bharat Rapid Rail and the Meerut Metro route today in Meerut, describing the project as a new surge of energy for a 'Viksit Uttar Pradesh' and a 'Viksit Bharat'. This event marks the first time in India that both a rapid rail and a metro service have been launched from a single platform on the same day.

The Prime Minister stated that this project provides a magnificent glimpse of what connectivity will look like in a Developed India. The integrated system utilizes the Metro for intra-city travel and the Namu Bharat trains to accelerate the "Twin Cities" vision.



Highlighting the work culture of the Double-Engine government, the Prime Minister noted that projects no longer hang in limbo. He emphasized that his government completes the work for which it lays the foundation stone, having personally led both the foundation and the

inauguration of these services. During his visit, the Prime Minister traveled on the Meerut Metro and interacted with students and passengers. The Prime Minister lauded the project as a symbol of 'Nari-Shakti', noting that most train operators and [More on P6](#)

## February heat breaks records across Kashmir

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 22: Several weather stations across Kashmir recorded their highest-ever February temperatures on Saturday, with departures exceeding 10 degrees Celsius above normal, according to local meteorological data.

At Kokernag, the maximum temperature settled at 19.0 degrees Celsius, the highest ever recorded in the month of February. The previous record of 18.4 degrees Celsius was registered on February 29, 2016, and again on February 20, 2026. The temperature was 10.2 degrees above normal for this time of the year.

Similarly, Qazigund recorded 21.5 degrees Celsius, breaking its earlier February record of 21.0 degrees Celsius set on February 20, 2026. The departure from normal was 11.4 degrees Celsius.

In Pahalgam, a prominent tourist destination, the mercury touched 17.5 degrees Celsius, making it the second-highest February temperature ever recorded at the station. The all-time February high of 17.6 degrees Celsius was recorded on February 24, 2016. The temperature was 10 degrees above normal.

The unusual warmth comes amid an overall dry spell across the Valley, with no major precipitation recorded in recent days. Weather observers said the persistent rise in day temperatures has led to early snowmelt in several areas, raising concerns about water availability in the coming months.

Kashmir has been witnessing a significant precipitation deficit this winter, contributing to higher-than-normal daytime temperatures across multiple stations.

The Meteorological Department has forecast mainly dry weather [More on P6](#)

## SC to hear Meta-WhatsApp privacy policy case today

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Monday pleas of Meta and WhatsApp against a Competition Commission of India (CCI) order imposing a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore over their privacy policy.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Panchohi is likely to hear the matter.

On February 3, the bench had made strong observations against Meta Platforms Inc and WhatsApp, saying they could not "play with the right to privacy of citizens in the name of data sharing" and alleged that they were creating a monopoly in the market and committing theft of private information of



customers.

Decrying WhatsApp's privacy policy, the bench referred to "silent customers" who were unorganised, digitally dependent and unaware of the implications of data-sharing policies, and asserted, "We will not allow the rights of any citizen of this country to be damaged." WhatsApp is owned by Meta Platforms Inc. The top court [More on P6](#)

## 'Operation Trashi-I'

# 3 JeM terrorists killed in Kishtwar encounter

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Feb 22: Three terrorists affiliated with Pakistan based terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were killed in an encounter with the security forces in the on-going 'Operation Trashi-I' in Kishtwar on Sunday.

An official told the news agency - Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the two terrorists were killed during the 'Trashi-I' operation in the general area of Passerkut in Chatroo belt. Security forces also recovered arms and ammunition that included two AK-47 rifles from them.

"Pursuant to credible intelligence inputs collated from



J-K Police, IB (Intelligence Bureau) and own intelligence sources, a joint operation was launched in the Kishtwar region under operation Trashi-I to track and neutralise terrorists operating in the area.

Following successful contact established earlier, troops of Cif (Counter-Intelligence Force) Delta, in close coordination with police and CRPF, re-engaged the terrorists today at approximately 11 am

in challenging terrain," the Army's White Knight Corps said in a post on X.

"Displaying tactical precision, seamless synergy and resolute aggression, the troops dominated the encounter site wherein two terrorists were successfully neutralised," the Army said.

In another post on X, Army's White Knight Corps wrote that the third terrorist was also killed in the same area. "In the continued operations under OpTrashi-I in Kishtwar, troops of Cif(D) #WhiteKnightCorps, in coordination with @JammuandKashmirPolice and #CRPF neutralised the third terrorist. The [More on P6](#)

## Terror era over, next century belongs to India and its youth: Minister Sharma

We represent tourism, our neighbour represents terrorism; they need to mend their ways | In 2025, we saw war, Pahalgam terror attack and nature's fury as well

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaie

Gulmarg, Feb 22: Jammu and Kashmir Sports Minister Satish Sharma on Sunday said that the era of terrorism has ended and the coming century belongs to India and its youth.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the inaugural function of the 6th edition of the Khelo India Games at Gulmarg, Sharma, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said everything has an expiry and

terrorism too has seen its end. "Everything has an expiry and the era of terrorism has ended. The coming time belongs to India and India will lead from the front," he said, adding that the large participation of youth in sporting events reflects a new and confident Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting the scale of the 6th edition of Khelo-India winter games, the Minister said more than 500 to 600 athletes from different parts of the country have arrived in



Photo: Naveed ul Haq Ganaie

Gulmarg to participate in the prestigious games. He said the overwhelming response is a clear sign that peace and normalcy have returned to the Union Territory.

Referring to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Sharma said that "Omar Sahib went to all parts of the country to promote tourism. Today people are coming from everywhere and we are not even getting rooms," he remarked, pointing towards the heavy tourist rush in the Valley.

From the famous ski resort of Gulmarg, the minister said he wanted to send a message of love and peace to everyone, including neighbouring countries. "We represent tourism, they represent terrorism. We want to tell them that they need to mend their ways," he said.

Recalling the challenges faced by Jammu and Kashmir, Sharma said 2025 had been a difficult year for Jammu and Kashmir. "In 2025, we saw war, the Pahalgam terror attack and nature's fury as well. It was a tough year for

J&K," he said, adding that in the past few months the government has worked hard to get back on its feet.

He urged people from across the country to visit Jammu and Kashmir without fear. "My message to all countrymen is that they should come to J&K. I assure them they will not face any problems. This time we are going to create a record," he said.

In a lighter vein, Sharma said he prefers to interact directly with the people. "Usually ministers don't [More on P6](#)

## CS reviews Early Childhood Care and Education framework in J&K

### Work in close coordination to achieve measurable improvements in nutrition, school readiness, foundational learning outcomes

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 22: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, held a meeting of all the stakeholders to take assessment of the interventions proposed for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) by the Social Welfare Department.

Speaking in this meeting he called for a time-bound, outcome-driven "Whole-of-Government" approach to transform Anganwadi Centres into vibrant hubs of holistic child development across Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Commissioner Secretary, GAD; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Project Director, Samagra Shiksha; MD, Mission Poshan; MD, JKRLM; Director, School Education, Jammu/Kashmir; and other senior officers of the concerned departments.

Highlighting the transformative role of early childhood development in light of the National Education Policy and the vision of 'Viksit Bharat', the Chief Secretary observed that no nation can dream of sustainable development without productively investing in its children.

He described children as the guarantee of a prosperous tomorrow and the real wealth of any nation. He emphasized that even nations endowed with abundant natural resources ultimately depend on the quality of their human resources for productivity and growth, and asserted that there is no better way to create quality human capital than through timely and strategic early childhood interventions.

Stressing clarity of goals and adherence to timelines, he directed all departments to work in close coordination to achieve



measurable improvements in nutrition, school readiness and foundational learning outcomes.

The Commissioner, Social Welfare Department, Sarmad Hafeez took this occasion to reveal that ECCE services are being delivered through 28,190 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) across the Union Territory, integrating preschool education (3-6 years), supplementary nutrition, immunization, growth monitoring, early identification of developmental delays and inclusive services for Divyang children.

He added that the pedagogical framework is anchored in Navchetna (0-3 years) and Aadharshila (3-6 years), promoting play-based and activity-oriented learning across five developmental domains as that of cognitive learning, language, socio-emotional, physical and cultural development.

While throwing light on the proposed interventions under the roadmap of ECCE, the MD, Poshan, Sajad Hussain Ganai informed the meeting that a key pillar of the roadmap is structured as inter-departmental convergence.

He elaborated that with the Health Department, integrated home visit protocols for AWWs and ASHAs, ECD-focused Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Days (VHSNDs), co-counselling sessions and developmental delay screening mechanisms have been institutionalized.

Additionally under this new strategy the School Education Department had ensured 100 percent mapping of AWCs with nearby primary schools has been completed, and 657 AWCs have been identified for co-location to ensure seamless transition from preschool to Grade 1 and alignment with Foundational Literacy and Numeracy goals under the NIPUN Bharat Mission.

Innovative mentorship models are being implemented to bridge Anganwadis and primary schools, with mentor teachers providing pedagogical support and on-site guidance. In addition to that internship collaborations are being rolled out with the engaging students from local Universities as Poshan Mitras

and ECCE interns to strengthen service delivery at the grassroots.

The roadmap also envisages digital transformation forming it another major component of the strategy. QR-enabled Anganwadi profiling, the "One Child, One Card" initiative and integration with Poshan Tracker, RCH and UDISE platforms are going to streamline the monitoring and service delivery.

Under Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, APAAR IDs are being generated for preschool children to enable seamless academic tracking, with 94 percent of Aadhaar-seeded children already covered and full saturation targeted by March 2026.

To strengthen transparency and community ownership, District-Level Monitoring Committees and a biannual Social Audit framework involving PRIs, SHGs, Mahila Mandals and parents is going to be instituted. Community-Based Events under POSHAN Abhiyaan including Godhbharai, Annaprashan, Pratham Diwas and Vidyarambh ceremonies are slated

for regular conduction to promote behavioural change, enrolment and parental engagement.

The meeting also reviewed the impact of some best practices in vogue here such as "Poshan on Wheels" facilitating doorstep delivery of services, on-the-spot registration under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Aadhaar generation and screening of malnutrition and developmental delays.

It was further detailed out that the capacity building under the "Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi" initiative has equipped supervisors and Anganwadi Workers with play-way pedagogy skills and digital literacy, with Round-II training scheduled for completion in a phased manner by FY 2026-27.

Reiterating that early childhood investment is foundational to building a developed and inclusive Jammu & Kashmir, the Chief Secretary directed all stakeholders to work in mission mode, ensure convergence and deliver tangible outcomes within defined timelines.

## Javed Rana reviews development works in Mendhar, stresses timely completion

### Directs officers to expedite pace of execution in road connectivity projects



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 22: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana Sunday chaired a virtual review meeting to assess the progress of ongoing development works being executed by Public Works Department (PWD) in Mendhar.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Pir Panjal, Executive Engineer PW (R&B) Mendhar and other concerned officers of the department.

During the review, the Minister took a detailed appraisal of projects being executed under SASCI, works related to EMRS infrastructure, various road projects under the UT Capex Budget & NABARD, and the ongoing works on the drainage system in Mendhar Town. He emphasized upon maintaining

quality standards, adherence to timelines and removal of bottlenecks to ensure timely completion of all projects.

The Minister exhorted upon the officers to ensure quality execution so that the system effectively addresses public concerns.

The Minister directed the officers to expedite the pace of execution, particularly in road connectivity projects, keeping in view their public importance. He emphasized close field-level monitoring and asked the officers to submit regular progress reports.

Reiterating the government's commitment towards balanced and inclusive development, the Minister said that infrastructure upgradation in border and remote areas like Mendhar remains a priority and all ongoing works must be completed within the stipulated timeframe for the benefit of the local population.

## DHS Jammu reviews health facilities in Rajouri



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 22: Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar, Director Health Services Jammu, conducted an official visit to Rajouri district to review the functioning of health institutions and assess the quality of healthcare services being delivered to the public.

During the visit, as per an official statement, a comprehensive review meeting was convened at Community Health Centre Thanamandi of Block Darhal, which was attended by Incharge Medical Officers, Block management unit, District Resource Persons, BAC, MLHPs and Nodal Officers of various health programmes.

Detailed deliberations were held on the implementation of National Health Programmes, service delivery indicators, infrastructure status, manpower deployment, availability of essential drugs and proper maintenance of records.

Block Medical Officer, Dr. Ruksana delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation highlighting the performance

of the block, achievements under various schemes, gaps identified and the action plan for further strengthening healthcare services.

Director Health emphasized strengthening patient centric services, ensuring discipline and accountability, maintaining updated registers and enhancing monitoring mechanisms at all levels. He directed all concerned officers and officials to work with dedication and professionalism to further improve healthcare delivery in the district.

The meeting was also attended by the Divisional Coordinator, ASHA & Community Processes, Jonson Chandaal along with District Resource Person, Romesh Kumar who actively participated in the review proceedings.

Local residents also expressed gratitude to the Director Health Services Jammu for visiting the remote area and personally reviewing healthcare facilities, appreciating the department's commitment towards improving medical services in the district.

