



PM Modi calls for dialogue, diplomacy to resolve West Asia conflict

PTI
New Delhi, Mar 02: The current situation in West Asia is a matter of deep concern and India supports the resolution of all disputes through dialogue and diplomacy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday. As the situation deteriorates following new Iranian strikes in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, India is constantly monitoring the developments primarily in the context of the safety and security of around nine million Indians living in West Asia. Since Sunday, Modi has held phone conversations with the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia



Mohammed bin Salman and King of Bahrain Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa. "We will continue to work with all countries to ensure the safety of all Indian citizens in the region," he said. The situation in West Asia figured in the Modi-Carney talks. "The thrust of the discussions was how we are all concerned

about the escalating situation in Iran, how dialogue and diplomacy should be the norm to resolve all underlying issues, and how there should not be any targeting of civilians who have nothing to do with this," said Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs P Kumaran at a media briefing. Following his phone conversation with the Saudi crown prince, Modi said, "India condemns the recent attacks on Saudi Arabia in violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity." "We agreed that the earliest restoration of regional peace and stability is of utmost importance. I thanked him for looking after the well-being of the Indian community in these difficult times," Modi said on X. In his | [More on P6](#)

LG Sinha visits bereaved family of SSF personnel



KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 02: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited the family of Special Security

Force (SSF) Personnel, SGCT Sunny Salgotra, who had lost his life in an unfortunate road accident. The Lieutenant Governor paid

homage to the departed soul. He expressed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family and assured all assistance and support from the government.

MHA alerts states to possible unrest after US-Israel strikes on Iran

Ahmad Taimur

New Delhi, Mar 02: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued a nationwide security alert to all states and Union Territories, warning of possible violence and sporadic protests in the wake of recent US and Israeli attacks on Iran, officials said. The advisory, per news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), has been issued against the backdrop of protests by members of the Shia community across several parts of the country following the assassination of Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on February 28. The ministry noted that rapidly evolving international developments have the potential to impact India's internal security situation. In its communication to state governments, the MHA has directed security agencies to remain on high alert and closely monitor the activities of both pro-Iran and anti-Iran groups. States have also been instructed to strengthen security arrangements around Iranian, American and Israeli embassies and consulates, as well as other diplomatic establishments. The advisory flags potential threats from Shia militias and terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda. Intelligence inputs suggest that extremist groups may seek to exploit the prevailing tensions to foment unrest or carry out disruptive activities, it said. According to the alert, major tourist destinations, Jewish institutions and establishments linked to Western countries could be potential targets, apart from diplomatic missions. The Centre has advised states to step up the deployment of security personnel at critical and sensitive locations. Local police units have been asked to | [More on P6](#)

Kashmiri families seek urgent evacuation of students from Iran

Urge Centre, J&K govt to act swiftly

Embassy begins temporary relocation of students

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Mar 02: Anxiety and distress gripped several households across J&K as parents of Kashmiri students studying in Iran voiced serious concerns over the safety of their children amid rapidly escalating hostilities. Dozens of worried parents gathered in the Bemina area of Srinagar on Monday, making an emotional appeal to the Government of India for the urgent evacuation of students from Tehran and other affected regions. The families, speaking to the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), described the situation as

"volatile and unpredictable", with fears intensifying due to reports of repeated strikes and growing instability. "My daughter and son are there, but every student stuck in Iran feels like my own child," said Sohail Muzzamil Qadri, his voice trembling with concern. "The situation is extremely grave. This is not something that will settle quickly—there is a sense that the conflict is deepening." Qadri added, "As soon as advisories were issued, I asked my daughter to prepare for departure and tried arranging travel via Dubai. But the university delayed the process, saying internal consultations were needed." Parents said they had initially planned to march towards the Press Colony to amplify their concerns, but were unable to proceed due to restrictions in parts of the city. Instead, they staged a | [More on P6](#)

For 7th consecutive year, winter remains dry, pushes J&K to brink

UT may face water crisis in coming months, say experts

Dec to Feb precipitation ends 65% below normal

February records nearly 90% rainfall deficit across districts

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Mar 02: Jammu and Kashmir has recorded its seventh consecutive winter rainfall deficit, with the December 2025-February 2026 period ending 65 per cent below normal. According to the data accessed by the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the region received 100.6 mm of precipitation during the core winter months against a normal of 284.9 mm, marking one of the driest seasons in recent years. Data revealed that December 2025 recorded only 13.0 mm rainfall against a normal of 59.4 mm, a deficit of 78 per cent. January 2026 fared relatively better with 73.4 mm precipitation against a normal of 95.1 mm, reducing the deficit to 23 per cent due to some western disturbance activity. However, February saw a sharp collapse, recording just 14.2 mm against a normal of



