

New era for aviation in J&K

CCEA chaired by PM Modi approves Rs 1,677 cr civil enclave at Srinagar airport

KNO Desk
Srinagar, Feb 24: In a major fillip to the aviation sector in Jammu & Kashmir, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tuesday approved the development of the civil enclave at Srinagar International Airport proposed at an estimated cost of Rs 1677 crore.

The new civil enclave project, spread over 73.18 acres, will feature a state-of-the-art terminal building spanning 71500 square meters (including 20659 square meters of existing structure), designed to serve 2900 passengers during peak hours and an annual capacity of 10 million passengers per annum (MPPA).

"The expanded apron will accommodate 15 aircraft parking bays including 1 wide body (Code E) (9 existing and 6 proposed), while the 3,658m x 45m runway continues to be operated by the IAF. The project will also include the construction of multi-level car parking facility for 1000 cars," reads the handout, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The project will mark a major milestone in strengthening aviation infrastructure and connectivity in the Kashmir Valley.

Operated by the Airports Authority of India within the



Budgam Airbase of the Indian Air Force (IAF), the airport designated as an international airport in 2005, is located approximately 12 kilometer from Srinagar city.

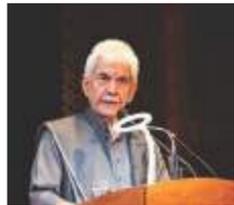
Architecturally, the new terminal will reflect a harmonious blend of modern design and the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir, incorporating traditional elements such as

intricate woodwork and locally inspired craftsmanship while maintaining operational efficiency through streamlined passenger processing areas, spacious lounges, and advanced security and check-in facilities.

"Sustainability remains a cornerstone of the development, with features such as advanced water harvesting systems, maximized | More on P6

PM Modi terms it major boost to J&K

LG Sinha expresses gratitude to PM; says J&K skies soar, dawn of bold aviation era



KNO Desk

New Delhi/Srinagar, Feb 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday termed the approval for civil enclave at the Srinagar Airport by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) as a major boost to Jammu and Kashmir.

Soon after the Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the approval for the project at a briefing post the Cabinet meeting in the national capital, PM Modi, according | More on P6

CM rolls out ₹84.41 cr multi-sector dev works to transform Ganderbal

'Development must translate into tangible improvement in people's daily lives'

KT News Desk

Ganderbal, Feb 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of major development projects worth 84.41 crore in Ganderbal Constituency, marking a significant stride towards strengthening infrastructure, healthcare, water supply, sanitation, education and road connectivity across the district.

The projects, spanning multiple departments, were inaugurated and e-launched at different locations, underscoring the Government's commitment to balanced and



inclusive development. At Beehama, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for the 770 lakh

Beautification & Development Project of Ganderbal Town under the Housing & Urban Development | More on P6

DGP calls for focused action against terror ecosystem

Reviews security scenario in Police District Sopore

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Feb 24: Director General of Police (DGP), J&K, Nalin Prabhat on Tuesday visited Police District Sopore and chaired a comprehensive security review meeting to assess the prevailing security scenario and operational preparedness in



the district. The DGP was accompanied by SDG Coordination S.J.M. Geelani, IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdi, and DIG North Kashmir Range Maqsood-ul-Zaman. During the | More on P6

Kashmir parts continue to record 9-11°C above normal temps

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 24: Maximum temperatures across Jammu and Kashmir remained significantly above normal on Tuesday, with most places in the Kashmir Valley recording departures of 9 to 11 degrees Celsius above the seasonal average.

The data, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) | More on P6

Omar urges Kashmiri students, workers in Iran to return

Says won't allow harassment of Kashmiri students anywhere

Raja Syed Rather

Ganderbal, Feb 24: Calling upon Kashmiri students and workers in Iran to take a serious note of the advisory issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and return, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday reiterated that he won't allow harassment of Kashmiri students in any part of the country.

Talking to the reporters here, CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The students and workers in Iran should take the advisory issued by the MEA seriously. Please do not ignore the advisory. If the situation worsens, evacuation may become difficult. My request is to

Security beefed up ahead of Vice-President's maiden Kashmir visit

C P Radhakrishnan to attend 21st KU convocation, confer degrees to graduates

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Feb 24: Elaborate security arrangements have been put in place across Srinagar ahead of Vice President C P Radhakrishnan's maiden visit to the Kashmir on February 26.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Vice-President Radhakrishnan is scheduled to attend the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir at its Hazratbal campus, where he will be the chief



guest. He is expected to deliver the convocation address and confer degrees on graduating students. | More on P6

J&K teachers may face compulsory retirement if TET not cleared

SED mandates JKBOSE as nodal agency to conduct Teacher Eligibility Test

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Feb 24: The Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, UT of J&K has advised the School Education Department that the in-service teachers with more than five years of service left must have to clear the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET)

within two years failing which they may face to quit their service or shall be liable for a compulsory retirement.

The department has however clarified that the in-service teachers who have less than five years' service left, as on date, may continue in service till they attain the age of superannuation without qualifying the TET.

"However, we make it clear that if any such teacher having less than five years' service left aspires for | More on P6

120 websites of J&K Govt temporarily disabled in 2025-26

KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Feb 24: As many as 120 official websites of the Jammu & Kashmir Government were temporarily disabled during the ongoing financial year 2025-26, official documents reveal.

Documents in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), show that 120 websites hosted at the Jammu & Kashmir State Data Centre (JKSDC) were taken offline during 2025-26 due to the non-availability of "Safe to Host" certificates.

The "Safe to Host" certificates serve as essential security clearances for websites and web applications. | More on P6

Khelo India Winter Games-2026

Army maintains top spot as players fight for medals in Gulmarg leg

Haryana holds second spot in overall race | Host J&K figures at rank 17 with bronze

Waris Fayaz

Gulmarg, Feb 24: The second leg of the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG-2026) continued in Gulmarg on day 2 with intense competition across multiple snow and ice disciplines, while the Indian Army maintained its lead in

the overall medal tally. The overall KIWG medal standing details, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) states that, the Army leads the table with 13 medals, including 5 gold, 4 silver and 4 bronze medals. Haryana holds second position with 7 medals,

including 4 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze, while Maharashtra finished third with a total of 9 medals. Ladakh delivered a strong showing to secure fourth position with 11 medals, reflecting consistent performances in winter disciplines. Himachal Pradesh and

Telangana shared competitive positions with six medals each, followed by CRPF with four medals at seventh rank. Uttarakhand secured three medals, followed by Karnataka with nine overall medals largely driven by bronze finishes. ITBP, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh | More on P6

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Accelerating Growth

A major push to Healthcare, Sanitation, Water Supply, Roads & Urban Infrastructure in Ganderbal

Jenab Omar Abdullah
Hon'ble Chief Minister, J&K

Inaugurated, laid foundation stones of

Major Development Projects

worth

₹84.41 crore

Inaugurations	E-Inaugurations
Beautification & Development of Ganderbal Town - ₹770 lakh	WSS Urpash Naderbagh - ₹679.14 lakh
Road from Bus Adda to District Hospital including Mirani Chowk widening - ₹750.78 lakh	WSS Buderkund - ₹399 lakh
CT Scan Machine at DH Ganderbal - ₹840 lakh	WSS Manasbal - ₹130 lakh
4.5 MLD STP under SBM 2.0 - ₹1,999.20 lakh	Upgradation of Roads - ₹1,288.40 lakh
	Upgradation of Schools - ₹902.69 lakh

- Better healthcare access
- Improved water supply
- Safer and smoother roads
- Stronger sanitation systems
- Enhanced school facilities
- Improved urban amenities
- Local employment opportunities
- Better quality of life

Dated: 24.02.2026
DIPK-11321/25

Sakeena Itoo leads plantation drive at DH Ganderbal to promote eco-friendly healthcare

KT NEWS DESK

GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 24: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Tuesday led a plantation drive at District Hospital Ganderbal to promote eco-friendly practices and reinforce quality healthcare standards under the Kayakalp and National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) programmes.

The Minister, as per an official statement, planted saplings within the hospital premises and emphasized on the importance of creating green, clean and patient-friendly environment in the healthcare institutions. "Environmental protection is not only a social responsibility but an essential component of quality healthcare delivery", the Minister stated.

She highlighted that the plantation drives in healthcare facilities serve a dual purpose of enhancing the aesthetic appeal of hospitals



and contributing to environmental conservation. "These kind initiatives help in improving air quality, reducing pollution and fostering a healing atmosphere for patients, attendants, and healthcare workers", she said.

The Minister reiterated the

sanitation, waste management, infection control and environmental sustainability across all healthcare institutions of J&K.

The Minister appreciated the efforts of the hospital administration and staff for actively participating in the plantation drive and maintaining high standards of hygiene and patient care. She urged healthcare workers to adopt eco-friendly measures like proper biomedical waste management, energy conservation and maintaining green hospital campuses for efficient and effective patient care.

On the occasion, Medical Superintendent, DH Ganderbal, Dr. Farah Shafi informed the Minister that the plantation drive will be followed by regular environmental awareness activities, cleanliness drives and implementation of green practices to further enhance the District Hospital's compliance with Kayakalp and NQAS benchmarks.

DC Srinagar reviews fencing along Old Zaina Kadal, Aali Kadal, new Zaina Kadal bridges

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Tuesday undertook an extensive onsite visit to various areas of Shahr-e-Khaas (Old City) to review the progress of ongoing developmental works and inspected the fencing works & allied strengthening works along the sides of historic Old City Bridges.

The visit, as per an official statement, was aimed at assessing the works being undertaken to enhance public safety and local infrastructure in old City areas of

Srinagar district while ensuring that the heritage value of the Shahr-e-Khaas is preserved.

The DC also inspected the progress of ongoing works of the key connecting road and inner lanes at Bulbul Lanker.

During the visit, the DC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B Shabir Ahmad, Executive Engineer R&B, Farid Khan, Executive Engineer R&B, Arif Hazari, Tehsildar South, Sajad Rasool Shah, Tehsildar Khanyar, Syed Shahid and other concerned. At Bulbul

Lanker, the DC assessed ongoing developmental works undertaken to improve civic infrastructure and public amenities in the historic Shahr-e-Khaas area. He also inspected progress of upgradation of inner lanes being executed by the R&B department under District Capex plan.

On the occasion, the DC was informed that the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) have been formulated for fencing the sides of these bridges. He was briefed on the status of the works, project timelines, and measures being undertaken to ensure

public safety.

While reviewing the plan of fencing of the bridges, the DC emphasized quality execution, durability and timely completion of the projects. He directed the concerned departments to ensure that the fencing not only enhances public safety but also preserves the heritage character of these historic structures.

He instructed executing agencies to incorporate all required safety measures in the project and complete the works within stipulated timelines while minimizing inconvenience to commuters and local residents.

Inter-state youth exchange programme concludes in Srinagar

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 24: The Inter-State Youth Exchange Programme organised by Mera Yuva Bharat, Srinagar, concluded Tuesday at SCERT Bema, Srinagar, marking the culmination of the five-day youth engagement initiative.

The programme, a per PIB statement, brought together youth delegates for structured cultural interactions, dialogue sessions and outreach activities aimed at promoting inter-state understanding and constructive youth engagement. During the exchange, participants were exposed to the cultural heritage, traditions and social landscape of Jammu & Kashmir, enabling meaningful peer learning and interaction.

Addressing the valedictory function, Chief Guest Waseem Akram, DYSP, underlined the importance of sustained youth participation in strengthening national integration

and communal harmony. He stated that such exchange programmes provide a vital platform for young citizens to understand the country's diversity and build mutual trust. He urged the participants to act as ambassadors of unity and carry forward the spirit of cooperation and responsible citizenship in their respective regions.