## Secretary Sports Council reviews arrangements for 6th Khelo India Winter Games at Gulmarg



KT NEWS DESK

GULMARG, FEBRUARY 22: Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, conducted a detailed review of the arrangements

for the forthcoming 6th Edition of the Khelo India Winter Games scheduled to be held at Gulmarg from February 23-26, 2026.

The review meeting, as per an official statement, was attended

by officers of the J&K Sports Council entrusted with the successful conduct of the prestigious national winter sports event. The J&K Sports Council, in close coordination with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Sports Authority of India and the Department of Youth Services & Sports, has put in place elaborate arrangements for the smooth conduct of competitions across disciplines including Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing, Snowboarding and Ski Mountaineering.

The Council has ensured seamless planning for technical conduct, athlete logistics including food and accommodation, transportation and ceremonial arrangements. Hosting the games at Gulmarg since their inception, the J&K Sports Council continues to play a pivotal role in strengthening Jammu & Kashmir's stature as India's premier winter sports destination with participation of over 1000 athletes and officials from 25 States and Union Territories.

## CBC holds day-2 pre-publicity programme at Gujjar & Bakerwal hostel in Udhampur

KT NEWS DESK

UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 22: The Central Bureau of Communication, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, Field Office, Udhampur organized the second day of its pre-publicity programme at Gujjar & Bakerwal Hostel, Udhampur in continuation of the upcoming Multi Media Exhibition scheduled from 23rd to 27th February, 2026 at Government Degree College Boys Udhampur.

The programme, as per an official statement, witnessed enthusiastic participation of students, staff and people aiming to engage the youth and spread awareness about flagship schemes and developmental initiatives of the Government of



India. A series of IEC activities including a quiz contest, drawing competition and seminar were organized.

The programme commenced with a welcome address by Gulsher Ahmed Assistant warden, who appreciated CBC Udhampur

for conducting awareness activities at their hostel.

Vikram Uppal from CBC Field Office Doda also delivered a brief address, motivating students to stay informed and play a proactive role in Nation-building efforts. He said

the forthcoming Multi Media Exhibition will focus on key national themes such as Viksit Bharat, Mission Aroha, Startup India, and VB-G RAM G. through exhibitions, audio-visual presentations/ Aids, cultural programmes, and interactive sessions. The event aims to highlight transformative initiatives contributing towards inclusive growth and the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

The quiz contest was conducted by Farhat Roheen, Accounts Assistant of the Hostel encouraging students to participate enthusiastically.

Speaking on the occasion, Gurnam Singh from CBC Field Office Udhampur elaborated on the significance of public awareness and community participation in ensuring effective

implementation of Government programmes at the grassroots level. He also extended his gratitude to the Warden, Staff of Gujjar & Bakerwal Hostel for their coordination and support and invited them to participate in ensuing Multi Media Exhibition with Family and Friends.

Gulzar Hussain, Warden of Gujjar & Bakerwal Hostel, graced the occasion as the chief guest. In his address, he appreciated the efforts of CBC Udhampur in spreading awareness among students and encouraged them to actively participate in the upcoming exhibition to gain maximum knowledge about various welfare schemes.

The programme culminated with the prize distribution ceremony.

## DC Doda inaugurates construction of Motorable Path at Nehru Chowk

KT NEWS DESK

DODA, FEBRUARY 22: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh on Sunday inaugurated the construction work of a motorable path from Nehru Chowk to the residence of Dr. Bashir Ahmed Minto under the first phase of the District Capex Plan.

The project, as per an official statement, being executed by the PWD (R&B) Division Doda at an estimated cost of Rs. 30 lakh, aims to strengthen local infrastructure and provide improved connectivity to residents of the area, ensuring safer and more convenient access for commuters and nearby households.

Officers and officials from PWD (R&B) Division Doda, the Executive Officer Municipal Committee (MC) Doda, senior citizens and prominent local residents were present on the

occasion.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner Doda interacted with senior citizens and local residents, patiently listening to their concerns and suggestions regarding civic amenities and developmental needs.

He assured them that the administration remains committed to inclusive and people-centric development.

The DC Doda also conducted an on-site inspection of the area and directed the executing agency to ensure quality workmanship and timely completion of the project while adhering to prescribed standards.

The local residents appreciated the initiative and expressed gratitude to the district administration for addressing their long-standing demand for improved road connectivity.

## Div Com Jammu attends 6th NRC finale in Doda

KT NEWS DESK

Doda, Feb 22: The four-day 6th National Rafting Championship (NRC) titled "The Ultimate River Battle," concluded on Sunday with a grand ceremony at Shibnote (Premnagar), Doda.

The ceremony was attended by the Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, DDC Chairperson Doda Dhanan Singh Kotwal, Municipal Commissioner Jammu Dr. Devansh Yadav, Deputy Commissioner Doda Harvinder Singh, Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek, Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta, SSP Doda Sandeep Kumar, ADDC Doda Roshan Lal, ADC Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, CO, ACR Doda, SDM Thathri, CEO BDA, Joint Director Tourism along with officers from various departments, representatives of the Rafting Federation J&K, Team SDRF J&K, Chenab Rescue teams, Municipality officials, locals and visiting tourists.

Addressing the gathering, the Divisional Commissioner congratulated all participating teams and appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders for making the event a grand success. He lauded the Directorate of Tourism for promoting adventure tourism in the Chenab Valley and highlighted the Government of Jammu & Kashmir's commitment to strengthening tourism across the Jammu Division.

He emphasized that destinations such as Guldanda, Bhaderwah and Jai Valley possess natural beauty comparable to the Kashmir Valley and noted that ongoing



infrastructure development, including new roads and tunnels, will significantly improve connectivity and reduce travel time to these picturesque locations. He further informed that 75 tourist destinations have been identified by the Directorate of Tourism, including several in Doda and Bhaderwah, where new events and tourism initiatives will be promoted.

The Divisional Commissioner Jammu also encouraged the promotion of local culture, folk dances and traditional music to provide the youth with platforms to showcase their talent and generate employment opportunities. He congratulated the BSF men's and women's teams for winning top honours in the championship and appreciated the role of the Police and security agencies in ensuring smooth and secure

conduct of the event.

DDC Chairperson, Dhanan Singh Kotwal, in his address, acknowledged the efforts of Deputy Commissioner Doda for encouraging both officials and locals to successfully host such large-scale events across the district. He also appreciated the Directorate of Tourism and District Administration Doda for identifying new adventure tourism sites and promoting youth participation. Highlighting developmental achievements, he stated that 31 new roads were inaugurated in recent months, improving rural connectivity and benefiting local communities. He noted that such events generate livelihood opportunities for unemployed youth and requested the Directorate of Tourism to organize more events during the summer season as well. He also expressed

gratitude to the security forces for their support and protection.

Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta expressed gratitude towards District Administration Doda, and all stakeholders for ensuring the smooth conduct of the championship. He informed that while five previous rafting championships were organized in Reasi, hosting the sixth edition in Doda marked a significant step in expanding adventure tourism across the Chenab region. He encouraged local youth interested in rafting to connect with the Directorate of Tourism, assuring necessary permissions and institutional support to promote adventure activities.

He further announced that events like Sarthal Winter Festival and the Shibnote Rafting Championship would be incorporated into the official tourism calendar.

Upcoming tourism projects for Guldanda and Padri along with a proposed Winter Carnival in Guldanda, were also highlighted as key initiatives aimed at boosting regional tourism.

During the ceremony, dignitaries distributed mementos and cash prizes to winners of the rafting championship, including marathon and sprint events, securing first, second and third positions. Earlier, the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, DDC Chairperson, Municipal Commissioner Jammu Dr. Devansh Yadav, Deputy Commissioners of Doda and Reasi, Director Tourism, SSP Doda, CO and other dignitaries undertook a rafting expedition from the scenic rafting site of Shibnote (Premnagar) to Karara, covering an approximate distance of 15 kilometres, showcasing the immense adventure tourism potential of the Chenab River stretch.

The championship was held from February 19 to February 22, 2026 and was organized by the Directorate of Tourism Jammu in collaboration with the District Administration Doda, attracting participants, tourists and adventure enthusiasts from across Jammu & Kashmir and various parts of the country.

A vibrant musical programme was also organised yesterday at Bhaderwah by the Directorate of Tourism in collaboration with the District Administration Doda, which was attended by all dignitaries, officers, participants, locals and tourists, adding a cultural highlight to the celebrations.

## CCF Jammu tours Nowshera forest division



KT NEWS DESK

Nowshera, Feb 22: A tour programme was conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department in Nowshera Forest Division under the leadership of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Jammu, Dr. V. S. Senthil Kumar. He was accompanied by the Conservator of Forests, West Circle, Rajouri, Sat Paul.

The visit was undertaken in connection with the Khair Awareness and assessment Programme for formulation of the next ten-year Khair Management Plan with the proposed felling cycle from 2027-28 to 2036-37.

In Nowshera Forest Division, the Chief Conservator of Forests visited Sunderbani Range along with the Divisional Forest Officer, Nowshera, Shweta Deonia, DCF accompanied with field functionaries and staff of the department.

An interactive session was held with local farmers of 35 Villages and other stakeholders like Ex-PRI Members, prominent villagers regarding the forthcoming ten-year Khair Management Plan wherein farmers are at the centre stage for Khair trees assessment in their private

land holdings and the data proposed by them will be used for formulation of Khair Management Plan to be implemented from 2027-28 to 2036-37.

ADC Sunderbani, Ramkesh Sharma along with other revenue officers/officials was also present on the occasion. The field staff distributed Khair Assessment Forms among the farmers to facilitate systematic data collection and ensure participatory planning.

On the occasion, Dr. V. S. Senthil planted a sapling in Nagar Van Charnote, symbolizing the department's commitment towards environmental conservation and promotion of indigenous species. The Chief Conservator of Forests emphasized the importance of scientific assessment, transparency in management practices and active community participation to ensure sustainable management of Khair resources and long-term ecological balance. The programme concluded with directions to the field functionaries for timely completion of the assessment process and effective coordination with local stakeholders.

## Empowerment, cyber safety camp for women at Chinchora Chinta

KT NEWS DESK

Doda, Feb 22: On the directions of the District Social Welfare Officer, Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women (SHEW) Doda in collaboration with One Stop Centre (OSC) Doda, organized an awareness programme at Village Chinchora Chinta in coordination with Dr. Amar Singh Memorial Public School.

The programme highlighted women-centric welfare schemes, helplines and support services. Participants were sensitized about

Women Helpline 181 and Childline 1098 and informed about OSC and DHEW services including legal aid, counselling, rehabilitation, and crisis intervention. Special focus was laid on cyber safety, cautioning adolescent girls against online exploitation and urging parents to monitor digital activities.

Awareness on menstrual hygiene was imparted, with sanitary napkins distributed among women and girls. Baby kits were also provided to newborn girls from BPL families, reinforcing maternal and child care support.

## Awareness Camp organized at Mahore

KT NEWS DESK

Reasi, Feb 22: An Awareness Camp was organized on Sunday at Mahore, District Reasi, by the Chief Horticulture Officer, Reasi, Rajinder Sharma, under the aegis of the Department of Horticulture.

The programme was graced by the Director Horticulture Jammu, Gul Syed, as the Chief Guest. Among others present on the occasion were the Assistant Director Horticulture, Sunil Gupta; Horticulture Development Officer (Additional Charge), Mahore, Sansar Chand and other officers and field staff of the department.

During the camp, farmers were sensitized about various ongoing Centrally Sponsored and UT sector schemes aimed at the holistic development and enhancement of the horticulture sector. The Director elaborated on the benefits and objectives of flagship schemes such as the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP), Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), emphasizing their pivotal role in enhancing productivity, promoting quality planting material and augmenting income generation for orchardists.

Later, the Director visited Tuli Nursery, where a plantation drive was carried out. High-value walnut variety (Chandler) plants were planted in the orchard maintained and owned by Akhlaq Choudhary, a beneficiary under departmental schemes. The Director appreciated the beneficiary for adopting modern horticultural practices and maintaining quality standards.

While interacting with the farmers, the Director stressed the adoption of advanced technologies, high-density plantations, and Ultra High Density (UHD) apple cultivation under various government-supported initiatives to enhance productivity and strengthen the horticulture sector in the district.

The programme concluded with an interactive session wherein farmers raised their queries, which were satisfactorily addressed by the officers of the department.

## YSS organizes youth engagement programme in Kishtwar

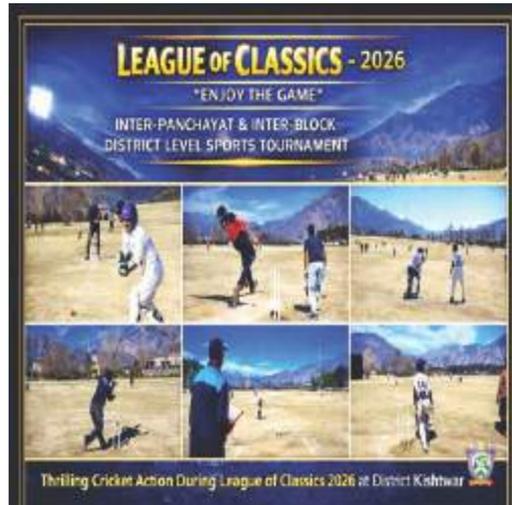
KT NEWS DESK

Kishtwar, Feb 22: The Department of Youth Services & Sports (YSS), District Kishtwar on Sunday successfully organized the much-anticipated Youth Engagement Programme-2026 at Chowgan Ground, Kishtwar, marking a historic step towards strengthening grassroots sports culture in the district.