130.4 mm — an 89 per cent shortfall — pulling down the seasonal average significantly. The 2025-26 winter now ranks among the most deficient in the past seven years. Since 2019-20, every winter season in Jammu and Kashmir has ended below normal. The deficits recorded over the past winters include minus 20 per cent (2019-20), minus 37 per cent (2020-21), minus 8 per cent (2021-22), minus 34 per

cent (2022-23), minus 54 per cent (2023-24), minus 45 per cent (2024-25), and minus 65 per cent (2025-26). In contrast, earlier years such as 2016-17 and 2018-19 had recorded surplus winters. District-wise data indicated widespread deficiency across both Kashmir and Jammu divisions. In Kashmir, Srinagar recorded 84.2 mm rainfall against a normal of 236.5 mm, a 64 per cent deficit. | [More on P6](#)

MoE mulls AI in curriculum, J&K lacks basic facilities

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Mar 02: With the Ministry of Education (MoE) mulling to introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the school curriculum, Jammu and Kashmir on the contrary is lacking the basic facilities of computers in over 60 per cent of schools—raising a question on future of students of the region. According to the official documents available with the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), "In J&K only 39 per cent of school going students have access to computers." The figures further reveal that the access to internet connectivity was available to only 49 per cent of school students across Jammu and Kashmir. The document however stated that digital infrastructure remains a focus area for the government. Stating the access and infrastructure indicators, the official figures show steady improvement with over 98 per cent students having access to schooling at all levels. The official figures further reveal that Jammu and Kashmir has | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir mourns Ayatollah Khamenei's assassination

» Edu instts closed, mobile internet speed restricted

» Security forces man key intersections, sensitive locations

» Leaders, admin urge people to maintain calm

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Mar 02: Amid security and precautionary restrictions imposed by authorities, hundreds of people across Kashmir took to the streets for the second consecutive day on Monday to mourn the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a joint United States-Israel military strike that escalated tensions in West Asia. According to the details available with the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) authorities enforced precautionary measures including closure of schools and colleges, internet



speed restrictions and district-wide curbs. Witnesses said that processions

were taken out in several Kashmir parts, with participants expressing grief, solidarity and raising

slogans. Religious clerics, community leaders and authorities appealed for calm and law-abiding conduct. Srinagar witnessed gatherings and peaceful rallies at multiple locations, with hundreds participating in processions and mourning rituals. Processions and rallies were taken out in several parts of Srinagar as well as in Budgam, Bandipora, Sonawari, Pulwama and other areas of South and North Kashmir. Demonstrators carried black flags and portraits of Khamenei. In several districts, particularly in | [More on P6](#)

Precautionary restrictions to continue today

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Mar 02: The authorities have decided to continue precautionary restrictions across all districts of Kashmir on Tuesday to maintain peace and prevent any untoward incidents, officials said. A senior security official told the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the decision has been taken in view of the prevailing situation and to ensure that law and order is maintained across the Valley. "Restrictions will continue tomorrow as a precautionary measure. The situation

is being closely monitored and necessary measures are in place to maintain peace," a senior official said. He said that security forces are manning the sensitive locations, while senior officers are reviewing the ground situation to prevent any escalation. Meanwhile, people took out processions—to mourn assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—in several parts of Kashmir on Monday. "The situation remained under control and security personnel were deployed to ensure peace and prevent any untoward | [More on P6](#)

DIGs NKR, CRPF visit 'ground zero', assess situation

KNO Desk

Baramulla, Mar 02: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, North Kashmir Range (NKR), Maqsood-ul-Zaman and the DIG of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), visited various 'ground zero' in Sopore and Baramulla on Tuesday to assess the situation and review law & order arrangements on the ground. According to the details available with the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) during the visit, the officers interacted with senior police officials, CRPF officers, and field personnel deployed at sensitive points. They emphasized



the need to exercise maximum restraint while ensuring public safety and protection of property. The DIGs directed officers on duty to remain vigilant,