Deputy Director, Mera Yuva Bharat Srinagar, Pradeep Kumar, oversaw the conduct of the programme and briefed participants on the broader objectives of the initiative, which focuses on youth empowerment through exposure, dialogue and collaborative learning.

The event was supported by volunteers including Rahi Rayaz, Imran Khan, Inam Hussain, Muzamil Abbas and Muntazir Owais, whose coordinated efforts facilitated smooth execution of the programme. The five-day programme concluded with the participants departing for their respective states after completion of scheduled activities.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR, NEAR J&K BANK(ZALDAGAR)

Telefax No. 0194-2952696 e.mail Id: to-exenmidsrinagar@jk.gov.in

Sub: - Extension in bidding time for e-NIT No. 34 OF 2025-26, Dated: 22-12-2025 for below mentioned work: -

Revamping / Modernization of Marval Lift Irrigation Scheme, Pulwama.

Ref: - JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No.: - 2025_IFC_298835_1

EXTENSION NOTICE 6

Due to No response the tender deadline is hereby extended by 02 days. The critical dates are extended as under: -

Bid submission/ Document download / sale end Date	26/02/2026 at 1400 hrs
Date and time of Bid opening	27/02/2026 at 1200 hrs

Rest of the terms and conditions shall remain un-altered as laid down in the original e-NIT.

Sd/-
No. MIDS/Ts/5621-42
Dated: -24-02-2026 DIPP-11314/25
DATED: 24-02-2026
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division

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

Address: Mini-Secretariat Duderhama Ganderbal

0194-2951904

rmbganderbal@yahoo.com

No.:12898-12903

Dated:- 21-02-2026

Subject:- Invitation of Tender under Samagra Shiksha.

Reference:- This office NIT No.112(12) of 2025-26 issued under endorsement No.12374- 79 Dated: 14-02-2026.

CORRIGENDUM

Please Read

> Name of Work as Construction of Girls Toilet at Middle School Guzham in NIT No.112(Serial No.12) and BOQ.

Instead Of

> Name of Work as Construction of Girls Toilet at Middle School Badampora in NIT No.112(Serial No.12) and BOQ.

All other terms and conditions of the above mentioned NIT will remain Un-altered.

Sd/-
DIPP-11294/25
DATED: 24-02-2026
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Ganderbal

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION HANDWARA

RAJWAR ROAD, HANDWARA - 193221

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

e-NIT No: 16-IFCD/HND/2025-26 Dated: 24/02/2026.

For and on behalf of Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory, e-Tenders on percentage basis are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with Jammu and Kashmir UT Government for the following work:

S. No.	Name of work	Advertised cost	Earnest Money	Time of Completion	Class of Contract	Major Head	Cost of Tender document	Tender ID No.
1.	Construction of lining wall on L/S of Unisoo Ujroo Khul at RD 4600 at village Guloor.	₹449664/-	₹9000/-	45 Days	CEE/ DEE	District Capex Regular	₹ 200/-	

Position of AAA: Sanctioned vide DDC Kupwara Accord Order No. 82-DDCK of 2025 Dated: 27/08/2025.

Position of T.S.: Issued vide this office T.S. No. 13/ TS/HND of 2025-26 Dated: 20/09/2025.

Position of funds: Available.

Authorization by: District Development Commissioner Kupwara vide No. DDCK/Capex/AA/2025-26/4363-68 Dated: 27/08/2025.

The NIT consisting of Qualifying information, eligibility criteria specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from website www.jktenders.gov.in from:

1	Publishing Date	24-02-2026 1500 Hours
2	Download Date Start	25-02-2026 1000 Hours
3	Tender Submission date Start	25-02-2026 1000 Hours
4	Tender Submission date Ends	02-03-2026 1200 Hours
5	Date of Opening	02-03-2026 1400 Hours

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Tenders must be accompanied with cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer (I&F) Division Handwara, payable at Treasury Office.

- The Tenders for the works shall remain valid for a period of 90 (Ninety) days from the date of opening of Tenders.
- The Tenders shall be deposited in Electronic format on the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in
- The Tender uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on the schedule date and time or any other date convenient to the tender opening authority in the Office of the Executive Engineer (I&F) Division Handwara, in presence of the Tenderers who wish to be present. In case of holiday or office happening to be closed on the basis of the opening of the Tender/date of submission of Hard copies, the same will be on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited if-
 - Any Tenderer withdraws his Tenders/tender during the period of Tender validity or makes any modification in terms and conditions of the Tender.
 - Failure of Successful tenderer to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
- The tenderer shall have to execute the agreement within 07-days after fixation of contract.
- Every participating bidder/ supplier/ contractor has to mandatory disclose the bank account Number which is linked with their GST at the time of bid submission. No payment shall be released by the Govt. Dept./ Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with GST registered number of the successful bidder.
- Instructions to Tenderer regarding E-Tendering process: -
 - Tenderers are advised to download Tender submission manual from the "downloads" option as well as from "Tenderers manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in acquaint Tenderers submission process.

No: - IFCD/HND/Camp/5039-47
Dated: 24/02/2026.

DIPP-11292/25
DATED: 24-02-2026

Sd/
Executive Engineer,
Irrigation & F Division
Handwara.



NOTICE

I have Changed my name from **Mohammad Haidar** To **Mohammad H Dar**. In future I will be known as **Mohammad H Dar**. If any body have any objection, he/she may submit objection in passport office Srinagar within 7 days. After seven days no objection will be accepted.

Srinagar Airport accords warm reception to KIWG participants



REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Feb 24: Participants and guests arriving for the Khelo India Games were accorded a warm reception at Srinagar International Airport on Tuesday, with authorities making coordinated arrangements to facilitate their smooth arrival. Officials said that dedicated teams were deployed at the arrival area to manage the influx of athletes, officials and dignitaries. Special assistance

counters, streamlined baggage handling and guided support were arranged to ensure hassle-free transit from the airport. An official said that all logistical and security measures had been put in place well in advance in coordination with the local administration and event organisers. "We are pleased to welcome the participants and guests of the Khelo India Games. All necessary arrangements have been made to ensure their arrival is

smooth and comfortable," the official said. In a post on X, Srinagar Airport extended its best wishes to the participants and organisers, expressing hope for the grand success of the event. "Participants and guests of the Khelo India Games arriving at Srinagar Airport were received with coordinated arrangements at the arrival area. Wishing everyone a successful event ahead.@kheloindia," the airport said—(KNO)

CRPF's Kajal Rai clinches double gold at KIWG

WARIS FAYAZ

Gulmarg, Feb 24: Kajal Kumari Rai of Meghalaya delivered a dominant performance at the Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) in Gulmarg, clinching double gold in Nordic skiing and emerging as one of the standout athletes of the tournament. Athlete from Shillong, Meghalaya, Rai displayed consistency and endurance across consecutive days of competition. On inaugural day, she clinched gold in the Women's Nordic 15 km sprint event, followed it with another commanding performance on Tuesday, securing gold in the Women's Nordic 10 km race to complete an impressive golden double. Speaking after her victory, Rai, representing the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), said her success was the outcome of sustained hard work and commitment. "Efforts and dedication bring results," she said, expressing happiness over her

performance. The victory, however, carried deep emotional significance for the skier, who dedicated both gold medals to her father, who passed away last year in the same month. Rai said her father's encouragement played a crucial role in shaping her journey in sports and motivating her to pursue excellence. Rai also praised Gulmarg as an exceptional venue for winter sports, stating that the destination has no comparison in terms of natural beauty and sporting potential. She appreciated the hospitality of local residents, describing them as helpful and cooperative throughout the competition. The Khelo India Winter Games 2026 in Gulmarg continue to witness strong participation from athletes representing various states and institutions—(KNO)

Ranji Trophy final J&K Batsmen Dominate Karnataka on Day-1

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 23: Jammu and Kashmir put up a commanding performance on Day 1 of the historic Ranji Trophy final against Karnataka, ending the day at a strong 284/2 at stumps at KSCA Hubli Cricket Ground.

In what marks J&K's maiden appearance in a Ranji Trophy final, the team displayed remarkable composure and batting depth against a seasoned Karnataka side, seizing early control of the summit clash. After losing opener Qamran Iqbal cheaply, J&K steadied their innings through a crucial 139-run partnership between Shubham Pundir and Yawer Hassan. Pundir emerged as the backbone of the innings, crafting a patient and technically sound unbeaten 117 off 221 balls, laced with 12 boundaries and two sixes. Yawer Hassan, who had endured a lean patch earlier in the season, rose to the



occasion when it mattered most, contributing a vital 88 off 150 deliveries. His knock not only rebuilt the innings but also laid a strong foundation before he was dismissed at 157/2 in 50.6 overs. J&K skipper Paras Dogra's brief stay was cut short as he retired hurt after sustaining multiple blows, bringing in the in-form Abdul Samad to the crease. Samad, the team's leading run-scorer this season,

injected momentum into the innings with an aggressive unbeaten 52 off 67 balls, including five fours and a six. Samad and Pundir stitched together an unbroken 105-run partnership, ensuring J&K finished the day without further damage. The duo capitalized in the final phase, scoring 44 runs in the last 10 overs without losing a wicket. Despite disciplined efforts from Karnataka's pace attack,

including a spirited spell by Prasidh Krishna, the bowlers found little assistance from the pitch. The surface offered minimal movement, making it difficult to break partnerships, while spinners struggled to contain the run flow. Pardeep was only bowler from the Karnataka team who took both the wickets that fell on day-1. J&K hold a clear advantage and will aim to build on their strong start on Day 2, with eyes set on a first-innings total beyond 450. Karnataka, on the other hand, will be hoping for early breakthroughs to claw their way back into the contest. The final carries immense significance for Jammu & Kashmir cricket, symbolizing years of perseverance and growth. With young talents like Abdul Samad and Auqib Nabi leading the charge, the team is now within touching distance of scripting history and clinching their maiden Ranji Trophy title—(KNO)

NGT gets brown bear protection update from SDA

RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Feb 24: Sonamarg Development Authority (SDA) has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that it has put in place a series of solid-waste management and habitat-protection measures in Sonamarg to prevent human-bear conflict and safeguard the Himalayan brown bear population. According to an affidavit filed before the Principal Bench of the Tribunal in OA No. 1046/2024, about a news report on the conservation of Kashmir brown bears, the Authority submitted that a "scientifically structured waste management protocol" is being followed in the ecologically sensitive tourist destination. The affidavit has been accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). The SDA stated that the measures are aimed at preventing wildlife habituation to food waste, ensuring proper scientific disposal of solid waste and maintaining compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, to protect the fragile ecosystem of Sonamarg. The Authority stated that all categories of solid waste generated in the Sonamarg bowl and its adjoining villages are being collected on a daily basis and

transported directly to the Sarbal Solid Waste Management (SWM) plant, thereby minimising food attractants along identified bear movement corridors. It added that surprise inspections are being carried out regularly to curb illegal dumping along tourist routes and other ecologically sensitive areas. To further reduce wildlife attraction, the SDA said it has replaced conventional waste bins with specialised wildlife-resistant receptacles. "As many as 60 pole-mounted stainless-steel dustbins with a capacity of 100 litres each have been procured through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal," it said. "While some of these have already been installed at high-footfall locations, including Thajwas and other key tourist sites, the remaining bins are scheduled to be put in place ahead of the upcoming tourist season." According to the affidavit, the Sarbal waste-processing facility presently comprises a bio-composter-cum-segregator and an auto-composter, each with a capacity of five metric tonnes per day, in addition to a one-metric-tonne electromagnet disintegrator. It notes that during peak tourist season, daily waste generation increases to 7-10 metric

tonnes, and the process for installation of an additional two-metric-tonne disintegrator has been initiated to augment capacity. The SDA has also proposed the construction of a 10-foot-high fenced perimeter with a secured gate around the SWM plant to prevent entry of wild animals, particularly Himalayan brown bears, and to check unauthorised access. The proposal has been included in the budget estimates submitted to the Tourism Department for approval. Besides strengthening infrastructure, the Authority informed the National Green Tribunal that awareness campaigns are being conducted in coordination with the Wildlife Protection Department. Signages are being installed at key access points, while tourists and hotel operators are being sensitised against feeding wildlife and improper disposal of food waste. The SDA further submitted that it remains committed to maintaining ecological balance in Sonamarg and has sought liberty to file an updated compliance report within six weeks, stating that recent winter snowfall had affected certain field activities—(KNO)