The programme witnessed the grand launch of the "League of Classics," featuring Block-Level Trial-cum-Selection competitions in multiple disciplines, including Cricket, Football, and Volleyball for U/17 and U/19 boys categories at the Inter-Panchayat Block Level, Kishtwar and Municipal Council Kishtwar.

The mega sporting initiative was conducted under the directions of Anuradha Gupta, Director General, Youth Services & Sports, J&K and Pankaj Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, whose visionary leadership continues to provide a dynamic platform for youth engagement and talent identification across the Union Territory.

The programme was organized under the close guidance and supervision of Jaffer Haider Sheikh, DYSSO Kishtwar, who emphasized the importance of structured competitions at the grassroots level to nurture hidden talent and channel the energy of youth towards constructive sporting activities. The selection trials witnessed enthusiastic participation from young



sportspersons across different Panchayats and Municipal wards of Kishtwar, reflecting a massive response at the grassroots level. The competitions were conducted in a fair, transparent and merit-based manner by a panel of experienced officials and technical experts from the Department of Youth Services & Sports.

The presence of Zonal Physical Education Officers (ZPEO) Kishtwar and Nagseni further strengthened the supervision mechanism, ensuring the smooth conduct of trials and adherence to departmental norms. All

officials of YSS Kishtwar actively coordinated the event, demonstrating remarkable teamwork and commitment.

The "League of Classics" is envisioned as a stepping stone for higher-level competitions at the District, Divisional, and UT levels, thereby opening pathways for young athletes to represent Kishtwar on prestigious platforms.

The Department of Youth Services & Sports, District Kishtwar, remains steadfast in its mission to create history in sports excellence and youth empowerment in the district.

## Open District Cricket Tournament launched in Kathua

KT NEWS DESK

Kathua, Feb 22: District Administration Kathua, in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department Kathua on Sunday commenced the Open District Cricket Tournament under the aegis of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, with inaugural day matches being held across different subdivisions of the district.

The tournament is being organized under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, with the objective of promoting sportsmanship and spreading awareness against drug abuse among the youth.

At Billawar, under the supervision of Additional Deputy



Commissioner Billawar, Vinay Khosla, two matches were played at Playground Bhaddu as part of the inaugural fixtures. In the first match, A.K Billawar defeated United II

Billawar. In the second match, M.K Deccan Charges Billawar secured victory against Ramkot Cricket Club.

Similarly, at Government Model Higher Secondary

School Basohli, inaugural matches were conducted under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Basohli, Pankaj Bhagotra. Plassi Cricket Club defeated Game Changer CC Mahanpur, while Basohli Warriors emerged victorious against United Hut.

At Hiranagar, under the supervision of Sub-Divisional Magistrate Hiranagar, Phulail Singh, two inaugural matches were played at Sai International Stadium. Hiranagar Cricket Club defeated Superking Cricket Club, while Mukesh II Cricket Club registered victory over Pro II Cricket Club.

Likewise, at Degree College Bani, under the supervision of Sub-Divisional Magistrate Bani,

Sandeep Kumar, Bani defeated Duggan, while Backen secured victory over Lowang in the opening day matches.

Refreshments were served to all participating players and officials. The tournament will continue in the coming days, with winning teams advancing to subsequent rounds, culminating in the grand finale at District Headquarters Kathua.

Pertinently, the District Administration Kathua has undertaken a resolve to engage youth in constructive pursuits and strengthen the fight against drug abuse through sustained sports-based interventions under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.



IS AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STALLS

EDITORIAL

## Language As The Homeland Of Thought

On International Mother Language Day, Kashmir's poets and writers made a heartfelt appeal that reaches far beyond literary gatherings. It is a powerful reminder that when a language dies, the heartbeat of an entire culture stops with it. The Kashmiri language is not just a set of words or grammar rules. It is a living treasure chest filled with centuries of wisdom, emotion, poetry, and shared memories. To watch it fade is to watch the slow disappearance of a people's very soul. As has been beautifully said, language is the

homeland of thought. Without Kashmiri, the unique ways of seeing, feeling, and expressing that have shaped this land for thousands of years become lost and homeless. The reluctance among younger generations to speak their mother tongue is a deep cultural wound. When children cannot talk with their grandparents in the language of their ancestors, a vital bridge breaks. Along with it, the passing down of values, stories, and identity is disrupted. This is not just about nostalgia. It is about survival. A language holds within it the

very structure of a culture – its humour, its sorrow, its strength. The poetry of ancient mystics, the wisdom of revered saints, and the rich collection of folk tales are all preserved in Kashmiri. To give up the language is to leave this precious inheritance without a home. The solution demands a committed effort on many fronts. First, the home must become the first classroom. Parents need to consciously speak Kashmiri with their children, setting aside the wrong belief that other languages alone lead to progress. Second, schools

and colleges must make Kashmiri a formal part of education. Dedicated Kashmiri language teachers should be appointed in every educational institution. The syllabus must include not just grammar but also the rich literary and philosophical contributions of Kashmiri writers. This will help students feel pride in their language and become fluent in it. Third, media and technology must embrace Kashmiri. More content in the mother tongue, whether news, entertainment, or social media, will make its use normal in everyday life. Fourth, the

government must take the lead through supportive policies. Official recognition, promotion of Kashmiri in public spaces, and backing for cultural programmes in the language are essential. The language must be seen, heard, and valued. Saving Kashmiri is an act of preserving our very culture. Saving our language means saving our identity. Let us make a promise: to speak Kashmiri with pride, to teach it with love, and to ensure that future generations receive not just a language, but a living, breathing legacy.

# WAVES 2025: Catalysing Growth Through Global Participation And Creative Collaboration

Press Information Bureau

WAVES as a Strategic Platform for the Global Creative Economy

WAVES 2025 – the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit – began with a simple but ambitious idea: to bring together creative voices from around the world into one collaborative space. From 1st to 4th May 2025, Mumbai's Jio World Convention Centre and Jio World Garden transformed into a dynamic crossroads, where storytellers, technologists, investors, policymakers, and industry leaders came together not merely to exchange ideas, but to forge meaningful partnerships. Conceived as India's first dedicated global convergence platform for media and entertainment, WAVES was designed to move beyond the format of a traditional summit and function as a living interface between creators and markets, ideas and institutions.

At a time when creative industries are shaping economies as much as they shape imaginations, WAVES placed collaboration at the centre of its design. The objective was clear: to connect Indian and global creative ecosystems in ways that generate real opportunity – in content creation, creative technology, intellectual property and market access. The scale of participation reflected that ambition. Stakeholders from over 100 countries, including policymakers, global studios, startups, investors and independent creators, engaged across broadcasting, films, digital media, Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality (AVGC-XR) and emerging formats.

More than a one-time gathering, WAVES signalled a shift in how India engages with the global creative economy. Instead of fragmented conversations across sectors and regions, it brought together policy, commerce and creative talent into a single, integrated framework.

**Institutional Architecture and Core Pillars**  
WAVES was structured around a set of core industry pillars that collectively represent the breadth and future trajectory of the global media and entertainment ecosystem. By bringing these segments onto a single platform, the summit enabled cross-sector interaction, policy alignment and commercial exchange, reflecting the increasingly convergent nature of creative industries worldwide.

**Create in India Challenge**  
At the heart of WAVES was the Create in India Challenge, a platform built to discover new voices and place them on a global stage. The first season drew nearly one lakh registrations, including over 1,100 international participants from more than 60 countries. The numbers spoke volumes, but the momentum behind them spoke louder. Creators from across continents saw India not merely as a market, but as a dynamic meeting ground where ideas intersect, collaborate, and find new direction.

From this vast pool, 750 finalists were selected to showcase their work at CreatoSphere, a curated space within WAVES where emerging talent could engage directly with studios, platforms and decision-makers. Among them were 43 international finalists from over 20 countries, turning the showcase into a genuine exchange of talent and perspectives, rather than a one-directional display.

By linking talent discovery with real industry exposure, the Create in India challenge moved beyond recognition. It created pathways for collaboration, co-creation and cross-border opportunity, reinforcing WAVES as a platform where creative ambition could find global resonance.

**WAVES Bazaar**  
If Create in India was about discovering voices, WAVES Bazaar was about giving them a marketplace. As the commercial backbone of the Summit, it brought together creators, studios, platforms, broadcasters, distributors and investors across film, television, gaming, music and immersive media – structured not just for networking, but for real deals and lasting business relationships. Launched ahead of the Summit and designed to operate year-round, it reflected a clear intent: market access should be sustained, institutionalised and globally connected.

**Key Outcomes:**  
Enabled structured buyer-seller



engagement, including curated B2B meetings, project pitching and content discovery formats.

Facilitated over 3,000 B2B meetings, generating business transactions exceeding 800 crore, with deal values projected to cross 1,000 crore as negotiations progressed beyond the summit.

The Buyer-Seller Market alone accounted for over 500 crore in revenues, reflecting strong commercial traction.

The Pitch Room shortlisted 16 projects from more than 100 submissions, offering creators direct access to global buyers and investors.

The Viewing Room showcased 100 films from eight countries, strengthening international visibility and distribution opportunities.

Enabled concrete cross-border outcomes, including announcements of international co-productions involving Indian and global partners.

The impact of WAVES Bazaar extends far beyond the Summit itself. As a year-round global marketplace, it continues to generate sustained industry engagement and measurable outcomes.

**Culturals and Concerts**  
Within WAVES, live cultural performances were not merely part of the program; they were shared experiences that sparked connection, celebrated diversity, and brought the spirit of the gathering to life. Across four days in Mumbai, WAVES Culturals & Concerts brought together India's classical, folk and contemporary traditions alongside international artists, turning the stage into a space of shared expression. From orchestral compositions and dance to cross-border collaborations, these performances embodied the spirit of "Connecting Creators, Connecting Countries."

By weaving culture into the Summit's core, WAVES positioned live artistic exchange not merely as a celebration, but as a catalyst for collaboration, creative dialogue and global resonance.

**WaveX (WaveXcelerator)**  
WaveX infused WAVES with the dynamism of the startup ecosystem. Centered on innovation in media, entertainment, and language technologies, it created a bridge between emerging ventures, government institutions, investors, and global industry leaders – turning ideas into pathways for scale and impact.

At WAVES 2025, over 30 startups pitched live to major players such as Microsoft, Google and Lumikai, while nearly 100 startups showcased their solutions, opening doors to capital and partnerships. Beyond the Summit, WaveX continues to support startups through incubation, mentorship and institutional partnerships with T-Hub, IIT Delhi and a nationwide network of centres – embedding innovation into India's creative ecosystem and linking it to global opportunity.

**Global Media Dialogue**  
The Global Media Dialogue was a high-level

government-to-government initiative held as a centrepiece of the WAVES 2025 in Mumbai. It gave WAVES its institutional depth, bringing governments, regulators and industry leaders onto a shared multilateral platform. It provided space to address the structural shifts reshaping media worldwide – from technology and governance to inclusion and cross-border cooperation.

At its core was the adoption of the WAVES Declaration – a formal, collective commitment by participating nations to strengthen global cooperation in media and entertainment. The Declaration underscored ethical media practices, digital inclusion, cultural diversity and the responsible use of emerging technologies, while encouraging cross-border partnerships and co-productions. By formally anchoring these principles, the Dialogue moved beyond discussion to deliberate alignment, positioning WAVES as a platform where shared vision translates into coordinated action, and global consensus in the creative economy begins to take shape.

**WAVES Declaration**  
Adopted at the Global Media Dialogue during WAVES 2025 in Mumbai on 2nd May 2025, the WAVES Declaration was endorsed by 77 participating nations, marking a collective commitment to strengthening global cooperation in media and entertainment.

**Key commitments and principles:**  
Reaffirms the role of media and entertainment in fostering global harmony, cultural understanding and resilience in a post-pandemic, uncertain world.

Commits to bridging the digital divide by promoting access, affordability and citizen-centric media ecosystems, ensuring equitable participation across communities.

Emphasises ethical, inclusive and responsible media, including the promotion of diverse voices, public interest content, and fact-based journalism.

Recognises media and entertainment as engines of inclusive growth and employment, with a focus on youth, women and underrepresented groups.

Supports fair and open markets, protection of intellectual property, and cross-border partnerships, including co-productions, trade and joint funding models.

Affirms the responsible and ethical use of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, guided by transparency, accountability and inclusivity.

Calls for strengthened cooperation to counter misinformation and disinformation, while upholding human rights and cultural sensitivities.