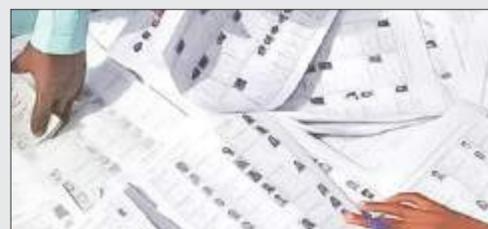
maintain close coordination between Police and CRPF, and ensure that all necessary preventive measures are taken to avert any untoward incident. They also | [More on P6](#)

High-level meeting to discuss Panchayat roll revision, ULBs delimitation today

SEC to chair meeting; DCs, other officials to attend

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Mar 02: The State Election Commissioner (SEC) has convened a high-level meeting on Tuesday to discuss the revision of the Panchayat electoral roll and review the status of delimitation of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). The SEC, Shatnaman, will chair the meeting tomorrow via videoconferencing at 2:30 PM to deliberate on the revision of the Panchayat Electoral



Roll-2026 and assess the progress of delimitation of ULBs. The meeting is expected to

be attended in person by the Secretary, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj; the Deputy

Commissioner, Jammu; the Director, Rural Development Department, Jammu; and the Director, Panchayati Raj, J&K. All Deputy Commissioners of the other 19 districts, along with concerned officials, have been directed to participate through video link, according to the meeting notice, a copy of which is in possession of the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO). The meeting is being held at a time when all | [More on P6](#)

Deputy CM stresses timely project completion, prompt service delivery

Conducts surprise inspection of CE PWD Office Jammu

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 2: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Monday conducted a surprise inspection of the office of Chief Engineer, Public Works Department (R&B) Jammu to assess its functioning and progress in both physical and financial areas.

During the inspection, the Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, reviewed the overall working of the office and called for prompt, efficient and citizen-centric service delivery. He took stock of both the physical and financial progress of ongoing projects and emphasised the need for achieving the targets within stipulated timelines.

Stressing on accountability and efficiency, he directed the officers to ensure seamless coordination between the Chief Engineer's office and allied wings for timely completion of developmental works. He underscored that any delay, negligence or compromise in quality would not be tolerated and instructed the officials to maintain



strict monitoring mechanisms.

"Quality work and transparency in execution are top priorities for this government," he stated.

The Deputy Chief Minister further highlighted the government's commitment towards ensuring robust and balanced development across all districts of Jammu and Kashmir, with a special focus on improving road connectivity and extending better infrastructure to every habitation across J&K.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister

met various public and individual delegations from different districts, including Padder area and listened patiently to their demands and grievances.

Reiterating the government's resolve for transparent and public-centric governance, he assured them of time-bound and result-oriented action to address their genuine concerns.

Chief Engineer and senior officers of engineering wing were present on the occasion.

DC Ganderbal reviews District CAPEX Budget 2025-26

KT NEWS DESK

GANDERBAL, MARCH 02: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore Monday chaired a meeting to review the progress of works being executed under the District CAPEX Budget 2025-26 in the district.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, reviewed the progress of key sectors including I&FC, Jal Shakti, PW (R&B), KPDC, Health, Education, etc. emphasizing the urgent need to complete all ongoing projects as the financial year draws to a close.

The DC took a detailed review of both physical and financial achievements under the approved works and stressed the need for timely completion of all projects within the stipulated timeframe.

Threadbare discussions were also held with the concerned officers regarding the status of ongoing works being implemented under different programmes including Area Development Plan (DDC Grants, BDC Grants,



and PRI Grants) besides Aspirational Block Development Programme and Aspirational Panchayat Development Programme.

Officers were directed to expedite progress on all ongoing projects, ensure proper utilisation of funds and maintain quality standards.

The DC emphasised close monitoring of works and called for improved coordination among departments to avoid

delays.

Later, the DC reviewed the progress on identification of suitable land and construction of assets including DEWATS, Segregation Sheds and Soakage Pits under the Rural Development Department (RDD) across the district. The DC directed concerned BDOs to expedite construction of developmental works on the already identified suitable land in different blocks.

He stressed the need for

timely compliance and concerted efforts by all stakeholders to strengthen rural infrastructure across the district.

Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Executive Engineers of KPDC, I&FC, PW (R&B), Jal Shakti, besides other officers and officials attended the meeting.

Kashmir Thunder



IS AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STALLS

DC Kulgam visits Yaripora, reviews functioning of Govt offices



KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, MARCH 02: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Monday visited Yaripora area to review the functioning of key government offices and assess healthcare services in the area.

During his inspection of the Tehsil Office, the DC examined mutation registers and Jamabandi records.

He reviewed the delivery of revenue services through Revenue Plus and the issuance of certificates under Jan-Sugam.

Emphasizing efficiency and accountability, he directed officials to ensure timely disposal of pending cases and seamless public service delivery.

Later, the DC, as per an official

statement, visited Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Yaripora, where he evaluated the range and quality of medical services being provided to the public.

He stressed the importance of maintaining proper sanitation standards and instructed that the public washroom constructed by the Municipal Committee be made operational without delay.

While inspecting the hospital premises, he noted vacant spaces and an unutilized residential building and directed the Block Medical Officer (BMO) to prepare a comprehensive proposal for the optimal utilization of available infrastructure to enhance healthcare facilities.

Assistant Commissioner Revenue and the Chief Medical

Youth Parliament, Yuva Connect programme concludes in Srinagar



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MARCH 2: The District-Level Youth Parliament & Yuva Connect Programme, organized by Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), Srinagar, in collaboration with the Nodal Agency NSS, University of Kashmir, concluded at Women's Degree College, M.A. Road, Srinagar on 28.02.2026.

The programme, as per PIB statement, witnessed participation of nearly 300 students from various institutions across the district.

Raja Nighat Aman, Senior Superintendent of Police attended the programme as the Chief Guest, along with the Principal of Women's

Degree College, M.A. Road, Srinagar.

The central theme of the Youth Parliament was "50 Years of the Emergency", a subject that sparked debate and critical reflections among the youth. Participants expressed their perspectives on democracy, constitutional values, civil liberties, and the lessons drawn from that historic phase of the nation's journey. The programme served as a platform for nurturing democratic awareness and leadership qualities among young minds.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Waqar Amin, NSS Coordinator, University of Kashmir, who highlighted the importance

of youth engagement in democratic processes and nation-building.

Pradip Kumar, Deputy Director, MY Bharat Srinagar, delivered motivating remarks, encouraging students to actively participate in constructive dialogue, uphold constitutional principles, and contribute responsibly to society.

The programme was managed by the team of MY Bharat Srinagar volunteers, including Rahi Rayaz, TOT; Imran Khan (Bharat Scouts and Guides); Inam Hussain; Muzamil Abbas; Showkat Ahmad Mir; Faizan Salmani, and several other volunteers whose coordinated efforts ensured the smooth conduct of the event.

CS inaugurates SKUAST-J industry startup outreach programme

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 02: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu Monday organized a landmark Industry-Startup Outreach Programme under the Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) here.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, inaugurated the event.

The programme, as per an official statement, attended by the senior government officials, industry leaders, startups, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), academicians and students, was aimed at to strengthen the industry-academia-startup linkages in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

The event was attended by Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu, Professor B.N. Tripathi, Mission Director, JKCIP/HADP, Sandeep Kumar (IFS), statutory officers of the university, representatives of different institutions including IIM Jammu, IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, industry experts, UTLBC, J&K Bank, District Industries Centre (DIC) Jammu, startups and FPOs.

The Chief Secretary highlighted the need for FPOs to move beyond aggregation towards enterprise-oriented models centered on processing, packaging, branding and value addition to significantly enhance farmers' incomes.

Atal Dulloo elaborated 4 Cs: culture, capacity building, commercialization and connectivity for success of startups. He reiterated the



government's commitment towards improving the ease of doing business in agriculture, strengthening startup ecosystems and ensuring timely and affordable credit through strong banking partnerships.

Appreciating the proactive

initiatives of SKUAST-Jammu and the Mission Directorate JKCIP, the Chief Secretary stressed that despite J&K being a major producer of wool, trout fisheries, floriculture and medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs), processing remains limited and requires

focused attention.