Cholesterol can damage heart without symptoms: Docs

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 24: Cholesterol is often blamed on oily and fatty foods, but doctors claim that the majority of this waxy substance is actually produced inside the human body. They said that nearly 75 per cent of cholesterol is made by the liver, while only about 25 per cent comes from dietary sources. The doctors said that despite its negative reputation, cholesterol is not entirely harmful. At normal levels, it plays a crucial role in building cells and producing essential hormones. However, an imbalance in its types can silently damage the body over time. Dr Murtaza Khan, a general physician said that low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL), often termed "bad cholesterol", carries cholesterol from the liver to body cells. Excess LDL can accumulate in artery walls, forming plaques that narrow blood vessels—a condition known as atherosclerosis—significantly increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. "High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL), or 'good cholesterol', works in the opposite way. It helps remove excess cholesterol from the bloodstream and transports it back to the liver for elimination, thereby protecting heart health," he said. "People often misunderstand cholesterol as entirely harmful, but HDL actually acts as a protective factor," said Dr Showkat Ahmad, a cardiologist. "The problem begins when LDL levels rise unchecked." Another important component is triglycerides, a type of fat that stores unused calories. Elevated



triglycerides, especially when combined with high LDL or low HDL, further raise cardiovascular risks. Very Low-Density Lipoprotein (VLDL) also contributes to plaque buildup in arteries. Doctors warn that high cholesterol typically shows no symptoms, making it particularly dangerous. "Many patients come to us only after a cardiac event, without ever knowing they had high cholesterol," said Dr Shazia Khan, an internal medicine specialist. "It quietly damages arteries over the years before showing any signs." The condition can be detected through a simple blood test known as a fasting lipid profile, conducted after 9-12 hours without food. This test measures LDL, HDL, total

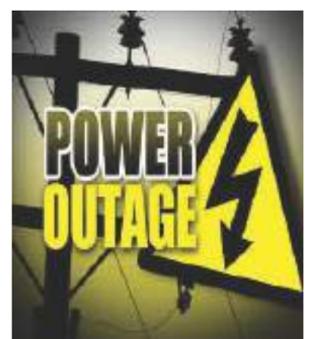
cholesterol, and triglycerides. Medical professionals highlight several contributing factors, including: Diets high in saturated and trans fats, Obesity or excess body weight, Lack of physical activity, increasing age and family history of high cholesterol. They said genetics plays a significant role. Even individuals with a healthy lifestyle can have high cholesterol if it runs in the family. Doctors emphasise the importance of distinguishing between harmful and beneficial fats. Trans fats and saturated fats—commonly found in fried foods, baked goods, and processed snacks—raise LDL levels and lower HDL, posing a double risk. On the other hand, unsaturated fats found in foods like olive oil,

avocados, nuts, and fish can help reduce bad cholesterol when incorporated into a balanced diet. "Replacing fried snacks with healthier fat sources can make a measurable difference in cholesterol levels within weeks," they added. Experts stress that lifestyle modifications remain the first line of defence against high cholesterol. They said a fibre-rich diet—including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes—helps reduce LDL levels. Fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids and plant-based proteins like soy are also beneficial. Weight management plays a key role as well. Doctors say losing even a few kilograms can lower LDL and triglycerides while boosting HDL. "Regular aerobic exercise can increase good cholesterol by up to five per cent within a couple of months. Quitting smoking can improve HDL levels by nearly 10 per cent," they said. "For high-risk patients, medication is not optional—it is life-saving," they said, adding that cholesterol buildup can begin as early as childhood, gradually leading to heart disease later in life. Experts recommend maintaining total cholesterol levels below 170 mg/dL in children and adolescents. Encouragingly, studies suggest that early intervention—including a healthy diet, regular exercise, and stress management—can even help reverse some arterial damage. According to doctors, cholesterol management is not just about treatment; it's about prevention. "The earlier you act, the better your chances of avoiding serious heart disease," they said—(KNO)

Natipora aghast over power cuts

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Feb 24: Residents of Faizabad Colony, Naik Bagh and Stadium Colony in Natipora area of Srinagar have expressed deep anger over prolonged and unscheduled power outages in their area. They alleged that electricity remains snapped for over seven to nine hours daily, severely affecting routine life, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. Mohammad Amin Mugloo, a resident of Faizabad Colony, said that the area faces frequent shutdowns both in the morning and at night. "Sometimes there is a shutdown from 7 am to 9 am, and at times from 8 pm to 12 midnight. On several occasions, power is also snapped during Sehri and Iftar hours, causing immense inconvenience to families," Mugloo said. Residents said the erratic power supply has disrupted daily activities, business operations and students' study schedules. They added that the situation worsens during Ramadan when uninterrupted electricity is essential for meal preparations and prayers. "Electricity remains cut for long hours, sometimes stretching up to nine hours a day. Small business owners and students are the worst affected. We fail to understand why our area is facing such prolonged outages despite repeated complaints," a resident of Stadium Colony said. Meanwhile, other residents from Stadium Colony in Natipora also echoed similar concerns, stating that despite repeated representations to the concerned department, the issue remains unresolved. The residents have



appealed to the Power Development Department (PDD) to streamline the electricity schedule and ensure that at least Sehri and Iftar hours remain free from outages. They warned that if the problem persists, they may be forced to stage peaceful protests to press for their demands. When contacted, the Assistant Executive Engineer of the Chanapora Division of the Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) was not immediately available for comment and did not respond to repeated calls. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah earlier chaired a high-level meeting to review arrangements for the holy month of Ramadan and directed the Power Development Department to ensure adequate planning of electricity supply during the month, especially during Sehri and Iftar hours. Officials were asked to designate nodal officers to closely monitor the situation—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Khelo India Winter Games Is A Triumph of Unity

The sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games in Gulmarg is a grand celebration of Jammu and Kashmir's identity, its strength, and its rightful place in the national mainstream. These games reflect the region's identity in sports and its bond with national unity. For four days, nearly 1,000 athletes and officials from across the country are competing in events like alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, snowboarding, and ski mountaineering.

But the real win is not just about medals. When athletes from different states train together, compete hard, and cheer for each other, the barriers of language, culture, and region disappear before the spirit of sports. This is nation-building at its purest—unity created not just through words, but through shared effort and mutual respect. Successfully hosting this event is a tribute to the transformative vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

the strong support of the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. With world-class sports facilities built under the Prime Minister's Development Package and the opening of 100 Khelo India Centres, the sporting scene in Jammu and Kashmir has been completely reshaped. A region once talked about mainly in terms of security is now proudly hosting a national sports festival, showing its true potential as India's top winter sports

destination. These games support local livelihoods. For ski instructors, sledge operators, and many others, this snow is not just a beautiful setting for sports; it is how they earn a living. The government's continued efforts to develop Gulmarg into an international ski destination create a positive cycle. Top-level events bring in tourists, which supports local businesses, and that in turn makes the community feel proud and invested in

these initiatives. The Khelo India Winter Games truly capture the spirit of "Vikas bhi, Virasat bhi"—progress along with heritage. They honour Gulmarg's natural beauty while also investing in its future. As athletes race down these legendary slopes, they are also carving out a new story for Jammu and Kashmir: a story of opportunity, excellence, and unbreakable national unity. This is the real victory of the Games.

From Panini To The AI Stack: Delhi's AI Moment And The Logic Of National Capability

The Delhi Declaration, adopted at the summit, is being called the first major AI governance blueprint from the Global South—anchored in data sovereignty, inclusion by design, and flexible guardrails. India also launched three sovereign AI models, including Sarvam AI's 105-billion-parameter model trained entirely on Indian compute.

Hardeep S Puri

When Panini reduced the chaos of spoken language into a compact, computable grammar, he proved something that still holds: intelligence is most powerful when it is expressed as structure. Nalanda took that instinct into institutions, building methods to debate, preserve, and transmit knowledge across borders. India's decision to host the India AI Impact Summit 2026 draws from the same civilizational impulse, because the next leap in technology is about systems that can learn, reason, and act at scale, and the world cannot afford a future in which only a few capitals decide how those systems are built.

Held at Bharat Mandapam last week, the Summit was the first global AI summit hosted by a Global South nation, and no previous edition drew participation at this scale: over 20 heads of state, 60 ministers, more than 500 AI leaders from over 100 countries, and 300 exhibitors across ten thematic pavilions. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India is putting forward an organising idea of its own: sovereignty over data, inclusion by design, accountability by default. And it is inviting global capital to build here on those terms.

That idea finds its sharpest expression in the Prime Minister's M.A.N.A.V. vision: ethical guardrails, accountable governance, sovereignty over data so that the raw material of intelligence is not extracted the way commodities once were, broad access so that the benefits reach a farmer in Madhya Pradesh as surely as an engineer in Bengaluru, and legal validity so that every deployed system remains answerable to democratic scrutiny. His formulation about giving AI an open sky while keeping command in human hands draws a line many advanced economies have been reluctant to draw.

Those principles now carry multilateral weight through the Delhi Declaration,



adopted at the summit and already being called the first major AI governance blueprint from the Global South; taking a development-oriented view, anchored in a techno-legal approach that favours flexible guardrails over rigid compliance. It organises global collaboration around three pillars: People, Planet, and Progress. Population-scale solutions like BharatGen, which supports 22 Indian languages, address the reality that most of the world does not operate in English. A proposed global Compute Bank, modelled on India's own subsidised GPU access at 65 per hour, lowers entry barriers everywhere. And the Declaration's insistence on data sovereignty directly challenges AI extractivism: the pattern in which developing nations' data is harvested to train models they must then pay to use.

What gives that framework its credibility is the decade of execution that precedes it, because this government did not arrive at AI through a white paper but through the most ambitious digital public infrastructure programme any democracy has undertaken. UPI processed over 228 billion transactions in

2025, worth roughly USD 3.4 trillion, nearly half the world's real-time digital payment volume, more than Visa processes globally. The JAM trinity has delivered over 3.48 lakh crore in welfare savings since 2015. No other country has built identity, payments, and entitlement delivery at this scale within a single policy arc, and that is the foundation on which India's AI moment stands.

If the logic of digital public infrastructure was to connect every citizen to the state, the logic of AI infrastructure is to connect every citizen to capability, and here the numbers reveal a striking gap: India generates nearly 20 percent of the world's data but hosts roughly 3 percent of global data centre capacity. That gap is now being closed with the same intent that built UPI: fast, at scale, and with sovereign design.

Consider what was announced in a single week at Bharat Mandapam. Microsoft: USD 50 billion by 2030 for the Global South, with USD 17.5 billion already committed to India. Google: the America-India Connect initiative, anchored by USD 15 billion over five years. Amazon Web Services: USD 8.3 billion in

Maharashtra. Adani Group: USD 100 billion toward renewable energy-powered AI data centres by 2035. Yotta Data Services: over USD 2 billion for one of Asia's largest AI computing hubs using Nvidia's Blackwell Ultra chips. Larsen & Toubro: a proposed venture with Nvidia to build India's largest gigawatt-scale AI factory. The IndiaAI Mission's national compute cluster has crossed 38,000 GPUs and is scaling to 58,000, available to startups at roughly one-third of global cost. The government's target of USD 200 billion in AI infrastructure investment over the next two years is not aspiration; the commitments already announced bring it within reach.