Reiterates commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, linking creative industries to long-term peace, progress and prosperity.

**Strategic Direction: A Blueprint for India's Creative Economy**

Beyond the stages and marketplaces, the conference track of WAVES 2025 posed a deeper question: what kind of creative future

is India shaping? Framed as a "Blueprint for a Creative India," the conversations moved past celebration to strategy – recasting media and entertainment not simply as cultural expressions, but as engines of economic growth, capable of expanding exports, generating employment, and amplifying India's cultural voice on the global stage.

The conversations recognised creators and startups not as peripheral participants, but as economic actors shaping new markets. From the rapid expansion of India's creator economy to the integration of AVGC-XR into mainstream media, advertising and immersive storytelling, the message was clear: creativity today is inseparable from technology, entrepreneurship and global ambition. Embedding innovation within education systems, incubation networks and policy frameworks emerged as a shared priority, reinforcing the idea that creative industries are not just niche domains but export-ready, future-facing sectors.

**PARTICIPATION, OUTCOMES, AND INDUSTRY IMPACT**

**Scale and Global Participation**  
WAVES 2025 unfolded at a scale that signalled serious global intent. Representatives from over 100 countries came together in Mumbai, spanning policymakers, industry leaders, creators, startups and enterprises across broadcasting, digital media, AVGC-XR, films and allied sectors.

More than one lakh people engaged with the Summit. Among them were over 10,000 delegates, 1,000 creators, more than 300 companies and 350 startups. The significance lay not only in the scale, but in the composition. Decision-makers, innovators and storytellers shared the same space, turning WAVES into a meeting point for creative ideas, investment and international collaboration within the creative economy.

**Policy and Institutional Outcomes**  
At the policy level, the Global Media Dialogue provided a formal multilateral platform for engagement among governments and institutions. 77 countries participated in the Dialogue, culminating in the adoption of the WAVES Declaration, which articulated shared commitments on ethical media practices, digital inclusion, cultural diversity and international cooperation.

This outcome elevated WAVES beyond just a consultative exchange, positioning it as a forum capable of producing collective frameworks and reinforcing India's role as a convenor in global media and cultural governance.

**Creators, Talent and CreatoSphere Outcomes**

The Create in India Challenges turned talent discovery into access. What began as entries across 33 categories grew into a global creative exchange, drawing participants from India and more than 60 countries. The scale reflected not just interest, but confidence in India as a shared stage.

For over 750 finalists, CreatoSphere became more than a showcase. It was a point

of entry into global networks. Across eight creative zones, creators connected with studios, platforms and collaborators. The WAVES Creator Awards recognised more than 150 of them, but the lasting outcome was structural. A pathway now exists for emerging talent to move from recognition to real opportunity within the global creative economy.

**Startup Innovation and WaveX Engagement**  
For the over 200 startups that engaged on the WaveX platform, participation translated into progression. Live pitches by more than 30 ventures and exhibition showcases by nearly 100 did not end on stage. They led to investor follow-ups, partnership discussions and structured entry points into larger industry networks.

Several founders converted these interactions into tangible next steps – refining product strategy, securing mentorship commitments, initiating pilot conversations and exploring funding pathways. The platform reduced the distance between innovation and market. WaveX did not simply convene startups; it helped convert exposure into execution.

**Market Platforms and Industry Integration**  
Through WAVES Bazaar, commercial conversations translated into active deal-making. Structured buyer-seller meetings and curated rights discussions enabled creators and enterprises to move projects into negotiation stages, initiate co-production talks and formalise distribution pathways across film, television, music, animation and digital media.

For participating companies, the platform reduced friction between pitch and partnership. Discussions matured into commercial alignments, content licensing explorations and cross-border collaborations. WAVES Bazaar did not simply connect markets. It accelerated entry into them, strengthening India's positioning within global creative value chains through tangible commercial movement.

**Institutional Capacity Building and Ecosystem Support**

WAVES 2025 signalled a shift toward long-term capacity building in the creative economy. The positioning of IIC as the National Centre of Excellence for AVGC-XR reflected a clear institutional commitment to strengthening advanced skills and production capabilities in emerging creative technologies. In the months that followed, this direction was reinforced by the announcement of AVGC Content Creator Labs across 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges, aimed at building a workforce of two million professionals by 2030.

Together, these steps suggest that the vision articulated at WAVES is translating into structural expansion, strengthening the talent pipeline needed for India's creative industries to scale globally.

**Conclusion: From Convening Power to Enduring Capability**

WAVES 2025 highlighted a pivotal moment for India. The creative economy has moved from the sidelines to the center of growth and diplomacy. It is now a key driver of how nations connect, compete, and collaborate. The Summit showcased not just scale, but confidence. Creators expressed global ambition, startups unveiled solutions for international markets, and policymakers engaged with the understanding that culture, technology, and commerce are increasingly intertwined.

The impact of WAVES lies in the bridges it has begun to build. Between independent storytellers and global studios. Between early-stage founders and institutional capital. Between governments navigating common technological shifts. These were not symbolic gestures. They were working relationships taking shape in real time.

Perhaps the most meaningful outcome is continuity. Networks remain. Partnerships progress. Young creators return home with global contacts. Startups refine products with sharper direction. Institutions carry forward shared frameworks. In this way, WAVES shifts from being an event to becoming infrastructure.

If sustained with care, this platform has the potential to deepen India's presence in global creative value chains not through assertion, but through participation and partnership. The future of the creative economy will be shaped by those who can combine imagination with organisation. WAVES suggests that India intends to do both.

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## Circular Economy In Agriculture: Waste To Wealth

Press Information Bureau

The growing scale of waste generation has emerged as a critical environmental challenge with substantial economic implications. In India, as agriculture plays a pivotal role in ensuring food and nutritional security, it also generates significant waste during cultivation, harvesting, and processing. Inadequate management of agricultural waste has become a substantial source of environmental contamination affecting air, soil, and water. The country generates an estimated 350 million tonnes of agricultural waste annually, comprising crop residues, husk, straw, and by-products from food processing activities. According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, India's agricultural residues have the potential to generate over 18,000 MW of power annually. In addition to energy generation, these residues can be used to produce nutrient-rich organic fertilisers. Such fertilisers help enhance soil health and reduce dependence on chemical inputs in agriculture.

In addition, globally, an estimated 1.3 billion tonnes of food produced for human consumption are wasted annually, while nearly one-third of biodegradable municipal solid waste is generated in household kitchens. When organic waste, such as food waste, agricultural residues, and other biodegradable municipal waste, is inadequately managed, it decomposes in landfills, releasing methane and other greenhouse gases. This contributes to air and groundwater pollution, generates noxious odours, and accelerates environmental degradation, thereby intensifying the impacts of climate change. Therefore, land use, resource utilization, and sustainable waste management solutions have become both environmental priorities and economic necessities.

Building a Circular Economy to Balance Growth and Sustainability

The importance of adopting a "waste-to-wealth" approach lies in reimagining waste as a valuable resource rather than an economic burden and environmental issue. It necessitates a rethinking of material flows within the economy, emphasizing the recovery, reuse, and reintegration of value. The circular economy has emerged as the most comprehensive and scalable approach for enhancing resource efficiency across the full lifecycle of products and processes.

At its core, circularity represents a systemic transformation in production and consumption patterns, aimed at minimizing the extraction of raw materials, water, and energy, while eliminating waste at every stage. This approach is guided by the principles of the six Rs- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refurbish, Recover, and Repair, ensuring that materials remain in productive use for extended periods. A defining feature of this model is "true recycling," in which waste is converted back to its original form without compromising quality, enabling higher-value recovery and avoiding the losses associated with downcycling.

Circular economy principles offer a viable, forward-looking solution that can help India balance between economic activity and ecological sustainability. By 2050, India's circular economy is expected to reach a market value of \$2 trillion and create 10 million jobs.

Realizing its potential will require aligning economic expansion with environmental stewardship, drawing inspiration from nature's efficient, regenerative recycling systems. Such systems exemplify optimal resource use and

minimal waste, thereby providing a model for sustainable development.

Understanding Agricultural Waste from Production to Consumption

Agricultural waste is generated throughout the journey from farm to food plate. It includes crop residues, animal manure, processing by-products, and effluents produced during crop cultivation, livestock rearing, post-harvest handling, and the processing of grains, fruits, vegetables, sugarcane, oilseeds, and dairy products.

**Crop Residues / Stubble:** The agricultural waste cycle begins at the post-harvest stage, when crops leave behind residues such as stalks, straw, and stubble. A substantial portion of this biomass is productively utilized as cattle feed, compost, biogas, mulch, or fuel. However, a significant share is still burned in situ to facilitate rapid land preparation for subsequent cropping cycles. Residue burning leads to the depletion of soil nutrients, degradation of soil health, and the emission of greenhouse gases.

What is Biomass?

Biomass refers to organic material derived from living or recently living plants and animals that can be used as a source of energy, materials, or nutrients.

**Animal Manure, By-products, and Carcasses:** Livestock farming constitutes a significant source of agricultural waste, particularly in India, where large animal populations generate enormous quantities of dung and bedding waste. In the case of a disease outbreak, the safe and timely disposal of animal carcasses is essential to prevent the transmission of infectious and zoonotic diseases. Therefore, proper carcass management underscores the importance of expanding infrastructure, financing, and technical capacity to ensure environmentally sound and public health-safe disposal practices.

**Post-Harvest Losses:** Post-harvest losses refer to measurable reductions in both quantity and quality of a product. These losses can occur at any stage of the post-harvest system. Food losses may be quantitative, such as a decrease in weight or volume, or qualitative, including loss of nutrients and undesirable changes in taste, colour, texture, or appearance. Better post-harvest supply chain management would minimize waste, increase real consumption, and enhance income across the economy.

**Food waste:** Food waste occurs later in the value chain, including markets, retail outlets, and households, where edible food is discarded. Such wastage contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. However, emerging technologies are increasingly converting food waste into value-added products, such as engineered biochar, which has the potential to sequester carbon, enhance soil health, and remove environmental contaminants. By transforming waste into a resource, food waste management is evolving into a crucial pillar of circularity within the agriculture and food systems.

What is Biochar & Engineered Biochar?

Biochar is a carbon-rich material made by heating biomass (such as crop residues or wood waste) in low-oxygen conditions. When this biochar is engineered, it is further treated or enhanced to improve specific properties, such as soil fertility and water retention, and to improve nutrient use efficiency.

Government Initiatives Driving Circularity in Agriculture

The government is implementing various policies to promote circularity in

agriculture and allied sectors by converting waste into valuable resources. Initiatives such as Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan) and Crop Residue Management are transforming agricultural, animal, and food waste into organic manure.

Complementing these schemes, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) support the development of infrastructure to convert agricultural waste into value. Additionally, the Jal Shakti Mission encourages the reuse of domestic and industrial wastewater for non-potable purposes, including agriculture, landscaping, and horticulture. All these initiatives are working towards the 'waste-to-wealth' approach by promoting resource recovery, reuse, and value addition across the agriculture and allied sectors.

Transforming Crop Residues and Biomass into Resources

**Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan):** The scheme brings together multiple ministries to convert cattle dung, crop residues, and food waste into compressed biogas (CBG) and organic manure. In 2023, the government launched the Unified GOBARdhan Portal to enhance transparency and functionality. By 14th January 2026, the scheme covered 51.4% of India's districts and had 979 operational biogas plants, indicating substantial progress in sustainable waste management. Additionally, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed crop-specific guidelines to help farmers use biogas slurry to enhance soil health.

Additionally, the government has eased regulations and introduced targeted incentives to enhance the scheme's impact. The inclusion of compressed biogas (CBG) in carbon credit trading, tax relief on CBG-blended fuels, and simplified norms for organic manure under the Fertiliser Control Order have accelerated biogas adoption, attracted private investment, and strengthened the national waste-to-wealth ecosystem.

**Crop Residue Management (CRM):** The CRM initiative aims to reduce the open burning of crop residues by promoting in-situ management, where residues are directly incorporated into the soil or used as mulch, and ex-situ management, where residues are collected for composting, biogas production, or bioenergy. These practices help improve soil health, enhance farm productivity, and promote effective waste management.

Under the scheme, from 2018-19 to 2025-26, Rs. 3,926.16 crore has been released to the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, and ICAR. During this period, the states have set up over 42,000 Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) for crop residue management machines, and more than 3.24 lakh machines have been supplied to these CHCs and individual farmers.

Building Infrastructure to Convert Agricultural Waste into Value

**Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF):** The AIF plays a key role in strengthening the agricultural value chains, including those involved in organic agriculture. Organic farmers, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), and agri-entrepreneurs have leveraged AIF support to establish warehouses, cold storage facilities, sorting and grading units, and primary processing centres.

Launched in 2020-21, the AIF provides medium to long-term institutional credit for the

development of post-harvest infrastructure and farm-level assets.

As of 2025, the AIF has supported 545 projects related to organic input production, with loan sanctions totaling 850 crore, underscoring the growing recognition of organic farming as both environmentally sustainable and economically viable.