Atal Dulloo expressed hope that the outreach programme would evolve into a sustained partnership model, positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a vibrant agri-entrepreneurship hub under initiatives such as JKCIP, HADP and Mission YUVA, contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Vice Chancellor Professor B.N. Tripathi detailed that holding the event outside the campus was both strategic and symbolic, reflecting the evolving role of universities as drivers of entrepreneurship and regional economic growth beyond teaching and research. He highlighted key milestones in industry engagement, including establishment of the Bayer Learning Centre and introduction of Professors of Practice from industry

to bring real-world expertise into academics.

The Vice Chancellor informed that over 120 startup ideas have been incubated in agriculture and allied sectors, with more than 32 receiving funding from the Ministry for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India. However, he emphasized that funding alone is insufficient and stressed the need for structured mentorship during scaling, compliance and commercialisation phases. He urged the industry partners to support startups through mentorship, contract research, joint product development, pilot trials, technology validation and integration into established supply chains.

CS reviews MSME Health Clinic support for enterprises

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Mar 02: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Monday observed that establishing a robust and responsive mechanism under the MSME Health Clinic to provide "the right advice at the right time" to local enterprises would be one of the most significant developmental interventions ever undertaken for the MSME sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

He made these remarks while chairing a comprehensive review meeting on the performance of the MSME Health Clinic, an initiative of the Industries & Commerce Department in collaboration with IIM Jammu under the RAMP scheme.

The meeting was attended by Director, IIM Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Director Industries, Jammu/Kashmir; faculty members from IIM Jammu; representatives from BISAG-N; and other senior officers.

Emphasizing the way forward, the Chief Secretary called for reaching out to all MSMEs across the UT to digitally assess their operational and financial health through a comprehensive analytical tool to be developed with BISAG-N.

He outlined a structured approach whereby enterprises would first undergo preliminary digital screening, followed by advanced assessment of identified units. Stressed or sick units would initially be provided tele-consultation, followed by personal interaction with experts and, wherever necessary, customized on-ground interventions through field visits by subject specialists.

He directed the Industries & Commerce Department to ensure seamless sharing of requisite enterprise data with experts from IIM Jammu to facilitate evidence-based diagnosis and recommend both financial and non-financial



interventions tailored to the specific needs of each unit.

Stressing institutional strengthening, he advised the creation of dedicated cells within both the Industries Department and IIM Jammu to oversee and streamline this specialized service to MSMEs.

Observing that MSMEs form the backbone of the UT's industrial ecosystem, the Chief Secretary underscored the need for strong intent, coordinated action and sustained commitment to ensure the sector's growth and resilience.

He stated that no greater support could be extended to MSMEs than a timely and well-structured intervention mechanism such as this, assuring that availability of funds would not be a constraint in achieving the mission. He also encouraged securing adequate human resources to scale up the

initiative effectively.

Director, IIM Jammu, B.S. Sahay described the initiative as a mission-driven effort with the sole objective of ensuring measurable impact in a time-bound manner.

He suggested launching a focused outreach campaign, building upon the work already undertaken as a sample survey. Highlighting the scale of opportunity, he stated that reaching nearly 5.5 lakh enterprises across J&K is achievable with a well-designed strategy.

He further proposed leveraging the academic strength of IIM Jammu, including the involvement of its 800 students through structured project work, to contribute meaningfully to the initiative.

Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramjit Singh informed the meeting that after

establishing the necessary digital framework by integrating GST, Udyam registrations, electricity consumption data and other utility metrics, around 2,050 units have been registered on the MSME Health Clinic portal. He added that approximately 12,000 units are targeted to be assessed by April this year, with expert-backed interventions to be recommended by IIM Jammu.

Director Industries, Jammu, Arun Manhas through a presentation apprised the meeting that the MSME Health Clinic Portal has been technologically strengthened with stabilized architecture, enhanced dashboard analytics and a user-friendly interface for field officers and enterprises.

He added that the key API integrations have been completed with JK Bank for financial

pattern analysis, the Power Development Department for electricity consumption trends, and Udyam for enterprise registration data. Integrations with GST filings and EPFO data are currently underway to enable comprehensive multi-parameter digital assessments, the meeting was informed.

It was also divulged that over 5.85 lakh MSMEs' Udyam data has been received from the Ministry of MSME. During Phase 1 (Pilot Execution), 75 enterprises were identified, 62 clinic sessions conducted and 14 units flagged for rehabilitation across 11 districts.