Ensuring that this investment becomes long-term structural advantage is the purpose of the Union Budget for 2026-27, which extends a tax holiday until 2047 for foreign companies using Indian data centres for global cloud services and commits USD 1.1 billion to a venture capital fund for AI and advanced manufacturing startups. The National Critical Mineral Mission, at over 34,000 crore, secures the lithium, cobalt, and rare earths that AI and semiconductor manufacturing depend on.

None of this matters, however, unless it reaches people. On the first day of the Summit, more than 2.5 lakh students took a pledge to use AI for responsible innovation, a number submitted for Guinness World Records recognition. Thirty Data and AI Labs are operational in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, the first wave of a planned 570-lab network, while AIKosh offers over 7,500 datasets and 273 models as shared public infrastructure. When this government took office India had 16 IITs; today there are 23. OpenAI's CEO disclosed that India is ChatGPT's second largest market, with 100 million weekly active users. The consumption is here, and the production capability is catching up: three sovereign AI models were unveiled at the summit, including Sarvam AI's 105-billion-parameter large language model trained entirely on Indian

compute and BharatGen's Param2, a 17-billion-parameter multilingual model supporting all 22 scheduled languages. These are not fine-tuned adaptations of foreign models; they are built from scratch on sovereign infrastructure.

Equally telling is how partnerships are now structured, because they are no longer about licensing foreign technology but about co-building sovereign capacity. The Tata Group's strategic partnership with OpenAI, beginning with 100 megawatts of AI-ready data centre capacity under the Stargate initiative and scaling to one gigawatt, signals that Indian industry is moving from the demand side to the supply side of global intelligence. India's formal signing of the Pax Silica Declaration on the sidelines of the summit places it in the US-led coalition securing supply chains for AI, semiconductors, and critical minerals alongside Japan, South Korea, the UK, and Australia. The bilateral India-US AI Opportunity Partnership, signed alongside, commits both nations to pro-innovation approaches on critical technologies, while the India-France Year of Innovation in 2026 adds another axis organised around joint skilling and measurable outcomes.

Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, the first Global South nation to host the global AI summit series did not merely convene a conversation but laid out the terms on which it intends to compete: a Delhi Declaration that rewrites the rules of AI governance, digital infrastructure processing nearly half the world's real-time payments, investment commitments in the hundreds of billions, sovereign models built from scratch, and entry into the supply chain security architecture of the AI age. Panini's lesson was never complicated. Structure is intelligence. India is building that structure now.

The author is Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas

Artificial Intelligence Transforming Indian Agriculture

From soil diagnostics to climate advisories and market intelligence, AI is making Indian agriculture more precise and profitable—already implemented across 12 states

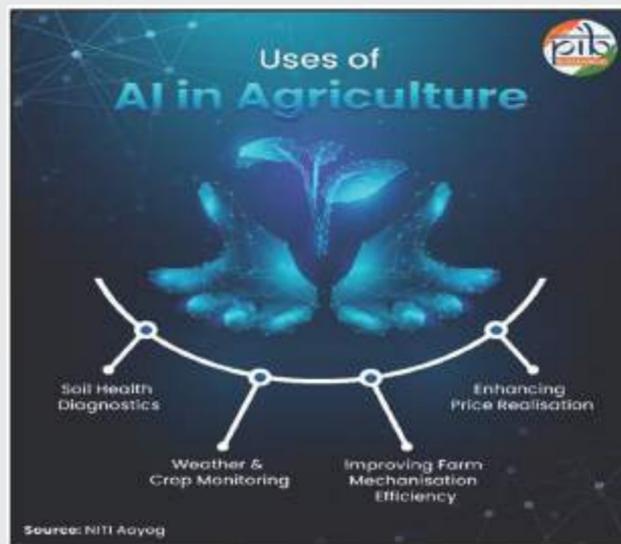
Press Information Bureau

Indian agriculture stands at a critical turning point, where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly being harnessed to support farmers, strengthen decision-making, and enhance productivity. By leveraging data from satellites, sensors, drones, weather stations, and farm machinery, AI-enabled tools support informed decision-making at every stage of the agricultural value chain.

Artificial Intelligence And Its Uses In Agriculture

In agriculture, AI helps turn data into simple, actionable advice that farmers can implement in their day-to-day farming practices. By analysing satellite imagery, weather forecasts, soil data, and crop patterns, AI can help farmers decide what to sow, when to sow, how much input to use, and when to harvest. From early warnings about pests and diseases to better planning for irrigation and fertiliser use, AI is making farming more precise, efficient, and less risky. The uses of AI in agriculture can be categorised as:

Soil Health Diagnostics
AI uses deep learning and image



recognition to monitor soil health by analysing signals from satellite imagery,

drone-based observations, and farm-level images. This eliminates the need

for laboratory testing infrastructure while detecting nutrient deficiencies and soil stress. Farmers can take timely action to restore soil fertility.

Climate-Responsive Crop Monitoring and Advisory Services

Indian agriculture is particularly susceptible to climate variability because it relies heavily on rainfall. AI analyses weather and climate data to predict changing rainfall patterns, temperature variations, and extreme events, while providing real-time advisories on sowing decisions, irrigation scheduling, pest management, and input application. In addition, AI-enabled monitoring using satellite imagery, drones, sensors, and image analytics facilitates early detection of pests and crop diseases, allowing timely interventions. Collectively, these applications support farmers, particularly in rain-fed regions, in managing climate risks and reducing potential crop losses.

Improving Farm Mechanisation Efficiency

AI-powered image classification and machine learning tools, integrated with drones, remote sensing, and local sensor data, improve the utilisation and efficiency of farm machinery. Applications

include precision weed removal, early disease detection, automated harvesting, and produce grading.

In horticulture, where crops require continuous monitoring across multiple growth stages, AI-based systems offer round-the-clock surveillance of high-value crops. This leads to reduced labour dependency, optimised input use, and improved quality control.

Improving Price Realisation for Farmers

Farmers, particularly those engaged in fruit and vegetable production, often capture only a small share of the final consumer price due to inadequate price discovery, supply chain inefficiencies, and information asymmetries. Artificial intelligence (AI) offers a robust means of addressing these structural constraints by strengthening demand-supply forecasting, market intelligence, and coordination across agricultural value chains.

The implementation of AI in agriculture highlights the breadth of bottom-up adoption across the sector. AI-enabled agricultural networks have improved market access, price discovery, and logistical efficiency for about 1.8 million farmers across 12 States.

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

AI4Agri 2026 Summit: J&K's Kisan Khidmat Ghar model praised

KT News Desk

MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 24: The Kisan Khidmat Ghar (KKG) ecosystem of Jammu and Kashmir garnered significant praise at the Government of Maharashtra's Global Conference on AI in Agriculture and Investor Summit (AI4Agri 2026).

Presented as a model for inclusive, AI-enabled agricultural service delivery, KKG impressed organisers and panelists with its innovative approach.

Mission Director, Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Sandeep Kumar, as per an official statement, participated as a panelist in the plenary session on "AI Across the Value Chain: Unlocking Inclusivity, Sustainability and Efficiency". He highlighted how Jammu and Kashmir has embedded digital intelligence into a structured public delivery architecture, rather than treating AI as a standalone pilot.

At the centre of the presentation was the KKG ecosystem, an entrepreneur-enabled, IT-driven network of physical single-window centres at the panchayat level, designed to convert the digital services into walk-in, assisted public support for



farmers. These centres provide assisted applications, advisory access, execution support and handholding, ensuring that the farmers who are not digitally fluent are not excluded from modern agri-services.

The Mission Director explained that HADP's inclusion pathway is built as a full institutional stack, starting with Kisan Sampark Abhiyan for field mobilisation and assisted onboarding, moving through the Kisan Sathi portal as the digital backbone for registration, applications and tracking, supported by Daksh Kisan for structured skilling and stabilised through KKG handholding on the ground. This is reinforced by OTA tracking for

geo- and time-stamped field verification and by Kisan Sathi 360 for a unified farmer-level view of services accessed, skilling received, advisories issued and outcomes tracked.

The panelists and delegates particularly noted the value of linking the physical facilitation centres with digital advisory and monitoring systems. They described the model as a practical pathway to ensure inclusivity while scaling technology across dispersed rural geographies.

On the technology front, the presentation also outlined how AI/ML is being positioned within this delivery stack to reduce risk and improve efficiency across

the value chain. Predictive models for apple disease risks such as scab and alternaria and pest forecasting modules under validation, are integrated into the KKG digital ecosystem so that early warnings and advisories translate into preventive field action.

The Mission Director also referred to sensor-based Smart Agriculture pilots under HADP, including LoRa-enabled monitoring frameworks across agro-climatic zones and the extension of digital decision-support beyond horticulture into wider crop and livestock contexts.

The AI4Agri 2026 summit—designed to advance responsible AI adoption in agriculture and catalyse collaboration among governments, institutions and investors—provided a national and global platform for showcasing such field-grounded models.

The officials noted that the summit's appreciation underscores the growing relevance of HADP's "assisted digital governance" approach, where AI tools are delivered through physical service points, backed by skilling and verified through outcome tracking. This approach ensures technology enhances farmer decisions rather than remaining confined to dashboards.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: SWD organizes Street Play in Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 24: Social Welfare Department (SWD) Srinagar, SANKALP-Hub for Empowerment of Women (Mission Shakti), successfully organized a theme based Nukad Natak/Street Play at General Bus Stand Parimpora as part of its ongoing awareness and outreach initiatives under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP).

The street play, as per an official statement, served as a powerful medium to address pressing social concerns, including the declining child sex ratio, gender discrimination, the importance of educating the girl child, prevention of child marriage, and the elimination of gender-based violence and discrimination. The performance emphasized the need to ensure equal rights, dignity, and opportunities for women and girls in all spheres of life.

Through impactful dialogues, emotionally compelling storytelling, and engaging performances, the artists effectively communicated the message of building a safe, inclusive, and gender-equitable society. The dramatization portrayed real-life challenges faced by girls and highlighted the collective responsibility of families, communities, and



institutions in safeguarding their rights and promoting their well-being.

The event attracted significant public attention, with passersby, shopkeepers, commuters, and local residents gathering in large numbers to witness the awareness campaign. The interactive format of the Nukad Natak encouraged active audience participation, prompting discussions and reflections on deeply rooted social norms and attitudes. Many members of the public appreciated the initiative and expressed support for promoting girl child education and ending discriminatory practices.

Officials from the department reiterated their commitment to spreading awareness at the grassroots level through innovative community-based platforms. They emphasized that such outreach programmes play a crucial role in sensitizing society, strengthening community engagement, and fostering a culture of respect, equality, and empowerment for women and girls. The programme concluded with an appeal to the public to actively support initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of the girl child and to contribute towards building a more just and progressive society.

Swachh Survekshan 2025

DC Shopian lauds efforts of Sanitation workers



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, FEBRUARY 24: Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta Tuesday interacted with sanitation workers of MC Shopian at Town Hall Shopian and lauded their relentless dedication and invaluable contribution towards maintaining cleanliness and hygiene across the district.

He emphasized that sanitation workers are the backbone of urban management and play a pivotal role in shaping the district's performance in the upcoming Swachh Survekshan rankings.