Additionally, 66,310 crore has been sanctioned across 1,13,419 projects, mobilising total investments of 1,07,502 crore in the agriculture sector. Major projects supported under AIF include:

- 30,202 custom hiring centres,
- 22,827 processing units,
- 15,982 warehouses,
- 3,703 sorting and grading units,
- 2,454 cold storage projects, and
- around 38,251 other post-harvest management projects,

along with the creation of viable community farm assets. These initiatives contribute to improved value addition, reduced post-harvest losses, and enhanced income opportunities for farmers.

**Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF):** Launched in 2020, the Government has introduced the AHIDF under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, with a corpus of 15,000 crore to strengthen infrastructure across the livestock value chain. The fund is designed to catalyse private and cooperative investments in meat and dairy processing, animal feed manufacturing, and waste-to-wealth management, thereby enhancing value addition, efficiency, and resilience in the animal husbandry sector. To embed sustainability and circularity into the dairy ecosystem, the government has initiated the formation of three exclusive Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) with specific objectives: -

- To supply cattle feed, mineral mixtures, and technical inputs that enhance livestock productivity.

To promote organic manure production and sustainable waste utilization through cooperative models, converting cow dung and agricultural waste into organic fertilizers and biogas.

To facilitate scientific management of hides, bones, and horns of fallen animals, ensuring responsible disposal while creating additional value streams within the livestock sector.

This approach supports natural farming practices, promotes circularity by minimizing waste, and addresses the rising demand for environmentally sustainable soil inputs, thereby enhancing the resilience and long-term sustainability of the livestock sector.

Water Management for Sustainable Agriculture: Initiatives under Jal Shakti Mission

The Ministry of Jal Shakti promotes the treatment and reuse of domestic and wastewater for non-drinking purposes, such as agriculture, landscaping, and horticulture, through schemes such as the National Mission for Clean Ganga, PMKSY-Watershed Development, and Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

The Ministry also focuses on water conservation and source sustainability by supporting watershed development, rainwater harvesting, revival of traditional water bodies, and groundwater recharge. These efforts improve water availability for irrigation, reduce pressure on groundwater, and encourage a resource-efficient and sustainable approach to water management in agriculture and allied sectors.

Complementing wastewater reuse initiatives, the Jal Jeevan Mission-Har Ghar Jal (launched in August 2019), focuses on ensuring

- India's agricultural residues have the potential to generate over 18,000 MW of power annually

- Under the Crop Residue Management Initiatives, the government provided 3,926 crore in support between 2018-19 to 2025-26.

- Additionally, more than 42,000 Custom Hiring Centres have been established, and 3.24 lakh machines have been deployed to promote sustainable residue management.

- Under GOBARdhan, 979 biogas plants are operational across 51.4% of districts (as of 14th January 2026), converting dung, crop residues, and food waste into clean energy and organic manure.

- Circular agriculture supports SDGs, particularly by addressing the global food waste of 1.05 billion tonnes in 2022, of which 60% originated from households.

universal access to safe and adequate drinking water in rural areas. The mission provides functional household tap water connections supplying 55 litres per capita per day of potable water, thereby reinforcing India's long-term objectives of water security and sustainable water governance.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-aligned Circular Agriculture Practices

Circular agriculture is closely aligned with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level. It supports SDG 2, which aims to "end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture".

In particular, SDG indicator 2.4.1 emphasises the need for resilient farming systems that improve soil health and reduce dependence on chemical inputs. In India, practices such as composting, biochar use, and biomass recycling contribute to these objectives by enhancing soil fertility, improving productivity, and promoting environmentally sustainable agriculture.

Moreover, circular agriculture supports the SDGs by reducing global food waste, which reached 1.05 billion tonnes in 2022, of which 60% generated at the household level.

Conclusion

India's shift towards a circular economy in agriculture demonstrates that environmental sustainability and economic growth can be mutually reinforcing. While the scale of agricultural and food waste poses a significant concern, targeted policies, strategic infrastructure investments, and coordinated institutional action are increasingly converting waste into energy, organic inputs, water resources, and livelihood opportunities. Flagship initiatives such as GOBARdhan, crop residue management programmes, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), and the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) represent the potential of circular agriculture to enhance soil fertility and water security, and to strengthen farm resilience. By scaling proven interventions, strengthening local institutions, and aligning economic incentives with ecological outcomes, circular agriculture can play a pivotal role in ensuring long-term food security, climate resilience, and inclusive rural development, turning agricultural waste into a cornerstone of sustainable prosperity.

## Ramadan Fast And Taqwa

Abdul Majid Jaffry

The Quran prescribes fasting for believers in these words, "O you who believe, the fasts have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may have taqwa" (2:183). Hence, the intent and effect of fasting as described in the ayah is to acquire taqwa. Presence of taqwa helps protect from committing sins and overcome the passions of flesh. There is no equivalent English word for taqwa. In Islamic terminology, taqwa refers to a state of consciousness where one constantly feels the presence of his Creator, obeys His commands to attain His pleasure, and avoids disobedience to Him, not only out of His fear but also for the love of Him.

Sayyidna Ubay Ibn Ka'b gave a comprehensive explanation of taqwa in response to a query from Hadrat Umar Farooq radi Allahu anhum. Hadrat Ka'b questioned, "O Amirul Momineen, have you ever walked on a path full of thorns?" Hadrat Umar replied, "Yes". Hadrat Ka'b then enquired, "What did you do?" In reply, Hadrat Umar stated, "I gathered my clothing and lifted it up to my shin, thereafter I watched my steps and took each step carefully from the fear of thorns lest they prick me". Hadrat Ka'b said, "This is taqwa".

In Hadrat Ka'b elucidation of taqwa, the world is a like a passage full of thorns (sins), a believer treads through it very carefully saving himself from the harm of sinful actions and attractions by adhering to the do's and don'ts of Islam.

Taqwa is a measure of a person's real worth. A slave with a higher level of taqwa is better than the master, and a pauper with greater consciousness of Allah is more respectable than a prince. Allah judges a person's honor and esteem according to the level of his taqwa. In a hadith, Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wassalam tells us that some people, who are poor, weak, and have no position in society, if they take oath by Allah, Allah will fulfill it because of their purity and strength of piety (taqwa). In the sight of Allah, the honorable are not the ones with wealth and position,

but with taqwa. The most honorable is the one with the most taqwa.

A belief in Allah, His Prophets, and His Books will save a person from eternal condemnation, but mere belief minus taqwa will not be enough to save him from the punishment in the hereafter, except the one on whom Allah has mercy. A conscientious Muslim strives to develop taqwa in his life for he knows, "Allah will deliver those who had taqwa to their place of salvation: no evil shall touch them, nor shall they grieve" (39:61), and, that Allah has prepared jannah for the muttaqeen, people of taqwa. (3:133)

Human beings are weak and susceptible to fall into errors and sin; it takes a little distraction and heedlessness to slip from virtue to vice and from piety to perversity. To protect men and women straying from the path of righteousness and falling into transgression, Islam has chalked out spiritual programs on a daily and yearly basis for its adherents, if followed sincerely and faithfully it will greatly minimize the chance of straying from the right course.

Among the various program intended to awaken the spiritual life of a believer, Ramadan, the month of fasting, contains the most intense training to instill taqwa in the hearts of believers.

The paramount significance of Ramadan can be seen from the love and yearning the Holy Prophet showed for the month. He used to start preparing for Ramadan two months in advance in Rajab with the supplication, "O Allah, make the months of Rajab and Sha'ban blessed for us, and let us reach the month of Ramadan (allow us to live till coming Ramadan so that we may benefit from its blessings)."

Ramadan is a month of fasting from dawn to sunset. It is a month of special nightly prayers (travah). In one of its nights, good deeds performed are better than a thousand months of virtuous deeds. Itikaf, secluding into Masjid, away from worldly distractions, in the last ten days of Ramadan with the intention of seeking closeness to Allah, gives a tremendous boost to a believer's spiritual life. Umrah in the month



of Ramadan is as one has performed hajj in the company of the Holy Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam. A voluntary good deed in Ramadan merits the same reward as an obligatory act in any other month, and an obligatory deed is rewarded seventy times over.

Of all the pious exercises connected with Ramadan, fasting is the main feature and the only obligatory act of the holy month. The remaining activities are supererogatory but of immense importance and value in breathing new life into spiritual body that may have become dormant during the year.

As heart is the spiritual center of the human soul, the belly is the center of sensual appetite. When the belly is pampered, the fleshly desires are stimulated, which in turn may lead to sin and arrogance and disinvest one of taqwa. On the other hand, controlling one's appetite and eating just enough to satisfy hunger keeps a person away from lust and evil thoughts and the weakness of soul that comes with the over indulgence of food. A belly filled to brim tends to be rebellious, while a bit empty stomach remains calm and conforming.

Hence the Prophet, sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam advised moderation in consuming food and drink, he said, "A human being does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. Enough for the son of Adam are a few morsels to keep his back straight. If it cannot be avoided, then

a third is for food, a third for drink, and a third for breath." He also said, "We are a people who do not eat until we are hungry and when we do eat, do not eat our fill."

As it is said that the "lusts of stomach leads to the lusts of the flesh"; satiety in food is sexual stimuli and sexual stimuli triggers sexual arousal. To an unmarried person gluttony may lead him to satisfy his desires in sinful ways. To reign in sexual temptations, fasting is recommended. Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam said, "O young men! Whoever among you can afford to get married, let him do so, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and protecting one's chastity. Whoever cannot afford it, let him fast, for it will reduce his sexual desire".

Fasting in the ordinary sense of the word simply means depriving the flesh from the pleasure of food and drink. The Ramadan fast also means the same, however, the physical abstinence from food and drink in Ramadan, with the intent to obey and worship Allah, takes a higher and nobler dimension, it becomes the nourishment of the soul.

A fasting person's soul experiences an exhilarating sense of taqwa when on a long hot summer Ramadan day his throat is dry, stomach is growling, no one is watching him, and yet he abstains from taking a few sips of water or a few morsels of food. What makes him curb his desires in seclusion, away from the eyes of people?

It is the consciousness of presence of Allah that causes him to control his hankering for sustenance and submit to Allah's Will and Command. The voluntary denial of food and water to body nourishes the soul to be strong and virtuous and become a shield against the evil thoughts and acts, and a mean to protect from the hellfire. This is what the Holy Prophet meant when he eloquently said, "Fasting is a shield."

However, a mere voluntarily abstaining from food and drink is not enough for the fast to be accepted or effective in purifying soul and inculcating taqwa. With giving up food and drink, it is imperative that the fasting person must also faithfully heed all prohibitions and perform all duties prescribed by Allah and His Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam made this point abundantly clear in more than one of his sayings. At one occasion he said, "Whoever does not give up vain speech and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his fasting", i.e. Allah will not accept his fasting.

In another hadith, the Holy Prophet warned, "How many persons fast and get nothing out of their fasting except hunger and thirst and how many persons pray at night and get nothing out of it except sleeplessness."

These and other ahadith tell a fasting person that the fast from food and drink must accompany the fast of tongue for his fast to be valid and beneficial. Fast of tongue means one should completely protect his speech from vain talk and foul language including lying and slandering. Also, fasting without the five daily obligatory prayers is of little avail; it becomes devoid of spiritual benefits. The fasting in the blessed month of Ramadan is of vital importance among the scheme of things that Islam has planned for a believer to secure the motivation and acquire taqwa. If done properly, fast will take a believer forward to the next eleven months to live in Allah's Will.

Ramadan is aptly called a taqwa training month.

## Govt's push elevates India's sporting stature Athletes welcome CWG 2030 amid nationwide Fit India cycling drive

### Press Information Bureau

New Delhi, Feb 22: Highlighting India's rapid strides towards becoming a sports powerhouse, top athletes, Rupinder Pal Singh and Rohit Tokas expressed deep appreciation for the country's successful award of hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2030 after a long gap of 20 years.

Rupinder Pal Singh, who was part of the Indian hockey team that won an Olympic bronze medal after a gap of 40 years in Tokyo 2020, said the massive push by the Government of India and collective efforts put in by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS), the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and National Sports Federations (NSFs) have helped the nation

win the hosting rights of the multi-discipline event and it will act as a catalyst in fulfilling our Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of the country staging the Summer Olympics in 2030.

"The Commonwealth Games will be happening in India after a gap of 20 years which is big news for all Indian sports persons. This was made possible only due to the combined efforts put in by the Modi government, the Sports Ministry, IOA and national federations. I had not made my international debut when India staged the CWG back in 2010 and for the players who will get a chance to compete and win medals in front of their home fans is the most memorable opportunity they can ask

for. Last time also we clinched 100 medals in Delhi CWG and I am confident that we will produce similar performance in 2030," Rupinder Pal Singh told SAI Media after leading a large group of cyclists as part of the Fit India Sundays on Cycle here at the Indira Gandhi Stadium.