Under Phase 2, 406 enterprises were digitally assessed, of which 318 were found stable, 87 categorized as stressed and three identified as sick, extending coverage to 12 districts. Combined outreach now spans 20 districts across the Union Territory.

The review highlighted that preliminarily it was diagnosed that enterprises here require financial and credit restructuring support, assistance in raw material sourcing and supply chain stabilization, marketing and branding interventions, technology upgradation, skilled manpower retention and, in complex cases, physical site visits for detailed diagnostics.

Moreover it was given out that under the upcoming Phase 3, targeted interventions will be undertaken for stressed units through in-depth interviews, stakeholder workshops, structured field visits and preparation of comprehensive diagnostic and revival reports too.

The meeting was informed that this will be a continuous and evolving process aimed at building a sustainable early-warning and enterprise support system for MSMEs in Jammu & Kashmir for the times to come.

Pulwama villages decry decaying power infra

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Pulwama, Mar 02: Residents of several villages in Pulwama district have raised serious concerns over the alarming condition of power infrastructure, saying that outdated and unsafe systems continue to pose a significant threat to both life and property.

People from areas including Wasoora, Astanpora, Wahipora, Yader, Panzgam, Kulpura, Crawgund, Rakh, Zahid Bagh, Chakoora, Darbagh, and nearby localities have expressed anguish over what they describe as long-standing negligence by authorities. They claim that in many places, electric wires remain loosely tied to trees due to the absence of proper poles, resulting in dangerously low-hanging lines that have persisted for decades. Locals said that while there has been some improvement in transformer capacity over time, the broader distribution network—particularly poles and overhead wiring—has not seen the necessary upgrades.

Aamir Ahmad, a resident of Panzgam, said the issue has been repeatedly highlighted during various Back to Village programmes, but no concrete action has followed. "We have raised this concern multiple times before officials, yet the situation remains

unchanged," he said. Echoing similar concerns, Altaf Ahmad from Rakh said that a large proportion of electric wires in his village are supported by trees instead of poles. "Nearly 80 per cent of the wiring is tied to trees. These wires hang dangerously low, are weak, and frequently get damaged," he said.

Another resident, Sameer Ahmad of Zahid Bagh, pointed out that overhead electric lines often come into direct contact with rooftops and roadside trees, creating a constant risk. "These low-hanging wires are a serious hazard. We have been urging the department to replace damaged lines and install proper poles, but our requests have gone unheard," he added. Residents from other villages also voiced similar grievances, stating that despite repeated representations to concerned authorities, no meaningful intervention has taken place.

They expressed frustration over paying increased monthly tariffs while continuing to suffer from unreliable supply and unsafe infrastructure.

The residents have urged higher authorities to take immediate notice of the situation and initiate necessary upgrades to prevent any untoward incidents and ensure reliable electricity services—(KNO)

'Tulip research centre Anantnag to reduce import dependence'

UMAISAR GULL GANIE

Anantnag, Mar 02: To boost tourism and floriculture in the Valley, Mountain Crop Research Station at Sagam in Kokernag area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district is set to begin supplying high-quality tulip bulbs and seeds to the famed Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, Asia's largest tulip garden.

The research station has been developed by Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) on modern scientific lines over 407 kanals of land at Tangpawa Sagam.

Officials said that special emphasis is being laid on production, breeding and research of high-quality tulip bulbs and seeds. So far, a majority of tulip bulbs have been imported from foreign markets, but the establishment of the centre is expected to ensure local availability in the coming years.

Locals said that tulip bulbs sown on a trial basis last year



yielded encouraging results.

This year, cultivation has been expanded across a major portion of the land. They said the station attracted a large number of visitors last year, generating employment opportunities for local youth, and expressed hope that more such projects would be introduced to promote Kashmir's floriculture at a global level. Dr Muhammad Ashraf, posted at the Mountain Crop Research

Station, said the initiative would make tulip cultivation in Kashmir more organised and sustainable. He said India imports tulips worth Rs 300 to 400 crore annually from foreign markets.

"To reduce this dependence, the government established the research centre at Sagam, where multiple varieties of tulips are currently under cultivation," he said. Dr Ashraf added that an eight

crore project has been approved under a scheme supported by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), and construction work is underway.

"Sustained efforts are being made to minimise imports in the coming years," he said.

Dr Mohammad Ayoub Mantoo, Professor and Head, Mountain Research Centre, Tangpawa Sagam, told KNO that the primary objective of the centre is to maximise local seed and bulb production.