While appreciating their tireless efforts, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, stated that the success of cleanliness initiatives

and improved civic standards largely depends on the commitment and discipline of frontline sanitation staff and urged them to continue working with the same zeal and sense of responsibility to ensure that Shopian secures a commendable position in the national cleanliness survey, Swachh Survekshan.

On the occasion, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and uniforms were distributed among the sanitation workers to ensure their safety, dignity, and professional identity.

Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Shopian, Shakoor Ahmad Dar, CEO Municipal Council Shopian, Suhail Ahmad Malik, officials of Municipal Council Shopian were also present on the occasion.

DC Ramban reviews performance of Banks

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 24: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, Tuesday chaired the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) and District Level RSETI Advisory Committee (DLRAC) meeting to assess the performance of banks and review the implementation of the financial inclusion and employment generation schemes in the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by CPO Dr. Shakeeb Ahmed Rather, ACD Sheraz Ahmed, Lead District Officer RBI Anil Kumar, LDM Davinder Singh, Director RSETI S. Harvinder Singh, DDM NABARD and senior officers of District Administration and Banks.

During the meeting, it was informed that the district's Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio has increased by 1.98%, reaching 72.78% as on December 31, 2025, compared to the previous quarter ended on September 30, 2025. An amount of 385.79 crore has been spent under the Priority Sector, achieving 65.51% of the 588.91 crore Annual Credit Plan (ACP) 2025-26 targets. The Non-Priority



Sector saw a credit outlay of 384.13 crore.

The Deputy Commissioner instructed the Bankers to focus on the targets under priority sector especially Education, Housing and Social Infrastructure development. He directed bankers to work in close coordination with the line departments for effective implementation of schemes and service delivery. He asked banks to organize awareness camps in uncovered areas to sensitize the public about the social security, financial inclusion and job oriented schemes.

Calling for swift processing of loan cases under PM VISHWAKARMA and KCC, the DC stressed on delivering timely benefits to local youth. He also called upon Departments and Banks

to intensify their efforts to achieve targets under PMEGP and other schemes providing loans to the youth under Mission YUVA. He further directed the officers to take lead in implementation of PMMY, PMSBY, PMJJBY and APY schemes in the district. Chairing the District Level RSETI Advisory Committee (DLRAC) meeting, the Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the performance of the institute. He also emphasized the need to enhance market-relevant training, increase the number of eligible cases and ensure financial and marketing linkages to empower the unemployed youth. Meanwhile, Director RSETI presented an overview of the achievements, ongoing initiatives and training programmes.

DC Samba directs NHA for timely completion of works

KT News Desk

SAMBA, FEBRUARY 24: Deputy Commissioner Samba, Ayushi Sudan, Tuesday conducted a comprehensive review of the condition of the National Highway in the district, with an on-site assessment of the ongoing construction works and the compliance with prescribed safety standards.

During the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, issued strict directives to officials of the

National Highways Authority of India (NHA), to avoid unnecessary delay in the execution of ongoing works. She stressed on proper signage, effective traffic management measures and adherence to safety norms to ensure unhindered and secure movement of vehicles during the construction phase.

The DC further emphasized that the timely completion of these works would bring immense relief to the residents of the region.

IGNOU opens online registration for PGDRPC entrance test

KT News Desk

Srinagar, FEBRUARY 24: Indra Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has announced the opening of online registration for the Entrance Test for admission to the Post Graduate Diploma in Rehabilitation Psychology (PGDRPC) for the July 2026 session through the Samarth Higher Education Admission Portal.

The programme, as per PIB statement, offered by the Discipline of Psychology, School of Social Sciences, is designed to develop skilled professionals equipped with both theoretical knowledge and practical expertise in Rehabilitation Psychology – a field focused on assessment, intervention and support for persons with disabilities across different life stages.

The curriculum provides comprehensive training in disability assessment, psychosocial issues, rehabilitation counselling and community-based rehabilitation practices. The subjects covered include Disability and Rehabilitation, Psychosocial Issues in Disability, Rehabilitation Assessment and Counselling, Community-based Rehabilitation, and practical laboratory work in identification, assessment and intervention



techniques. The programme conforms to the norms and guidelines of the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), ensuring academic and professional relevance for learners seeking careers in clinical, community or institutional rehabilitation services. Eligibility for admission will be governed as per RCI Norms and Regulations, 2017.

Prospective applicants can complete their registration on the dedicated Samarth portal by selecting "New Registration," creating a user profile and uploading the required documents as per the prescribed eligibility criteria. The last date for submission of the online application is March 5, 2026. Detailed instructions and FAQs are available on the portal.

Poonch: DLIC approves 153 cases under Mission YUVA

KT News Desk

POONCH, FEBRUARY 24: The District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) for Mission YUVA met Tuesday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner, Ashok Kumar Sharma.

During the meeting, the committee approved 153 new cases, marking another major milestone in promoting entrepreneurship, self-employment and youth empowerment under the Mission YUVA initiative.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik; GM DIC, Naheem Un Nissa Bhatti; Chief Agriculture officer, Jograj Salathia; Medical Superintendent, LDM, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, AD Handicraft/Handloom besides members of the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) of Mission YUVA.

The meeting held detailed deliberations, while the participating committee members shared valuable inputs to enhance transparency and efficiency in the implementation process.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among all stakeholders for the timely processing and disbursement of approved cases. He reiterated that Mission YUVA is not merely a financial support program but a transformative initiative aimed at empowering youth and fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the district.

National Youth Exchange Programme Doda students leave for Punjab to participate, DC flags off tour

KT NEWS DESK

DODA, FEBRUARY 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda Krishan Lal Tuesday flagged off a group of students to Punjab to participate in the National Youth Exchange Programme being held at Lovely Professional University (LPU)-Phagwara from February 24 to March 1, 2026.

The students' tour as per an official statement, has been sponsored by the District Administration and the Red

Cross Society in collaboration with the School Education Department with the objective of promoting cultural exchange, national integration and developing leadership skills among the youth.

While interacting with the students, the Deputy Commissioner encouraged them to actively participate in all academic, cultural and interactive sessions during the programme.

He emphasized that such exposure visits provide

valuable learning opportunities, broaden perspectives and help students develop confidence, communication skills and a spirit of unity and cooperation.

Krishan Lal advised the students to act as ambassadors of the district and make the best use of the platform to learn, share experiences and build meaningful connections with participants from different regions of the country.

The event was attended by Assistant Commissioner

Revenue (ACR) Ashraf Parvez; Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Manesh Kumar; Chief Education Officer (CEO) Bhushan Kumar; District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Zubair Ahmed and others.

The students expressed enthusiasm and gratitude to the District Administration for providing them with an opportunity to participate in the national-level exchange programme aimed at enhancing their overall development and exposure.

Implementation of RDD sector schemes reviewed in Kishtwar

DC stresses on accountability, quality execution

KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma Tuesday convened a meeting with officers of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department to review the progress and implementation of the RDD Sector development schemes.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on a comprehensive and detailed review of the progress of works under



UT/District Capex, Aspirational Block Development Programme (ABDP), Aspirational Panchayat Development Programme (APDP), MGNREGA, PMAY-G, SBM-G, works under DDC/BDC/PRI Grants, Awaas Plus Survey, RGSA, MGMD and other key initiatives.

A detailed presentation and analysis of all schemes was delivered by ACD, highlighting

physical and financial progress across all blocks.

The DC discussed the performance of each scheme and sought inputs from Panchayat Secretaries, Junior Engineers (JEs), Technical Assistants (TAs) and other concerned officials to assess ground-level implementation and challenges.

Under MGNREGA, the DC reviewed the block-wise status of

person-days (PDs) generated, timely payment of wages, geo-tagging progress and other related parameters. A thorough evaluation was conducted to ensure compliance with guidelines and timely execution of works.

The DC also conducted an in-depth review of the physical and financial progress of other ongoing schemes at the block level, including ABDP, APDP, CD Panchayat, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Health, NFB, PMAAGY, TAD-UT, YSS and allied sectors.

The DC stressed that all schemes must be executed with the highest standards of quality. He directed officers to ensure proper coordination and timely

completion of works without compromise.

Taking serious note of poor performance, the DC ordered withholding of salaries of underperforming BDOs, TAs, Panchayat Secretaries and GRS. He clearly warned that no lackadaisical approach would be tolerated in the execution of developmental works.

The DC stated that future performance reviews shall be conducted strictly on the basis of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all schemes. He reiterated that accountability will be fixed at every level.

The DC imposed delay compensation on officials who failed to fill Muster Rolls under

MGNREGA in a timely manner. He also directed the ACD Kishtwar to initiate the suspension of one Technical Assistant and one Panchayat Secretary for dereliction of duty.

Delivering a clear and firm message, the DC stated, "To perform or to perish," underscoring that only a dedicated and result-oriented work culture will be accepted.

The meeting was attended by CPO Kishtwar Akhil Thakur, ACD Kishtwar Manoj Kumar, ACP Kishtwar Neeraj Sharma, AD Planning RDD, Ashraf Wani, all BDOs, Panchayat Secretaries, Technical Assistants and other concerned officers and officials.

Secretary RDD reviews draft DPR for 'Viksit Village' initiative in J&K 90 villages to be transformed into model growth centres: Aijaz Asad

KT News Desk

Jammu, Feb 24: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, chaired a meeting to review the Draft Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the proposed 'Viksit Village' initiative, envisaging holistic development of one village in each Assembly constituency across Jammu and Kashmir.

With a proposed allocation of 2 crore per village and an outlay of 1,800 lakh under the 2026-27 capital expenditure

budget, the programme aims to transform 90 villages into model growth centres.

The initiative seeks to create self-reliant, economically productive and environmentally sustainable villages through comprehensive development covering infrastructure, digital smart libraries, modern crèche facilities, well-equipped youth gymnasiums, dedicated recreation centres for senior citizens, advanced solar power infrastructure facilities, skill empowerment & career development facilities, community



sports excellence hubs, solid and liquid waste management and livelihood generation opportunities.

Emphasising alignment with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the Secretary stressed scientific planning, community participation, convergence across departments and adherence to technical standards. He directed that DPRs incorporate sustainability components such as solar lighting, rainwater harvesting, DEWATS and Plastic Waste Management Units, while

ensuring geo-tagging, third-party inspections and ODF Plus standards.

He directed that villages be identified in coordination with elected representatives, with DPRs to be finalised within two days of identification. Implementation is to be planned over two years, with the selection process to be completed by March.

Senior officers, including Directors of RDD Jammu and Kashmir, Director Finance and Joint Director Planning attended the meeting.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

New era for

natural lighting to reduce energy consumption, and the use of locally sourced eco-friendly materials to minimize the carbon footprint. This project is targeted to achieve a prestigious 5-star GRIHA rating," reads the handout

The project is expected to significantly boost tourism and economic growth by improving connectivity to iconic attractions including Dal Lake, Shankaracharya Temple, and the Mughal Gardens, thereby generating employment opportunities, stimulating investment, and reinforcing Srinagar's position as a premier tourist and economic destination.

"The development of the civil enclave thus represents a transformative step toward delivering world-class infrastructure, offering better facilities for passengers and enhanced connectivity, while showcasing the cultural and natural splendour of Kashmir to the world," reads the handout. (KNO)

PM Modi terms

to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) wrote on X: "Today's Cabinet decision on expanding the Srinagar airport will boost the economy of J&K. It will strengthen connectivity and encourage tourism."

According to an official release accessed by the KNO the CCEA on Tuesday approved the development of the civil enclave at the Srinagar airport for an estimated cost of Rs 1,677 crore. The project will be spread across 73.18 acres, and the new terminal building will come up in 71,500 square meters.

The project is estimated to cost Rs 1,677 crore, and the terminal building will be designed to handle 2,900 passengers during peak hours with an annual capacity of 10 million passengers per annum.