"Hockey and shooting was dropped from the Commonwealth Games fold since the Birmingham edition, where India has clinched a bagful of medals historically. So, I think those disciplines will make a return in 2030, which will motivate our players further. In all, it is such a pleasant news for all Indian sportspersons," he added.

The 62nd edition of the cycling movement was organised at more than 1000 locations across



the subcontinent in collaboration with the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), coinciding with their celebration of 75 years of service and social security. Rupinder was

joined by Sh. Ashok Kumar Singh (IAS), Director General, ESIC, Sh. Mayank Srivastava (IPS), Deputy Director General, Khelo India apart from Fit India champions Tanvee Tutlani and Atul Jindal.

Highlighting the benefits of adopting an active lifestyle, Rupinder said: "I was happy to see more than 500 people cycle with me today at the IG Stadium. Fit India movement's main objective is to encourage citizens to dedicate at least 30 mins to 1 hour for their personal fitness, which is very important when we see a surge in lifestyle-related diseases. I would urge everyone to make fitness part of their daily lives, do some fitness activity or the other to keep oneself healthy. I would also like to congratulate ESIC for completing 75 years of outstanding service."

Rohit Tokas, who won the bronze medal in boxing at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, said that hosting the 2030 Commonwealth Games

will give a huge impetus to development of sports infrastructure and encourage more youngsters to take up sports as a career.

"It is very motivating for us athletes that Commonwealth Games are coming to India four years later. Playing in front of the home crowd and all of them cheering for you when you are competing, is an experience of a lifetime for any sportsperson. It's a goose bump moment. Boxers have performed consistently well in the Commonwealth Games and I am sure we will put a better performance in 2030 in Gujarat. Also, when a country gets to host an event of this stature sports infrastructure gets developed as we saw during Delhi 2010 edition. That inspires more youngsters to take up sports," Rohit Tokas told SAI Media.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### World got to see

technology, this invaluable Indian knowledge can be translated into Indian and foreign languages. World leaders showed great interest in learning about India's ancient knowledge through a modern avatar.

Friends,  
At this summit, the world got to see India's amazing capabilities in the field of AI. During this period, India also launched three Made in India AI Models. This in itself has been the biggest AI summit ever. The enthusiasm and excitement of the youth pertaining to this summit was worth watching. I congratulate all the countrymen for the success of this summit.

Friends,  
I often say, 'The one who plays, blooms'. Sports also unites us. These days, you must be watching the T-20 World Cup matches. And I am very sure that while watching the match, many times your eyes must have been fixed on a particular player. The jersey is that of some other country, but on hearing the name, you feel that the person is from our country. Then a slight joy arises in some corner of the heart...

Since that player is of Indian origin and he is playing for the country where his family has settled. They step into the field wearing the jerseys of their respective countries and represent that country wholeheartedly. The Canadian team has the highest number of players of Indian origin. Team captain Dilpreet Bajwa was born in Gurdaspur, Punjab. Navneet Dhaliwal is from Chandigarh. This list includes many names like Harsh Thakar and Shreyas Mowla, who are raising the pride of not only Canada... but India as well. The American team has many players who have emerged from Indian domestic cricket. American team captain Monank Patel has also played for Gujarat's under-16 and under-18 teams. Saurabh from Mumbai, Harmeet Singh and Milind Kumar from Delhi are all the pride of the American team. The Oman team today has many players who have previously played for different states of India. Players like Jatinder Singh, Vinayak Shukla, Karan, Jai and Ashish are strong links that bind Oman cricket. Players of Indian origin are also ensuring their place in the teams of New Zealand, UAE and Italy. There are countless such players of Indian origin who are bringing pride to their respective countries... becoming an inspiration for the youth there. This is the hallmark of Indianness. Wherever Indians go, they remain connected to the roots of their motherland and contribute to the development of their Karambhoomi, the country they live and work in.

My dear countrymen,  
There is no greater sorrow for any parent than losing one's own child. The pain of losing a very young child is deeper. Just a few days ago, we lost Aalin Sherin Abraham, a little innocent girl from Kerala. She left this world at the age of just 10 months. Imagine—she had a whole life ahead of her, which abruptly ended. So many dreams and joys remained unfulfilled. The pain her parents must be undergoing is beyond any expression in words. But even amidst such profound pain, Aalin's father, Arun Abraham, and mother, Sherin, made a decision that has filled up the heart of every citizen with respect. They decided to donate Aalin's organs. This single decision reveals the expanse of their thinking and the magnitude of their personality. While on the one hand they grieved the loss of their daughter, on the other they were also filled with a spirit of helping others. They wanted that no family experiences such a fate. Aalin Sherin Abraham is no longer with us, but her name has joined the ranks of the nation's youngest organ donors. Friends, awareness about organ donation is steadily rising in India these days. This is helping those who are in need of it. It is also strengthening medical research in the country. Many organizations and individuals are doing extraordinary work in this direction.

Friends,  
Like Aalin from Kerala, there are many people who have given a second life to someone through organ donation. For example, Lakshmi Devi from Delhi. She traveled to Kedarnath last year.  
For that she had to trek 14 kilometers. You will be surprised to know that she undertook this trek after a heart transplant. Her heart was functioning only at 15 percent. Amidst that, she received the heart of a deceased donor. After that, her life transformed completely. Gaurang Banerjee from West Bengal has been to Nathu La twice. It is located 14,000 feet above sea level. And the special aspect is that he achieved this feat after a lung transplant. Ramdev Singh of Sikar, Rajasthan, had to undergo a kidney

transplant. Today, he is excelling in sporting activities.

Friends,  
You will come across many such inspiring examples. This proves once again that a single noble act can change the lives of countless people. I heartily commend all those who have undertaken such noble deeds.

My dear countrymen,  
During the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, I spoke of the 'Panch-Pran' from the Red Fort. One of them is freedom from the mentality of slavery. Today, the country is leaving behind the symbols of slavery and has begun to value symbols related to Indian culture. Our Rashtrapati Bhavan has also taken an important step in this direction. Tomorrow, i.e. the 23rd of February, 'Rajaji Utsav' will be celebrated at Rashtrapati Bhavan. On this occasion, a statue of C. Rajagopalachari ji will be unveiled in the Central Courtyard of Rashtrapati Bhavan. He was the first Indian Governor General of Independent India.

He was among those who saw power not as a position but as a service. His conduct, self-restraint, and independent thinking in public life inspire us even today. Unfortunately, even after independence, statues of British administrators were allowed to remain in Rashtrapati Bhavan, but those of the nation's greatest sons were denied space. A statue of British architect Edwin Lutyens also stood in Rashtrapati Bhavan. Now, this statue will be replaced by a statue of Rajaji. An exhibition on Rajagopalachari ji will also be held during the Rajaji Utsav. This exhibition will be on from the 24th of February to the 1st of March. Do pay a visit there, to have a look, whenever possible.

My dear countrymen,  
In 'Mann Ki Baat', I have spoken to you at length about Digital Arrest. After this, a lot of awareness was generated in our society regarding Digital Arrest and Digital Fraud, but still such incidents are happening around us, that are unpardonable. Innocent people are being targeted through Digital Arrest and Financial Fraud. Many a time we come to know that a senior citizen has been swindled of one's lifelong earnings. At times, someone is defrauded of the money one had saved to pay children's fees. We also come across news of fraud with businessmen. Someone calls up and says, "I am a big officer. You have to share some details." After this, innocent people do just that. Therefore, it is very important for you to remain alert and vigilant.

Friends,  
You all must be familiar with the process of KYC - Know Your Customer. Sometimes, when you receive messages from your bank asking you to update KYC or re-KYC, the question arises in your mind - I have already done KYC, then why this? I urge you not to fret; this is just for the safety of your money. We all know that nowadays everything from pension, subsidy, insurance, UPI, everything is linked to the bank account. This is why banks periodically perform re-KYC to ensure your bank account remains secure. Yes, here too, you must remember one thing: criminals make fake calls, send SMS and links. Therefore, we must remain vigilant and not fall prey to such fraudsters. KYC or re-KYC should be done only through your bank branch, official app, and authorized medium. Do not share OTP, Aadhaar number, or bank account information with anyone. And most importantly, keep changing your password from time to time. Just as food and clothing change with each season, make it a rule to change your password every few days.

Friends,  
The Reserve Bank of India recently organized a Financial Literacy Week on these very topics. This financial literacy campaign will now continue throughout the year. Therefore, pay heed to the Reserve Bank of India's message and keep your KYC updated.

Remember:  
Correct KYC, timely re-KYC keeps your account safe.

Become an empowered citizen.  
Because only empowered citizens builds a strong and self-reliant India.

My dear countrymen,  
Our farmers are not just food providers... they are true devotees of the earth. One should learn from our farmers what it is to turn soil into gold. And our farmers today are blending both tradition and technology, and I am pleased to see that our farmers are now focusing not just on production but also on quality, value addition, and new markets. The story of a young farmer named Hirod Patel in Odisha is truly inspiring. Until about eight years ago, he cultivated paddy in the traditional way with his

father, Shiv Shankar Patel, but then, he began to approach farming from a new perspective. He built a strong mesh structure over his farm's pond. He grew creeper vegetables on it, planted bananas, guavas, and coconuts around the pond, and also started fish farming in the pond. In other words, traditional farming, vegetables, fruits, and fish are all being undertaken in one place. This has led to better land use, water savings, and additional income. Today, farmers from far and wide come over to see his model.

Friends,  
In Kerala's Thrissur district, there's a village where 570 varieties of rice are grown in a single field. This includes local varieties, herbal varieties, and even varieties imported from other states. This isn't just farming, it's a massive campaign to preserve seed heritage. The results of our farmers' hard work are reflected in the statistics also. Today, India has become the world's largest rice producer. Producing over 150 million tons of rice is no small achievement. We are meeting our own needs and contributing to the global food basket. Friends, agricultural products are now reaching foreign countries more easily by air. Nanjangud bananas from Karnataka, Mysuru betel leaves, and Indi lemons were exported to the Maldives. These products are known for their taste and quality and have even received the GI tag. Today's farmer seeks quality, is also increasing quantity and is making his mark as well.

My dear countrymen,  
You surely remember the amazing images of the Maha Kumbh around this time last year. The sea of humanity surging on the banks of the Sangam, the immense flow of faith, and in that sacred moment of bathing, it seemed as if India was 'in communion' with its 'Sanatan Chetana'. Friends, the same stream of the Maha Kumbh, the same month of Magha, the same voice of devotion, as it moves from North to South, takes on a new identity.

Friends,  
On the land of Kerala, in Tirunavaya on the banks of the Bharatapuzha River, there is a centuries-old tradition - Mamangam. Many people also call it the Maha Magha Festival or Kerala Kumbh. Bathing in the holy river during the month of Magha and making that moment an indelible memory of life is its soul. Over time, this tradition seemed to have disappeared. For nearly two hundred and fifty years, this event had not been celebrated with the same grandeur as it used to be. But today, in our country, which is re-recognizing its heritage, history has taken another turn. This time, the Kerala Kumbh was successfully held without any major announcement. People communicated with each other about it, word spread, and soon, devotees began arriving at Tirunavaya every day.

Friends,  
Whether it's the Maha Kumbh or the Kerala Kumbh, it's not just a festival of bathing. It's a remembrance of culture. From North to South, the rivers may be different, the banks may be different, but the stream of faith is the same—this is Bharat.

Friends,  
In our country, those who have worked for the welfare of society... those who have prioritized the public in their noble deeds always remain in the hearts of the people. Amma Jayalalitha ji was one such popular leader. February 24th is the occasion of her birth anniversary. I still feel the deep affection the people of Tamil Nadu had for her, even today during my visits to the state.

The mention of Amma Jayalalitha brings a glow to the faces of the people of Tamil Nadu. Our 'Nari Shakti's' connection with her has been even more special. This is also because, while in government, she made many commendable efforts for the welfare of mothers, sisters, and daughters. She also took concrete steps to maintain law and order in the state. The spirit of Patriotism was deeply embedded within her. She was also deeply proud of India's cultural heritage. Every meeting and every conversation with Amma Jayalalitha is still fresh in my mind. She also attended two of my swearing-in ceremonies in Gujarat, in 2002 and 2012. When we were both Chief Ministers of our respective states, we often discussed topics like good governance. Her thinking was crystal clear and her thoughts were uncluttered. This was a significant characteristic of hers. Many years ago, she invited me to Chennai over lunch on the auspicious occasion of Pongal. That affectionate gesture will remain unforgettable for me. Once again, I pay my humble tributes to her.

Jayalalitha avargalaku,  
yen ninaivanjanli-gal,  
samudayattirukku,  
avar aatriya sevai yendrum ninaivil irukkum

(English Translation: My tributes to Jayalalitha,

Her services to the people will always be remembered!!!)

My dear countrymen,  
I shall now address our dear, promising children, those currently taking exams. I hope you must have watched "Pariksha Pe Charcha" earlier this month and learned something from it. However, I still want to ask: are you stressing too much about your studies?