"The government has been spending an amount on importing tulip bulbs. To reduce costs, the department decided to promote in-house production, and work has been ongoing for the past two years," he said.

Mantoo said farmers are also being guided to diversify into tulip cultivation alongside traditional crops.

The project is expected to generate new employment avenues in Anantnag district, with youth being trained in horticulture, seed production, packaging and supply—(KNO)

SDA bans snowmobiles in sensitive meadow zones

KNO

Ganderbal, Mar 02: The Sonamarg Development Authority (SDA) has ordered immediate suspension of snowmobile operations in the meadow areas to prevent environmental degradation.

According to an order, the decision has been taken in the interest of environmental protection and preservation of the eco-fragile meadow, particularly as the natural grass surface has been exposed due to inadequate snowfall and the conclusion of the winter season.

The order states that continued operation of snowmobile bikes was resulting in damage to the meadow area of the tourist destination. "This step is necessitated to prevent further ecological degradation and to ensure the protection and conservation of the environmental integrity of the meadow," it reads.

The authority has directed all concerned operators, associations and enforcement agencies to ensure strict compliance with the order and its effective implementation in letter and spirit.

It further warned that any violation will invite action under relevant environmental and regulatory provisions in force, including cancellation of permission—(KNO)

NC offers condolences to Iran over Khamenei's assassination

KNO

Srinagar, Mar 02: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference General Secretary Haji Ali Mohammad Sagar, led party functionaries in offering tributes to Iran's Supreme Leader and a prominent figure of the Shia community worldwide, Ayatollah Syed Ali Khamenei, who was martyred in a joint US-Israeli attack.

Chairing a condolence meeting at the party headquarters in Srinagar, Sagar led the participants in offering tributes and reciting Fatiha for all the victims of the US-Israeli attack on Iran, including schoolgirls who lost their lives in the attack.

A resolution expressing grief and solidarity was presented by the party's Provincial President (Kashmir), Showkat Ahmad Mir and was unanimously seconded by those present.

The party functionaries



extended their heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the people of Iran over the tragic loss of lives and prayed for their protection and strength during this difficult time.

Among others present at the meeting were the party's District President Srinagar Pir Afaq Ahmad, and Women's Wing Provincial President Er. Sabiya Qadri. The meeting witnessed participation from a large number of office bearers.

Meanwhile, the party's Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly also expressed solidarity with the people of Iran in their hour of grief—(KNO)

Police files charge sheet in fake Govt job fraud case

KNO

Awantipora, Mar 02: Police Station Awantipora has filed a charge sheet in FIR No. 09/2026 under Sections 318(4), 61(2), and 351(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) before the Hon'ble Court of the Additional Special Mobile Magistrate, Awantipora, in a case pertaining to cheating and fraud on the false pretext of providing a government job.

The accused persons have been identified as Showkat Ahmad Dar, son of Gh. Mohd Dar @ Mom Dar, resident of Panzgam & Aijaz Ahmad Shah, son of Ali Mohd



Shah, resident of Tral Payeen.

During investigation, it was established that the accused induced the complainant to part with 7,00,000/- by falsely assuring appointment in a government department. The investigation, supported by bank transaction

records and documentary evidence etc, has substantiated the involvement of the accused persons. The investigation was headed by the Incharge Police Post Reshipora, SI Meheraj-ud-Din, under the supervision of the SHO Police Station Awantipora,

Inspector Ajaz Ahmad. The case was investigated in a professional manner and concluded on the basis of material evidence.

J&K Police reiterates its commitment to act firmly against fraudsters and advises the general public not to fall prey to individuals promising government jobs in exchange for money. Citizens are urged to verify all recruitment information through official government notifications and to report such frauds immediately to the nearest police station. Police reaffirm their commitment to act firmly against anti-social elements and uphold public safety and trust—(KNO)

Five arrested, 5 vehicles seized in Awantipora

KNO

Srinagar, Mar 02: In continuation of its ongoing drive against illegal mining, J&K Police have arrested 05 persons and has seized 02 Loaders, 02 Tractors and 01 Dumper involved in illegal transportation of minerals in Datpora and Reshipora areas of Awantipora.