The government also said the project is expected to generate employment opportunities and stimulate investments.

LG SINHA EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO PM MODI

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister Modi for approving the development of the Civil Enclave at Srinagar International Airport.

In a post on X, the Lieutenant Governor said: "J&K Skies Soar: dawn of a bold aviation era. I am grateful to Hon'ble PM Sh Narendra Modi Ji for major expansion of Civil Enclave at Srinagar International Airport. I vividly remember announcement we made at Srinagar on 25th Sept 2021 in presence of then Hon'ble Minister for @MoCA_Gol."

He said that CCEA's Rs.1,677 crore approval for a new 71,500 sqm Civil Enclave marks a defining leap in connectivity for the Valley. It is designed to serve 2,900 passengers during peak hours and an annual capacity of 10 million passengers per annum.

"Better connectivity will ensure more tourists, more investment and more jobs. The new Civil Enclave at Srinagar will upgrade Valley's economic future and transforming Srinagar from a beautiful destination into a thriving one," LG Sinha added.

He said, "Under the leadership of Hon'ble PM Sh. Narendra Modi Ji, Jammu Airport's new terminal is set for completion by end of this year. Upon commissioning, the advanced infrastructure in the renowned spiritual city will bolster connectivity and catalyze remarkable economic advancement." (KNO)

CM rolls out ₹84.41 cr

Department (H&UD-ULB), to be executed by PWD. The project envisages construction of a grand entry gate and a municipal guest house, upgradation of the MC Terminal building into a Smart Library, development of playing areas and club facilities, and comprehensive improvement of streets and pathways through cobble stone and tiling works. It also includes installation of street lights and garbage bins, along with façade improvements, murals and colour-coding of the market to enhance the town's aesthetic appeal.

He laid the foundation stone for the 750.78 lakh road project connecting Bus Adda to District Hospital, including widening of Mirani Chowk, aimed at easing traffic congestion and improving connectivity.

Similarly, at District Hospital Ganderbal, the Chief Minister inaugurated a CT Scan Machine installed at a cost of 840 lakh under the Health & Medical Education Department through DSHK, significantly augmenting diagnostic facilities for patients.

Likewise, at Rakhi Harran, he laid the foundation stone for a 4.5 MLD capacity Sewage Treatment Plant under the Used Water Management Project of Municipal Council Ganderbal (SBM 2.0), costing 1,999.20 lakh under H&UD (UEED). The plant is expected to substantially improve sanitation standards and environmental sustainability in the town.

From Dak Bungalow, Ganderbal, the

Chief Minister, who represents Ganderbal Constituency, e-inaugurated several key projects. These included the Water Supply Scheme (WSS) at Urpash Naderbagh, constructed at a cost of 679.14 lakh, WSS Buderkund at 399 lakh, and WSS Manasbal at 130 lakh, all executed by the Rural Water Supply Division, Ganderbal under the Jal Shakti Department and Jal Jeevan Mission.

He also laid e-foundation of works of various roads in the Ganderbal constituency costing 1,288.40 lakh under PWD, and improvement of various infrastructure in schools in the district at a cost of 902.69 lakh under the School Education Department.

The Chief Minister further laid e-foundation stones for upgradation of inner link roads of Treesa Safapora, including link roads at Check Yangaroo in Lar, Ganderbal, at a cost of 302.11 lakh, as well as improvement and upgradation of Kohistan Colony Canal Roads along with allied works amounting to 379.62 lakh, both under PWD.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister reiterated that development must translate into tangible improvements in the daily lives of people.

"From healthcare and sanitation to roads, schools and drinking water, these projects reflect our resolve to ensure comprehensive development of Ganderbal. Our focus is not merely on announcements but on timely execution and quality outcomes," he said.

He emphasized that investments in urban beautification, clean water supply, modern healthcare infrastructure and road connectivity would not only strengthen public services but also create economic opportunities and raise the overall quality of life.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also distributed Mission Yuva disbursement letters worth 55 lakh among beneficiaries.

Later, the Chief Minister held a public interaction at the Dak Bungalow Ganderbal, where he listened to the demands and grievances of people from various areas of the district. Delegations from Phekh, Safapora, Manigam, Batwina, Nunar, Wakura, Lar, Sherpathri, Yangooora, the Traders Federation Ganderbal, the Health Employees Confederation Ganderbal and other groups apprised him of issues relating to drinking water supply, lift irrigation, upgradation of sports infrastructure, establishment of a fire service station, and improvement of schools, among other demands.

Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Itoo, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Jatin Kishore, Director Urban Local Bodies Kashmir Qazi Sarwar, Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal Khalil Poswal and other concerned officers accompanied the Chief Minister during the tour. Minister for Jal Shakti Javed Ahmed Rana participated in the foundation laying ceremony through virtual mode. (KNO)

DGP calls for

meeting, SSP Sopore Iftkhar Talib—JKPS presented a detailed briefing on the current security environment, counter-terror measures, anti-narcotics operations, and overall law and order management in the district.

The DGP reviewed operational strategies, intelligence grid, area domination plans, and measures being undertaken to dismantle the terror ecosystem, a police spokesperson said in a statement issued here.

Addressing the officers, the DGP stressed the need for focused and sustained action against elements supporting terrorism and directed decisive and uncompromising kinetic operations against Pakistani terrorists. He emphasised strengthening intelligence generation, maintaining operational momentum, and ensuring close coordination among all security agencies.

The meeting was attended by SSP Sopore, Additional SP Sopore, all SDPOs, DySP Ops, SHOs, and DOs of Police District Sopore.

The DGP appreciated the efforts of Sopore Police and urged officers to remain vigilant, proactive, and committed to ensuring peace, stability, and security in the district.

Kashmir parts

indicates that while the Kashmir continued to witness unusually high temperatures for February, parts of Ladakh experienced a cooling trend compared to Monday.

In Srinagar, the summer capital, the maximum temperature settled at 21.0°C, which is 10.0°C above normal — unchanged from Monday. Qazigund also remained steady at 21.2°C, hovering 11.1°C above average, one of the highest departures in the Valley.

Pahalgam recorded a slight rise to 17.6°C from 17.3°C a day earlier, while Kupwara dipped marginally to 20.4°C from 20.6°C. Kokernag saw a drop to 18.4°C compared to Monday's 19.0°C, though it continued to remain nearly 10°C above normal. Gulmarg held

steady at 11.2°C, around 9.2°C above the seasonal average.

In the Jammu division, temperatures showed minor fluctuations. Jammu city recorded 25.3°C, up from 25.0°C on Monday, remaining about 3°C above normal. Banihal rose sharply to 21.4°C from 20.2°C, increasing its positive departure to 8.3°C. Batote also climbed to 19.9°C from 19.4°C.

However, Baderwah registered a noticeable fall, dropping to 18.2°C from 20.1°C recorded the previous day. Katra slipped slightly to 24.5°C from 25.0°C.

In the Ladakh region, Leh remained unchanged at 7.0°C, while Kargil saw a significant fall to 7.0°C from 9.3°C recorded on Monday. Nubra Valley also registered a decline, settling at 10.1°C compared to 11.1°C a day earlier.

Meteorological officials have predicted that dry weather conditions will prevail across J&K in the coming days. (KNO)

Omar urges Kashmiri

book tickets and return. If things remain normal, you can go back later."

Asked about the reports about Kashmiri students facing harassment at a private university in Punjab, the Chief Minister said he would take up the matter with his counterpart in Punjab. "The Punjab government has always supported Jammu and Kashmir. I will speak to the Punjab Chief Minister. If Kashmiri students are facing any difficulty there or elsewhere, it will be resolved," he said.

CM Omar said that he would ensure that no Kashmiri faces any sort of harassment in any part of the country.

The Chief Minister, while referring to the development works taking place in his constituency, said, "Several key development projects worth around Rs 80 crore were either inaugurated or had their foundation stones laid in Ganderbal today. I could not visit the area for the past few days due to the ongoing Assembly session and Darbar move in Jammu. This my own area."

He said the projects that were set rolling today include installation of a CT scan facility at Ganderbal Hospital, multiple water supply schemes, a major drainage project for the town, and a bypass road to decongest Beehama Chowk.

"Several projects needed by Ganderbal have now been approved and work on them will start soon," he added.

The Chief Minister also distributed sanction letters under Mission Yuva to beneficiaries to enable them to start their own ventures.

He said road projects at four locations were also taken up and officials have been directed to expedite the works to ensure completion within the year.

On vacancies in various departments, CM Omar said the issue was not limited to Ganderbal. "There are vacancies in revenue, health and education sectors across Jammu and Kashmir. It cannot be resolved overnight, but we are gradually addressing the situation. In some places, additional charge has been given, but no post will remain vacant permanently," he said.

On concerns that local youth were not being allowed to use the synthetic athletic track in Ganderbal, he said the facility was constructed for the Physical Education College but assured that the matter would be discussed with the authorities. "If local youth want to use the track, they should register themselves and I will ensure they are given permission," he said. (KNO)

Security beefed up

Officials said a comprehensive security grid has been activated in Srinagar, particularly around the university campus in the Hazratbal area.

Multiple checkpoints have been set up, and frisking and verification drives intensified as part of the arrangements.

Senior police and civil administration officers have reviewed the security and logistical preparations. Personnel from the police and central armed forces have been deployed in strength at key locations, while access to the venue will be strictly regulated, they said.

Security forces have been deployed in strength at vulnerable locations across Srinagar, with heightened alertness maintained to counter any potential militant threats, officials said.

They said checking and surveillance have been intensified across the Valley as part of the security drill ahead of the Vice President's visit.

Vehicles are being subjected to random checks at multiple points, particularly on routes leading to the Hazratbal area, where the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir is scheduled to be held.

Security personnel have set up naka points and are conducting frisking and verification of commuters to ensure law and order, officials added.

The convocation is expected to be a major

academic event, with over 59,000 degrees to be awarded to students from various streams. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah are also expected to attend the ceremony. (KNO)

120 websites of

According to the documents, all affected websites were restored after undergoing a comprehensive security audit.

The audit was conducted by CERT-In empanelled auditors, who carried out vulnerability assessments and identified potential security gaps. These vulnerabilities were subsequently examined and rectified by the concerned departments and development teams.

Upon satisfactory closure of all observations, the auditors issued a "Safe to Host (STH)" certificate, certifying that the websites met prescribed security standards. Following this clearance, the websites were made live again at the Data Centre in accordance with hosting and security protocols.

It is worthwhile to mention that these websites became inaccessible in May last year, temporarily affecting the delivery of online services to the public. (KNO)

J&K teachers may

promotion, he will not be considered eligible without he/she having qualified the TET," it reads.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Secretary to School Education Department (SED) has said that in exercise of the powers vested in the Government and in compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court of India, JKBOSE, State School Standards Authority (SSSA) is designated as Nodal Agency for conducting TET for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, with immediate effect.

"The JKBOSE, SSSA shall take immediate necessary steps for operationalization of the TET examination framework in accordance with the Action Plan formulated in the meeting held in October-2025," it reads.

SED has also said that JKBOSE shall develop and notify a detailed schedule for conduct of TET.

"The board shall coordinate with NIC, School Education Department, Higher Education Department, Home Department, and other concerned authorities for logistical, technical and security arrangements," it reads.

It also said that the board shall ensure alignment of syllabus and examination standards with the guidelines of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), with suitable contextual modifications.

"The secretary, J&K BOSE/SSSA shall furnish a comprehensive action plan including timelines and preparatory status, to the School Education Department within the shortest possible time," reads the order.