My dear children,  
You are exam warriors. I'm sure you're all wholeheartedly preparing for your exams. Yes, it's natural to have some doubts at such times. Sometimes you wonder if you'll remember everything or not! Sometimes you wonder if you'll run out of time. Children of every generation have experienced these feelings; you're not alone. Remember, your worth isn't determined by your mark sheet. So, trust yourself. Write wholeheartedly about what you've studied. And don't let that one question about what you didn't understand dominate your mind. And one more thing: keep talking to your parents and teachers. They recognize you not by your marks but by your efforts; they are happy with your hard work. I am fully confident that you will succeed in your exams and achieve new heights of success in your lives.

Friends,  
Ramzan is currently going on. I wish everyone the best for this holy month. Holi is also coming in a few days. This means that a time filled with colors, gull, and laughter is about to knock at the door. May you all celebrate all festivals happily with your family and loved ones. And yes, always remember some mantras, like being vocal for local.

Many foreign-made products have entered our Holi celebrations, or even other festivals. Keep them away from festivals, keep them away from Holi as well, and adopt Swadeshi. When you buy Swadeshi, you also help in the campaign to make the country self-reliant.

Friends,  
Every month I receive numerous suggestions from you for 'Mann Ki Baat'. Your messages help us know about the amazing talents hidden in every corner of the country. Many inspiring stories of rising above personal interests and serving society have reached people across the country through you. May you continue with your efforts. I look forward to your messages. Once again, I extend my best wishes to you and your family for the upcoming festivals. Thank you very much. Namaskar.

### LG Sinha inaugurates

500 to 600 athletes from different parts of the country have already arrived in Gulmarg to participate in the event.

All necessary arrangements have been put in place at Gulmarg Golf Club and other designated competition and accommodation sites for the smooth and successful conduct of the prestigious winter sporting event, the official added. (KNO)

### Today world feels

station control staff are women. He congratulated the people of Uttar Pradesh on the country's first Namoo Bharat Rapid Rail service.

Recalling his special bond with Meerut, the Prime Minister noted that his national election campaigns in 2014, 2019, and 2024 all began from this revolutionary land. He thanked the farmers, artisans, and entrepreneurs of the region for their consistent blessings. "Before 2014, metro services reached only 5 cities, but now metros are running in more than 25 cities, making India the third-largest network in the world", Shri Modi noted. "A unique feature of the project is the integration of Indian Railways, Metro, and bus stands at Sarai Kale Khan, Anand Vihar, Ghaziabad, and Meerut. For the first time in India, Namoo Bharat and Metro rail will run on the same track and station", Shri Modi highlighted. The Prime Minister noted that this integration allows commuters to travel within the city or go directly to Delhi, thus ending the compulsion for many workers and students to live in rented houses in Delhi.

"The government's investment in modern infrastructure—including expressways, freight corridors, and the Jewar International Airport is creating vast employment opportunities. These projects attract new industries and business to the region", the Prime Minister stated.

Describing Uttar Pradesh as a land of labor

and creation, the Prime Minister said that the state's farmers and artisans are successfully realizing the mantra of heritage and development. He noted that as India's global strength grows, developed nations are eager to sign trade agreements to tap into India's youth power. "Today, the world views India as a powerhouse capable of solving 21st-century challenges, directly benefiting the citizens of Uttar Pradesh", Shri Modi remarked.

Addressing the MSME sector, the Prime Minister highlighted a 10,000 crore rupee special fund in this year's union budget which will make loans easier for MSMEs. He also mentioned the Mahatma Gandhi Gram Swaraj Yojana to help weavers reach global markets. The 10-lakh limit on sending goods via courier has been removed. This allows small entrepreneurs in Meerut and across UP to sell directly to customers in the US and Europe via online apps", the Prime Minister announced.

"To honor the vision of Chaudhary Charan Singh ji, the government awarded him the Bharat Ratna. Inspired by him, the double-engine government is working to increase farmers' income through food processing and the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. Under this scheme, nearly 95,000 crore rupees have already been provided to the farmers of Uttar Pradesh", Shri Modi remarked.

The Prime Minister emphasized that UP's development is paramount, noting the shift from an era of riots and crime to today's recognition for Brahmos, mobile manufacturing, and tourism. He stated that today, the criminals are in jail, the dignity of daughters is protected, and improved law and order has triggered a major economic surge and manufacturing boom.

"UP is being transformed into a manufacturing hub, and recently the foundation for the state's first semiconductor factory was laid. A developed Uttar Pradesh is essential for a developed India", the Prime Minister concluded.

### February heat

over Jammu and Kashmir in the coming days, with no major rain or snowfall expected till the end of the month.

### 3 JeM terrorists killed

remains and the weapon of the terrorist have been recovered. The pursuit continues—no space, no sanctuary for those who seek to undermine stability."

Pertinently, Operation Trashi-I, was launched in January this year; it has focused on flushing out terrorists from the mountainous pockets of Kishtwar district, including Chatroo, Sonnar, Dolgam and Dichhar. Multiple cordon-and-search operations have been conducted in these areas over the past weeks.

Officials said search operations were continuing to ensure that no terrorists remained in the area. (KNO)

### SC to hear

was hearing the appeals of the two tech giants against a CCI order that imposed a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore on them over the privacy policy.

On November 4, 2025, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) set aside a section of a CCI order that had banned WhatsApp from sharing data with Meta Platforms Inc for advertising purposes for five years, but retained the Rs 213-crore penalty.

Later, the NCLAT clarified that its order in the WhatsApp matter on privacy and consent safeguards also applies to user data collection and sharing for non-WhatsApp purposes, including non-advertising and advertising.

The top court said that it would pass an interim order on February 9 and ordered that the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology also be made a party to the appeals of the two companies.

The bench is also seized of a cross-appeal by the CCI, which assailed the NCLAT ruling to the extent that it allowed WhatsApp and Meta to continue sharing users' data for advertising purposes.

### Terror era over,

behave like this, but I behave like a sarpanch as I am their sewak. It is the direction of my leader Omar Abdullah Sahib," he added.

The Sports Minister also expressed hope that Jammu and Kashmir's cricket team would emerge victorious in the Ranji Trophy final. "We should pray that we win the Ranji finals. It is for the first time we have entered into the finals", he said.

Calling for responsible journalism, Sharma said the region needs unbiased and good media, adding that the Chief Minister has envisioned several initiatives for the welfare of journalists as well. (KNO)

## Congress used AI summit for its 'gandi aur nangi' politics: PM Modi

PTI

Meerut (UP), Feb 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday slammed the Congress over its "shirtless" protest at the global artificial intelligence summit in Delhi, alleging that the party had turned an international event into an arena for its "gandi aur nangi" (dirty and shameless) politics.

Addressing a public gathering after inaugurating development projects, including the Namo Bharat rail and the Meerut Metro Rail extension in Meerut, the prime minister said the Congress' conduct showed how "ideologically bankrupt and impoverished" the party had become.

He alleged that Congress had "crossed all limits" and that its conduct had drawn widespread criticism across the country. Modi also thanked several opposition parties for criticising the incident, saying they had stood with "truth and national pride".

"While citizens are working day and night to make India a developed nation, some political parties cannot digest the country's success," Modi said.

He said that representatives from over 80 countries and heads of state from around 20 nations had attended the summit in Delhi, which had made the country proud.

"But what did Congress and its



Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Bahujan Samaj Party and Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

"The crazy (sarfire) and reckless (be-lagaam) leaders of Congress are bent on destroying the country," he said.

Modi alleged that the Congress' actions were affecting parliamentary functioning as he slammed the opposition party over the February 4 incident during the Budget session when women MPs had charged towards the Prime Minister's seat in Lok Sabha holding banners before he was to arrive for his scheduled speech, leading to the adjournment of proceedings for the day.

"They are unable to perform in Parliament and do not allow their allies to speak. By not allowing Parliament to function, it is their allies who suffer the most," Modi said.

Without naming anyone, PM Modi said, "If you want to sit in the Prime Minister's chair, you must first win the hearts of the people."

"You cannot become prime minister by sending women MPs to occupy seats... and what compulsion is there to push mothers and sisters forward like this? Have you become so hollow?"

He alleged that Congress had become a burden on the country and said he appreciated the courage shown by opposition parties that criticised the incident at the AI summit.

ecosystem do? They turned a global event of India into an arena for their 'gandi and nangi' (dirty and shameless) politics. Congress leaders arrived at the venue in front of foreign guests after taking off their clothes. I want to ask Congress leaders -- the country already knows you are 'nange' (exposed), so why was there any need to strip further?" he said.

Continuing his criticism, Modi alleged that the actions of Congress leaders demonstrated the state of the country's oldest political party.

"What Congress leaders did there shows how ideologically bankrupt and impoverished the party has become," he said, adding that the party was engaged in

defaming its own country.

He said, "The leaders of the Congress hate Modi. They want to dig my grave. They have no hesitation in even in abusing my mother. They oppose the BJP and they oppose the National Democratic Alliance -- that may be necessary in their politics, and we can understand that. We will tolerate that too. But Congress should have remembered that the Artificial Intelligence Global Summit was not a BJP programme; it was a programme of the nation."

Referring to other opposition parties, he said the alleged actions were limited to Congress leaders alone and did not involve its allies such as the Trinamool Congress,

## Not legitimate dissent, blatant assault on public order: Delhi court

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 22: The conduct of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) workers arrested for protesting at the AI Impact Summit venue was not legitimate dissent, rather a "blatant assault on public order" that also hurt the country's "diplomatic image", a Delhi court said.

Judicial Magistrate Ravi made the observation on Saturday when the four IYC workers who were held for the "shirtless" protest at the Bharat Mandapam here were produced before his court. The court allowed five days of custody to the police to question them.

Summarising the reasons for allowing the Delhi Police's plea seeking custodial interrogation, the magistrate said that the accused hailed from remote parts of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Telangana, posing a high risk of their absconding.

This was "further heightened by early investigation findings

suggesting external conspiracy links, the court said. A portion of the order passed by judicial magistrate Ravi, accessed by PTI, said that the protest imperilled or jeopardised not only the event's sanctity, but also the country's diplomatic image.

"...the accused persons are alleged to have orchestrated a pre-meditated intrusion into the high-security precincts of Bharat Mandapam during the AI Summit 2026, a premier international conclave hosting global delegates and dignitaries," the court's order said.

It said the protestors allegedly "donned provocative T-shirts bearing offensive slogans such as 'India US Trade Deal Compromised', vociferously raised incendiary chants, obstructed public servants in the execution of their duties, and perpetrated physical assaults causing grievous injuries to police personnel, as substantiated by the medico-legal cases (MLCs) on record."

## PM Modi inaugurates projects worth Rs 12,930 crore in Meerut

PTI

Meerut (UP), Feb 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated development projects worth around Rs 12,930 crore in Meerut and said the BJP's work culture ensures the timely completion of projects once their foundation is laid.

Addressing a public meeting after flagging off the Meerut Metro and the Namo Bharat train from Shatabdi Nagar Namo Bharat Station here, Modi said the programme showcased the governance model of the "double-engine" government.

"BJP's work culture is about toiling day and night to ensure projects are completed once their foundation is laid. Improved law and order and safer travel have now transformed the area," he said.

He said for the first time, rapid rail and metro services were launched from the same platform and called it a glimpse of the connectivity envisioned for a developed India.

"Metro for intra-city travel and modern rapid rail for cleaner, faster mobility together reflect the vision of urban transformation," Modi said. The prime

minister said projects no longer face prolonged delays as in the past, and noted that he had the opportunity to both lay the foundation and inaugurate the services.

Recalling his metro ride earlier in the day, he said students and other passengers expressed surprise at the scale and quality of the infrastructure.

He also referred to the improvements in law and order and travel safety, and said the region has undergone a transformation with increased women's participation in various sectors.

Taking a swipe at the Congress, Modi said metro services were operational in only five cities during its tenure, whereas the BJP-led government have expanded the facility to more than 25 cities.

"Under the Congress-Samajwadi Party regime, progress would not have been possible amid infrastructure scams," he said.

He congratulated the residents of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi on the launch of the services and recalled his long association with Meerut, noting that he had launched his campaign for the 2014, 2019 and 2024 Lok Sabha elections from the city.

## ED sets target of filing 500 chargesheets this fiscal; completing probe in 1-2 years

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 22: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has set a target of filing 500 chargesheets in money-laundering cases in the current financial year and investigating officials have been directed to ensure that once a case is registered, the probe should be completed within one to two years, except in "complex" matters, the agency said on Sunday.

These measures were discussed and finalised during the federal probe agency's 34th Quarterly Conference of Zonal Officers (QCZO) held in Assam's capital, Guwahati, on December 19-21 last year. The meeting was chaired by ED Director Rahul Navin.

The agency has been holding this once-in-three months conference outside Delhi since last year, with the last two editions held in Kevadia (Gujarat)

and Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir).

"The decision to hold the conference in northeastern region reflects the Directorate's recognition of the strategic and operational importance of the region," the ED said in a statement.

It added that the meeting was significant as it was the last before the end of the current fiscal (March 31). Officials were told that the focus must be on "meaningful" achievement of targets, logical conclusion of investigations, timely filing of prosecution complaints and ensuring that attachments and penalties are legally sustainable and effectively realised.

"The target of filing 500 prosecution complaints in the current financial year was reiterated and all field formations were urged to make concerted efforts to achieve the same while also preparing for an enhanced target in the next financial year.

## 'India's first childhood cancer survivor registry suggests 94.5 pc overall survival rate'

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 22: India's first registry of childhood cancer survivors shows a 94.5 per cent rate of five-year overall survival and nearly 90 per cent event-free survival, according to a study published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal.

The Indian Childhood Cancer Survivorship (C2S) study, initiated in 2016, is among the world's first registry from a resource-limited setting, researchers said.

The team, including researchers from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre, New Delhi, looked at 5,419 children diagnosed with cancer before turning age 18 and in remission post-treatment from 20 centres across the country. Survival data was available for 5,140 participants.

Acute leukaemia was found to be the most common diagnosis (40.9 per cent), while common therapeutic strategies included chemotherapy for 94.7 per cent of the participants, surgery for 30 per cent and radiotherapy for 26.3 per cent.

"The 5-year overall survival (OS) and event-free survival (EFS) rates for the entire cohort were 94.5 per cent and 89.9 per cent, respectively," the authors wrote.

A five-year overall survival rate is the percentage of patients who are alive five years after their initial diagnosis or start of treatment, whereas event-free survival rate is the number of patients who remain free of certain complications after their primary treatment for cancer ends.

For 2,266 of the survivors who were followed up for at least two years post-treatment, the five-year overall survival rate was found to be 98.2 per cent and event-free survival rate 95.7 per cent.

The authors said the C2S cohort can serve as a model for similar resource-limited settings, and also highlights a collaboration across public and private



sector institutions from all four regions of the country -- east, west, north, and south.

Further, the study can help inform policy-relevant research with respect to childhood cancer survivorship, the team said.

The researchers said late effects are likely to appear months or years after the completion of cancer treatment, with one-third to one half of childhood cancer survivors estimated to experience a long-term or late effect of therapy -- up to one-half of which could be life-threatening.

However, data on the prevalence of late effects in childhood cancer survivors from low and middle-income countries, including India, are limited, they said.

"The C2S study represents the first structured attempt to build a nationwide childhood cancer survivors' cohort in India," the authors wrote.

The cohort "paves the way towards addressing the evidence gap on childhood cancer survivorship in lower income and middle-income countries -- providing a means to explore long-term outcomes, treatment exposures, and late effects in the Indian context," they said.

INOX CINEMA  
SHIVPORA SRINAGAR

### Movies Watchlist

Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February

**ASSI (A)**  
HINDI - 12:00 PM

**GOAT (U)**  
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 04:00 PM

**DO DEEWANE SEHER MEIN (U/A 13+)**  
HINDI - 12:30 PM

**O'ROMEO (A)**  
HINDI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES - 02:40 PM, 06:10 PM

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## Afghans mourn villagers killed in Pakistani strikes

AFP

Bihsud, Feb 22: Afghans gathered around a mass grave Sunday to bury villagers killed in overnight air strikes by Pakistan, which said its military targeted militants.

The overnight attacks killed at least 18 people and were the most extensive since border clashes in October, which left more than 70 dead on both sides and wounded hundreds.

"The house was completely destroyed. My children and family members were there. My father and my sons were there. All of them were killed," said Nezakat, a 35-year-old farmer in Bihsud district, who only gave one name.

Islamabad said it hit seven sites along the border region targeting Afghanistan-based militant groups, in response to suicide bombings in Pakistan.

The military targeted the Pakistani Taliban and its associates, as well as an affiliate of the Daesh group, a statement by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said.

Afghan government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said "people's homes have been destroyed, they have targeted civilians, they have committed this criminal act" with the bombardment of Nangarhar and Paktika provinces.

Residents from around the remote Bihsud district in Nangarhar joined searchers to look



Afghan relatives and mourners surround the body of a victim, killed in an overnight Pakistani air strike, during a mass burial ceremony at the Girdi Kas village in Bihsud district, Nangarhar province on February 22, 2026. (AFP)

for bodies under the rubble, an AFP journalist said, using shovels and a digger. "People here are ordinary people. The residents of this village are our relatives. When the bombing happened, one person who survived was shouting for help," said neighbor Amin Gul Amin, 37. Nangarhar police told AFP the bombardment started at around midnight and hit three districts, with those killed all in a civilian's house.

"Twenty-three members of his family were buried under the rubble, of whom 18 were killed

and five wounded," said police spokesperson Sayed Tayeeb Hammad. Strikes elsewhere in Nangarhar wounded two others, while in Paktika an AFP journalist saw a destroyed guesthouse but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

- 'Calculated response' - Afghanistan's defense ministry said it will "deliver an appropriate and calculated response" to the Pakistani strikes.

The two countries have been locked in an increasingly bitter dispute since the Taliban

authorities retook control of Afghanistan in 2021.

Pakistani military action killed 70 Afghan civilians between October and December, according to the UN mission in Afghanistan.

Several rounds of negotiations followed an initial ceasefire brokered by Qatar and Turkiye, but they have failed to produce a lasting agreement.

Saudi Arabia intervened this month, mediating the release of three Pakistani soldiers captured by Afghanistan in October.

The deteriorating relationship has hit people in both countries, with the land border largely shut for months.

Pakistan said Sunday that despite repeated urging by Islamabad, the Taliban authorities have failed to act against militant groups using Afghan territory to carry out attacks in Pakistan.

The Afghan government has denied harboring militants.

Islamabad launched the strikes after a suicide blast at a Shiite mosque in Islamabad two weeks ago and other such attacks more recently in northwestern Pakistan. The Daesh group had claimed responsibility for the mosque bombing, which killed at least 40 people and wounded more than 160 in the deadliest attack in Islamabad since 2008.

The militant group's regional chapter, Islamic State-Khorasan, also claimed a deadly suicide bombing at a Kabul restaurant last month.

## Brazil's Lula urges Trump to treat all countries equally

AFP

New Delhi, Feb 22: Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva urged Donald Trump on Sunday to treat all countries equally after the US leader imposed a 15 percent tariff on imports following an adverse Supreme Court ruling.

"I want to tell the US President Donald Trump that we don't want a new Cold War. We don't want interference in any other country, we want all countries to be treated equally," Lula told reporters in New Delhi.

The conservative-majority Supreme Court ruled six to three on Friday that a 1977 law Trump has relied on to slap sudden levies on individual countries, upending global trade, "does not authorize the

President to impose tariffs."

Lula said he would not like to react to the Supreme Court decisions of another country, but hoped that Brazil's relations with the United States "will go back to normalcy" soon.

The veteran leftist leader is expected to travel to Washington next month for a meeting with Trump.

"I am convinced that Brazil-US relation will go back to normalcy after our conversation," Lula, 80, said, adding that Brazil only wanted to "live in peace, generate jobs, and improve the lives of our people."

Lula and Trump, 79, stand on polar opposite sides when it comes to issues such as multilateralism, international trade and the fight against climate change.

However, ties between Brazil

and the United States appear to be on the mend after months of animosity between Washington and Brasilia.

As a result, Trump's administration has exempted key Brazilian exports from 40 percent tariffs that had been imposed on the South American country last year.

"Affinity" "The world doesn't need more turbulence, it needs peace," said Lula, who arrived in India on Wednesday for a summit on artificial intelligence and a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Ties between Washington and Brasilia soured in recent months, with Trump angered over the trial and conviction of his ally, the far-right former Brazil president Jair Bolsonaro.

## US envoy says Trump questioning why Iran has not 'capitulated'

AFP

Washington, Feb 22: US envoy Steve Witkoff said on Saturday that President Donald Trump is questioning why Iran has not "capitulated" in the face of Washington's military build-up aimed at pressuring them into a nuclear deal.

The United States and Iran this week resumed Oman-mediated talks in Geneva aimed at averting the possibility of military action, after Washington dispatched

two aircraft carriers, jets and weaponry to the region to back its warnings.

In a Fox News interview with Trump's daughter-in-law Lara, Witkoff said the president was "curious" about Iran's position after he had warned them of severe consequences in the event they failed to strike a deal. "I don't want to use the word 'frustrated,' because he understands he has plenty of alternatives, but he's curious as to why they haven't... I don't want to use the word 'capitulated,' but why they haven't capitulated," he said.

## 'Greenland does not need US hospital ship'

AFP

Copenhagen, Feb 22: Greenland does not need medical assistance from other countries, Denmark's defense minister said Sunday, after US President Donald Trump claimed he was sending a hospital ship to the autonomous Danish territory that he covets.

"The Greenlandic population receives the health care it needs. They receive it either in Greenland, or, if they require specialized treatment, they receive it in Denmark. So it's not as if there's a need for a special health care initiative in Greenland," Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen told Danish broadcaster DR.

In Greenland as in Denmark access to health care is free. There are five regional hospitals across the vast Arctic island, with the Nuuk hospital serving patients from all over the territory.

The Greenlandic local government signed an agreement with Copenhagen in early February to improve



the treatment of Greenlandic patients in Danish hospitals.

Trump on Saturday posted on his social media platform Truth Social that "we are going to send a great hospital boat to Greenland to take care of the many people who are sick, and not being taken care of there."

"It's on the way!!!" he added.

Trump has said the US must control Greenland to ensure its security, though he has backed off earlier threats to seize it after striking a "framework" deal with NATO

Secretary General Mark Rutte to ensure greater US influence. Lund Poulsen told DR he was not aware of the hospital ship's possible arrival.

"Trump is constantly tweeting about Greenland. So this is undoubtedly an expression of the new normal that has taken hold in international politics," he said.

Earlier Saturday, Denmark's Arctic Command announced that it had evacuated a crew member of a US submarine off the coast of Nuuk after the sailor requested urgent medical attention.

## Zimbabwe aiming for top performance instead of worrying over lack of experience in India: Raza

PTI

Mumbai, Feb 22: Having not played a T20I for over a decade in India will not worry Zimbabwe as the African nation has the wherewithal to produce a "top performance" in the T20 World Cup Super Eights, reckoned skipper Sikandar Raza here on Sunday.

Zimbabwe punched above their weight beating Sri Lanka and Australia in the group stage, but now they are clubbed with champions India and runners-up South Africa, and two-time winners West Indies, their opponents here at the Wankhede Stadium on Monday.

"Regardless of how the result goes, I don't think it will be because we couldn't adjust to the conditions. That is not how Zimbabweans are thinking or that is not how we are thinking," Raza told reporters.

"We are having our warm-up now, we are going to have our nets session. We absorb; we watch a lot of cricket (and) some of us have played here as well and the majority of us haven't," said Raza, who featured in two IPL 2023 and 2024 for Punjab Kings.

"Instead of worrying about the smaller grounds or anything... it's going to stay the same for both teams. What we are looking for is a top, top performance from Zimbabwe and that will help us to win the game," he replied



when asked about how tough it would be to adjust to Indian conditions, having played in Sri Lanka so far in the ICC showpiece.

Zimbabwe had last played in India during the first round of the T20 World Cup in 2016, along with spinner Wellington Masakadza.

Raza said his side will look to maximise their training sessions here ahead of the first Super Eights match.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# رَمَضَانَ الْمُبَارَكِ

1447 H / 2026 CE

وقت افطار	اعتقاسم سحرى	رمضان المبارک	تاریخ	وقت افطار	اعتقاسم سحرى	رمضان المبارک	تاریخ
06:34 PM	05:31 AM	16	06	06:21 PM	05:49 AM	1	19
06:34 PM	05:30 AM	17	07	06:22 PM	05:48 AM	2	20
06:35 PM	05:28 AM	18	08	06:23 PM	05:47 AM	3	21
06:36 PM	05:27 AM	19	09	06:24 PM	05:46 AM	4	22
06:37 PM	05:26 AM	20	10	06:24 PM	05:45 AM	5	23
06:38 PM	05:25 AM	21	11	06:25 PM	05:44 AM	6	24
06:38 PM	05:24 AM	22	12	06:26 PM	05:42 AM	7	25
06:39 PM	05:23 AM	23	13	06:27 PM	05:41 AM	8	26
06:40 PM	05:20 AM	24	14	06:28 PM	05:40 AM	9	27
06:41 PM	05:19 AM	25	15	06:29 PM	05:39 AM	10	28
06:42 PM	05:18 AM	26	16	06:30 PM	05:38 AM	11	01 MAR
06:42 PM	05:16 AM	27	17	06:31 PM	05:37 AM	12	02
06:43 PM	05:15 AM	28	18	06:32 PM	05:36 AM	13	03
06:44 PM	05:14 AM	29	19	06:33 PM	05:34 AM	14	04
06:45 PM	05:12 AM	30	20	06:33 PM	05:33 AM	15	05

**DUA FOR SEHRI**  
وَبَصُومٍ غَدَ 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 امْتَنْتُ [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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