Meanwhile, SED in the order while referring the returned and the findings with advice that was sought from the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, UT of J&K said that if any of such teachers fail to qualify the TET within the time that we have allowed, they shall have to quit service. They may be compulsorily retired; and paid whatever terminal benefits they are entitled to.

In a query whether TET qualifications are mandatory for teachers in both government and private schools, including those registered and unregistered, the department had responded with, "If we are to accept the contention of the in-service teachers, the above said proviso would be rendered nugatory obtaining the TET qualification under the RTE Act is mandatory and the consequence of non-obtaining such qualification flowing from the scheme of the RTE Act is that the in-service teachers would cease to have any right to continue in service."

"Reference may also be made to letter dated 3rd August, 2017 (discussed in Paragraph 69 above) issued by the MHRD which provided a deadline beyond which the in-service teachers, having not qualified the TET, would not be permitted to continue in service," it reads.

It also said, "As such in view of the above, the TET qualifications are mandatory for teachers in both government and private schools, including registered schools. Apposite to mention that the School Education Department requires to proceed against the unregistered institutions in accordance with law."

In another query as to whether existing teachers need to qualify TET to continue in service or seek promotions, except for those with less than 5 years of service left before retirement, the department has responded that those teachers who have less than five years' service left, as on date, may continue in service till they attain the age of superannuation without qualifying the TET.

"The Supreme Court in Paras 216 to 218 of the judgment has inter-alia held that Bearing in

mind their predicament, we invoke our powers under Article 142 of the Constitution of India and direct that those teachers who have less than five years' service left, as on date, may continue in service till they attain the age of superannuation without qualifying the TET," it reads.

"However, we make it clear that if any such teacher having less than five years' service left) aspires for promotion, he will not be considered eligible without he/she having qualified the TET," it reads.

"Insofar as in-service teachers recruited prior to enactment of the RTE Act and having more than 5 years to retire on superannuation are concerned, they shall be under an obligation to qualify the TET within 2 years from date in order to continue in service. If any of such teachers fail to qualify the TET within the time that we have allowed, they shall have to quit service. They may be compulsorily retired; and paid whatever terminal benefits they are entitled to," reads the opinion/advise of the department.

It also said, "We add a rider that to qualify for the terminal benefits, such teachers must have put in the qualifying period of service, in accordance with the rules. If any teacher has not put in the qualifying service and there is some deficiency, his/her case may be considered."

"Subject to what we have said above, it is reiterated that those aspiring for appointment and those in-service teachers aspiring for appointment by promotion must, however, qualify the TET; or else, they would have no right of consideration of their candidature," it reads.

The Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, UT of J&K has further said that the existing teachers need to qualify TET. The Supreme Court while exercising the powers under Art. 142 of the Constitution of India has carved an exception with regard to the in-service teachers who have less than 5 years of service left as provided in para 216 of the judgment as submitted above.

In another query as to whether the TET requirement is retrospectively applicable to teachers appointed before and after the introduction of TET in 2010.

The department has said that in this regard, it is stated that requirement of TET is applicable from the date it was introduced to all teachers as per the scheme of RTE Act, and all those in-service teachers except those having less than 5 years left are required to qualify TET even if appointed before the enactment of RTE Act. (KNO)

Army maintains

have secured one gold medal each to feature on the medal table. Andhra Pradesh has won two silver medals, while Chandigarh has secured one silver and one bronze. Delhi and host Jammu and Kashmir have won one bronze medal each so far in the ongoing competitions. GULMARG LEG

The competitions began on Monday with the men's Nordic skiing sprint, where Army athletes swept the podium. Sunny Singh clinched the gold medal, followed by Shubham Parihar with silver and Manjeet securing bronze, giving the Army an early lead in the Games.

In the women's 15 km Nordic skiing event, CRPF's Kajal Kumari delivered a strong performance to win gold, while her teammate Renu Dan secured silver. Karnataka's Bhavani TN finished third to claim bronze.

The men's snowboarding slalom further strengthened the Army's position, with Vivek Rana winning gold and Kulwinder Sharma taking silver. Host Jammu and Kashmir opened its medal account through Vikar Ahmad Lone, who secured bronze.

Army athletes continued their dominance in the men's Alpine giant slalom event, claiming a clean sweep of the podium. Mayank Panwar won gold, Baqir Hussain secured silver and Devendra Gurung finished with bronze.

In the women's Alpine giant slalom, Himachal Pradesh's Sandhya Thakur won gold, while Aanchal Thakur added a silver medal for the state. Karnataka's Zia Aryan secured bronze to complete the podium.

The competitions on day 2 added further momentum, with additional gold medals decided in Nordic skiing and ski mountaineering events. CRPF's Kajal Kumari Rai won her second consecutive gold in the women's 10 km Nordic race, while Army skier Padma Nangail led an Army podium sweep in the men's 10 km Nordic event. Uttarakhand and Maharashtra also entered the gold medal list through ski mountaineering victories.

Competitions are being held in Ski Mountaineering, Alpine Skiing, Snowboarding, Nordic Skiing, Ice Hockey and Ice Skating, attracting athletes from across the country.

Officials in Gulmarg said the games are witnessing strong participation with over 400 athletes from 25 states racing the slopes, reinforcing Gulmarg's growing status as a premier winter sports destination in India. (KNO)

India-US travel corridor reflects deepening economic, people-to-people ties: VP

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 24: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Tuesday said the travel corridor between India and the United States reflects not only growing economic engagement but also deep people-to-people ties rooted in shared values, entrepreneurial spirit and a vibrant diaspora.

While addressing the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum's USISPF Tourism Summit 2026, the vice president said that tourism is more than an industry, calling it a bridge between cultures and a global economic opportunity and a powerful instrument of soft diplomacy. The VP said, "The travel corridor between India



and the United States reflects not only growing economic engagement but also deep people-to-people ties rooted in shared values, entrepreneurial spirit and a vibrant diaspora." "Tourism is more than an

authenticity, sustainability, culture, heritage, wellness and meaningful connections.

"This presents an extraordinary opportunity for both our nations to collaborate in building resilient and responsible tourism ecosystems," he said.

During the event, USISPF launched its report titled "State of India's Tourism (2026)", which was formally presented to the vice president by Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

The summit, organised at the USISPF office here, brought together policy-makers, industry leaders and key stakeholders to deliberate on the future of India's tourism sector.

industry. It is a bridge between the cultures and a global economic opportunity and a powerful instrument of soft diplomacy," he said.

The VP noted that travellers today seek experiences,

Govt raises MSP for raw jute to Rs 5,925 per quintal for 2026-27 season

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved a hike in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of raw jute by Rs 275 to Rs 5,925 per quintal for the marketing season 2026-27.

The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in its first meeting at the Prime Minister's new office, Seva Teerth. The new MSP will ensure a return of 61.8 per cent over the all-India weighted average cost of production. "The announced MSP of raw jute for Marketing season 2026-27 is in line with the principle of fixing MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production as announced by the Government in the Budget 2018-19," Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters after the meeting.

Cabinet approves three railway projects worth Rs 9,072 cr covering 8 districts in 4 states

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 24: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday approved three Railway ministry projects with a total cost of approximately 9,072 crore.

The three projects include the doubling of the Gondia-Jabalpur section and the laying of the third and fourth lines between Punarakh-Kiul and Gamhar-ia-Chandil sections.

The government said that these projects covering eight districts across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand will increase the existing network of the Indian Railways by about 307 km.

"The proposed multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approximately 5,407 villages which have a population of about 98 lakhs," an official statement said.

It added, "The increased



line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. These multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion."

The Railway ministry said the projects are in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a new India which will make people of the region 'Atmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive

development in the area which will enhance their employment/self-employment opportunities.

Outlining the benefits, the statement said, "The projects are planned on PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan with focus on enhancing multi-modal connectivity and logistic efficiency through integrated planning and stakeholder consultations. These projects will provide seamless connectivity for the movement of people, goods and services."

AI Summit protest: Delhi court sends IYC president Chib to 4-day police custody

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 24: A Delhi court on Tuesday sent Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Uday Bhanu Chib to four days of police custody in connection with the shirtless protest at the India AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam on February 20.

Judicial Magistrate Ravi allowed four days of custody to the police to question Chib, after the investigating officer (IO) sought seven days of custodial interrogation.

"The application of the IO is partly allowed. The accused is remanded to police custody for four days commencing from today till February 28 (inclusive). On expiry of the said period, the IO shall produce the accused before the concerned court or the concerned duty magistrate, along with a detailed remand report," the court said.

It underlined that during the custody, the IO had to abide by all constitutional and statutory safeguards, including those relating to medical examination, maintenance of the case diary and production of the accused before the court within the stipulated time.

The court also "expressly" recorded Chib's right to meet his counsel during interrogation according to Section 38 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), but clarified that such



a meeting could not hamper the legitimate needs of investigation.

The provision says, "When any person is arrested and interrogated by the police, he shall be entitled to meet an advocate of his choice during interrogation, though not throughout interrogation."

The magistrate said that the advocate's presence would be permitted at such intervals as reasonably fixed by the IO, but not throughout the interrogation and not in a manner that directly interfered with questioning.

Besides, the presence and permission had to remain consistent with the statutory scheme and judicial pronouncements, he said.

"Nothing stated in this order shall be construed as an expression on the merits of the case or as a final determination of the applicability of any specific penal provision, including Section 197(1)

(d) BNS (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration) which shall be considered at the appropriate stage on the basis of evidence collected," the court said.

According to the BNS provision, "Whoever, by words either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or through electronic communication or otherwise, makes or publishes false or misleading information jeopardising the sovereignty, unity and integrity or security of India, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both."

The arrest memo alleged that Chib was the "main conspirator and mastermind of the incident of unlawful assembly" during the summit, where "anti-national slogans were raised" by the co-accused, who also tried to "incite a riot-like situation".

Indian tech industry revenues to grow 6.1 pc to USD 315 bn in FY26: Nasscom



PTI

Mumbai, Feb 24: Indian tech industry revenues for FY26 are set to grow 6.1 per cent to USD 315 billion,

Nasscom said on Tuesday.

The industry lobby grouping revised up its FY25 revenues number to USD 297 billion from USD 282.6 billion earlier.

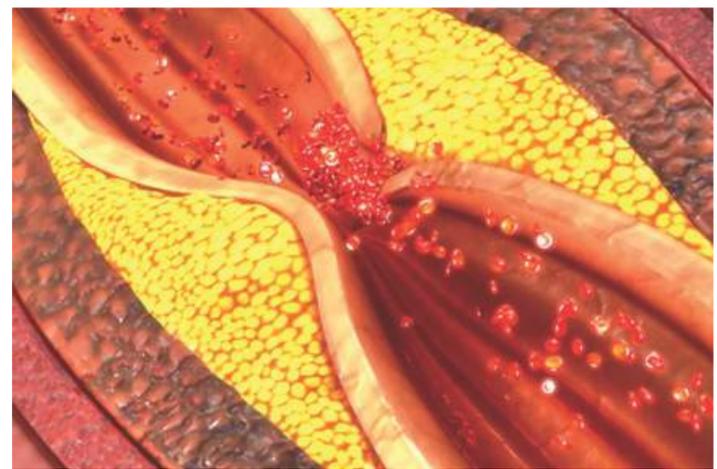
The revenue growth in FY26 increased marginally to 6.1 per cent in FY26 from 5.9 per cent in FY25 despite the headwinds, it said.

Its President Rajesh Nambiar said the industry continues to be a net job generator, and the overall number of employees is set to increase 2.3 per cent to 5.95 million in FY26 from 5.82 million in the year-ago period.

Nambiar said the overall number of employees added by the tech industry in FY26 is 1.35 lakh, which is marginally better than the 1.33 lakh added in FY25.

Amid the intense focus on AI, Nasscom said USD 10-12 billion of overall revenues for the sector come from the new-age tech solutions.

'Even lower levels of artery-clogging plaque may cause heart attack risk in women'



PTI

New Delhi, Feb 24: Women may develop a risk of heart attack even at lower levels of plaque deposition in the arteries, according to a study.

Women are known to typically have lower amounts of artery-clogging plaque compared to men.

However, researchers, including those from Harvard Medical School in the US, said it is unknown how difference in plaque levels impacts one's risk of a major adverse cardiovascular event.

"Our findings underscore that women are not 'protected' from coronary events despite having lower plaque volumes," senior author Borek Foldyna, an assistant professor of radiology at Harvard

Medical School said.

"Because women have smaller coronary arteries, a small amount of plaque can have a bigger impact. Moderate increases in plaque burden appear to have disproportionate risk in women, suggesting that standard definitions of high risk may underestimate risk in women," Foldyna said.

The study, published in the Circulation: Cardiovascular Imaging journal, analysed data of more than 4,200 outpatients with chest pain and no history of coronary artery disease.

Total plaque volume and total plaque burden — amount of plaque relative to the size of the blood vessel — were measured.

Researchers found that despite having lower plaque

volumes and fewer plaques with high-risk characteristics, women experienced similar rates of major adverse cardiovascular events as men.

"Among 4,267 patients (2,199 women), plaque was less frequent in women (55 per cent versus 75 per cent), with lower total plaque volume but similar total PB (plaque burden) and incident major adverse cardiovascular events (2.3 per cent versus 3.4 per cent)," the authors wrote.

"Major adverse cardiovascular event risk became elevated at lower PB (plaque burden) in women than in men," they said.

Risk of a major adverse cardiovascular event emerged at 20 per cent total plaque burden among women and 28 per cent for men.

Movies Watch List

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

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

Wednesday, 25th February

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PM Modi's second visit to Israel set to upgrade strategic ties

PTI

New Delhi, Feb 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a two-day visit to Israel beginning Wednesday to shore up bilateral defence and trade cooperation amid the ongoing tensions in the Middle-east including deteriorating ties between the US and Iran.

Modi's engagements will include his address to Israel's parliament, wide-ranging talks with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu and a meeting with President Isaac Herzog.

It is learnt that boosting overall defence and security cooperation between the two sides will be a major area of discussions during delegation level talks involving the two prime ministers on Thursday.

Netanyahu is scheduled to host a private dinner for Modi on Wednesday night.

It will be Modi's second visit to Israel in nine years. The India-Israel relationship was elevated to the level of strategic partnership during Modi's first visit to that country in July, 2017.

Netanyahu had made a return visit to India in January 2018. India and Israel share a robust strategic partnership with strong cooperation across science and technology, innovation, defence and security, trade and investment, agriculture, water, and people-to-people relations.

In their talks, the two prime ministers are also likely to deliberate on the prevailing situation in the Middle-East including in Gaza.

Following the outbreak of the Israel-Iran conflict in June last, Netanyahu and Modi spoke twice on the phone.

On October 9, Modi dialled Netanyahu and congratulated him on the progress made under President Donald Trump's Gaza peace plan.

There has been an upswing in the India-Israel ties in the last few years



including in the areas of defence, scientific research, cybersecurity and innovation.

The defence cooperation has emerged as an important pillar of the partnership between the two sides with Israel supplying a plethora of military platforms and weapon systems to India.

Last November, during the visit of India's defence secretary to Israel, an important agreement on defence cooperation was signed.

As India is looking at developing an indigenous air defence shield called "Sudarshan Chakra", it is learnt that New Delhi would like to explore the possibility of incorporating certain elements from Israel's Iron Dome all-weather air defence system that can intercept and destroy missiles and artillery shells.

The trade and investment ties between the two sides are also witnessing steady

progress.

During the visit to Israel of Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal in November, the term of reference (ToR) for the launch of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations between India and Israel was signed.

In September, the two sides had inked a Bilateral Investment Agreement (BIA) to expand economic cooperation.

The people-to-people ties between the two countries are also an important aspect of the overall relations with over 41,000-strong Indian diaspora playing a key role in the two-way engagement.

In November 2023, India and Israel signed a bilateral framework agreement to facilitate the temporary and legal employment of Indian workers in Israel.

Since then, 20,000 Indians arrived in Israel, both under the Government-to-Government route and through private channels, according to officials.

Ton-up Pundir, Yawer shine as J&K dominate fancied Karnataka on Day 1

PTI

Hubballi, Feb 24: A masterful unbeaten century from Shubham Pundir and a tenacious 88 from young Yawer Hassan saw Jammu & Kashmir seize control of the Ranji Trophy final, ending the opening day at a solid 284 for two and leaving Karnataka's bowlers searching for answers here on Tuesday.

Pundir, the 27-year-old left-handed batter, was 117 not out at stumps and giving him company was Abdul Samad on 52, the duo having added 105 runs for the third wicket after skipper Paras Dogra retired hurt.

This was after Pundir and Yawer stitched together a stand of 139 runs to lay the foundation for a big total against the eight-time champions, whose batters have a great record at this venue.

Pundir reached his hundred in style, smashing Shikhar Shetty for a six over deep mid-wicket. He marked reaching the landmark by removing his helmet and raising his arms in the direction of the dressing room.

Earlier, on a pitch that is likely to break up as the game progresses, Jammu and Kashmir won a good toss, and Dogra's decision to bat first was on expected lines.

Playing in their maiden Ranji final after an inspired run that saw them claim away victories against established teams such as Madhya Pradesh and Bengal in the knockouts, J&K lost Qamran Iqbal (6) early.

The opener poked at a Prasad Krishna delivery that straightened



a bit to induce an outside edge for KL Rahul to complete a comfortable catch in the slip cordon.

The lack of foot movement from Qamran played a part in the day's first wicket, but J&K's decision to bat first was vindicated by Yawer and Pundir, the duo carrying the team to 104 for one at lunch.

Yawer was unbeaten on 57 at the lunch break, and Pundir was on 38 as the duo batted with confidence to keep the experienced Karnataka bowling attack at bay.

It was not easy out there in the middle and there were numerous plays and misses, and a few streaky edges too, but both Yawer and Pundir saw off the difficult period against the new ball.

Yawer and Pundir may not have looked the most fluent, but they were effective nonetheless, stitching together a big partnership for

the second wicket while keeping the scoreboard ticking at around three runs an over.

The Karnataka bowlers -- the three pacers and leg-spinner Shreyas Gopal -- were disciplined with their line and length but didn't get any reward for their perseverance. Shreyas, the season's leading wicket-taker with 55 scalps heading into the title clash, too beat the bat on a few occasions but did not taste success, even as Yawer and Pundir looked to go after him with a determination to not allow him to settle into a nice rhythm.

The 22-year-old Yawer, who made his First Class debut in former India captain Rohit Sharma's last red-ball game in 2025 and had gone nine games without a fifty, chose the big occasion to show his wares and found the fence 13 times.

Turning grief into glory, Kajal eyes bigger stage after double gold at KIWG

PTI

Gulmarg, Feb 24: Two races, two gold medals and a promise kept.

Nordic skier Kajal Kumari Rai scripted an emotional comeback at the Khelo India Winter Games, clinching back-to-back gold a year after a personal tragedy had derailed her campaign.

Kajal's world had come crashing down in 2025 when she lost her father just five days before the Games. She left her training midway and returned to Shillong to perform the last rites.

Though she came back to Gulmarg to compete, she could not find success and left with unfinished business.

The CRPF cross-country skier, however, resolved to return stronger.

On Monday, the 25-year-old from Meghalaya struck gold in the Nordic women's 15km sprint event. She followed it up on Tuesday with another commanding performance to win the 10km sprint, completing a memorable double.

Kajal comes from a land where Nordic skiing is not just uncommon, it is almost



unimaginable.

"We don't have this kind of weather," said the Shillong girl.

"Even surviving in snow is a big deal for us. Forget competing in a sport that tests your endurance like this."

She had only started skiing in 2024. For the past three weeks, Kajal trained relentlessly at the Indian Army's High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) here.

"They trained us well. They improved our technique and gave us confidence," she said.

Team manager Magesh K saw her transformation first hand. "She has always worked

extremely hard," he said.

"But more than that, she has the spirit of an athlete. That spirit is rare."

Kajal credits her friend and fellow CRPF soldier Lokesh Kumar for helping her believe in her ability.

"I saw athletes from states without infrastructure succeed," Kajal said.

"I promised myself I would not complain. I would focus on my goal."

She now harbours ambitions of competing at the Olympics and the World Championships, hoping to carry her father's story and sacrifice onto the global stage.

Zelenskyy says Putin has 'not broken' Ukrainians as country marks 4 years of Russia's all-out war

AP

Kyiv, Feb 24: More than a dozen senior European officials were in the Ukrainian capital on Tuesday in a show of support on the fourth anniversary of Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine -- a grim milestone in a war that has killed tens of thousands of people and put European leaders on edge about the scale of Moscow's ambitions on the continent.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was defiant despite the devastating toll -- insisting that Russia has not "broken Ukrainians" nor triumphed in the war.

Zelenskyy said his country has withstood the onslaught by Russia's bigger and better-equipped army, which over the past year of fighting captured just 0.79 per cent of Ukraine's territory, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank.

North Korea ruling party promotes Kim Jong Un's younger sister

AFP

Seoul, Feb 24: North Korea's ruling party has elevated leader Kim Jong Un's powerful younger sister to a top position, state media said Tuesday, a sign of her far-reaching influence within the reclusive nation.

Thousands of party elites have packed the capital Pyongyang for a once-in-five-years summit of the ruling Workers' Party, a gathering that directs state efforts on everything from diplomacy to war planning.

Kim Yo Jong -- long considered one of her brother's closest lieutenants -- was promoted to department director

within the party's apex central committee, the Korean Central News Agency said.

Although it was not clear which department she would lead, she has previously held a senior role within the party's propaganda unit.

Kim Yo Jong has in recent years emerged as one of the most powerful figures in North Korea, playing a highly visible role in diplomacy, nuclear negotiations and other matters of state.

"Kim Yo Jong is one of the very few people Kim Jong Un can trust and rely on," said Ahn Chan-il, a researcher originally from North Korea.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

رمضان المبارك

1447 H / 2026 CE

وقت افطار	اعتقاسمحرى	رمضان المبارك	تاريخ
06:34 PM	05:31 AM	16	06
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06:35 PM	05:28 AM	18	08
06:36 PM	05:27 AM	19	09
06:37 PM	05:26 AM	20	10
06:38 PM	05:25 AM	21	11
06:38 PM	05:24 AM	22	12
06:39 PM	05:23 AM	23	13
06:40 PM	05:20 AM	24	14
06:41 PM	05:19 AM	25	15
06:42 PM	05:18 AM	26	16
06:42 PM	05:16 AM	27	17
06:43 PM	05:15 AM	28	18
06:44 PM	05:14 AM	29	19
06:45 PM	05:12 AM	30	20

وقت افطار	اعتقاسمحرى	رمضان المبارك	تاريخ
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06:25 PM	05:44 AM	6	24
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06:27 PM	05:41 AM	8	26
06:28 PM	05:40 AM	9	27
06:29 PM	05:39 AM	10	28
06:30 PM	05:38 AM	11	01 MAR
06:31 PM	05:37 AM	12	02
06:32 PM	05:36 AM	13	03
06:33 PM	05:34 AM	14	04
06:33 PM	05:33 AM	15	05

DUA FOR SEHRI
وَبصَوْمٍ عَدَّ نَوَيْتٍ 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

Kashmir Thunder
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