Acting tough against the persons involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals, a Police party of Police Post Reshipora headed by Incharge Police Post Reshipora under the supervision of SDPO Awantipora seized five Vehicles. The persons involved in the said crime have been identified as Jahangeer Ahmad Bhat son of Mohd Ayoub resident of Chakoora Pulwama, Nadeem Ahmad Mir son of Ab khaliq resident of Litter Pulwama, Sajad Ahmad Dar son of Ab Razaq Dar resident of Reshipora, Ali



Mohd Dar son of Ab khaliq resident of Reshipora & Zubair Ahmad Mir son of Ab khaliq resident of Reshipora.

Community members are requested to come forward with any information regarding illegal mineral-related activities in their neighbourhood—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Bring Them Home: India Must Evacuate Students From Iran

The sudden escalation of conflict in West Asia, following the death of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has turned a political crisis into a life-threatening emergency. For the nearly 1,200 Kashmiri students trapped in a country now facing bombardment, this is a living nightmare filled with bomb blasts, internet blackouts, and overwhelming fear. This is not a time for issuing advisories but for urgent and coordinated evacuation.

The cruel choice between safety and years of medical education has left hundreds stranded, even after the Indian Embassy issued an advisory on February 23 asking citizens to leave. According to the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association, more than 1,100 students remain in Iran, while their families back home in the Valley live in constant fear and uncertainty. This situation demands a strong, two-part response. First, diplomatic efforts must move

from simply advising students to taking real action. The government must immediately get firm commitments from Iranian authorities that students can leave without facing academic punishment. While Iran's recent announcement allowing foreign students to exit through land borders and postponing exams is a welcome first step, it must be put into practice without delay. Second, evacuation plans must be put into motion with the urgency of

a wartime operation. Prime Minister Modi's emergency meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security is a necessary first move, but it must lead to fast, visible action on the ground. With airspace closed, land routes are the only way out. India must coordinate with neighbouring countries to ensure safe passage and arrange flights from evacuation hubs. Past successful missions like Operation Kaveri and Operation Sindhu provide a clear model to follow. The

Lieutenant Governor and Chief Minister have rightly assured coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and appealed for calm at home. But staying calm here must be matched by decisive action there. For every Kashmiri student huddled in a hostel in Tehran, and for every family staring at a silent phone waiting for news, the government's promise of safety must become real. We must bring our children home. There is no higher priority.

India's Transformation Into A Global Health Powerhouse

Universal Coverage – Ayushman Bharat provides free/subsidised care to hundreds of millions through insurance, 184,000+ primary healthcare centres, and 863 million digital health IDs

Press Information Bureau

From conquering longstanding public health challenges to becoming a leading force in affordable medicines and global healthcare delivery, India's rise as a global health powerhouse stands as a testament to visionary leadership, resilient institutions, and the unwavering commitment of the Government of India to building a healthier, stronger, and more prosperous nation. The Government runs flagship schemes that provide public health insurance, free healthcare and services across all levels and subsidised medicines, along with a widespread and accessible health infrastructure. The guiding principle is to provide universal health coverage – ensuring that everyone, including the most socio-economically disadvantaged populations, gets access to affordable and quality healthcare so that India can progress towards its goal of being a healthy, productive and prosperous society – a Viksit or developed Bharat – by 2047.

India's medical education system, comprising private colleges along with publicly funded institutions, has seen expansion and growth over the years. India's pharmaceutical sector, the world's third largest by volume, enables a ready supply of affordable medicines not just to Indian citizens but also to the world – as evidenced by India's prowess in manufacturing and supplying COVID-19 vaccines. India's biopharmaceutical sector is growing in leaps and bounds, supported by government investment and private industry's innovative spirit. India has been witnessing a rise in medical tourists, from over 112,000 in 2009 to over 600,000 in 2024. To enhance India's medical tourism sector, the Government of India in its Union Budget 2026-27 announced the establishment of five integrated medical hubs across India featuring diagnostic infrastructure and rehabilitation services in partnership with the private sector. India is now poised to contribute more significantly to global public health – a remarkable achievement for a country that was battling endemic diseases not even a century ago.

Providing Universal Health Coverage: Ayushman Bharat

The Government of India's flagship scheme – Ayushman Bharat (Long Live India) – is key to its aim in providing universal health coverage to all, particularly the socio-economically backward and vulnerable sections of the Indian society. This umbrella scheme has various components that work together to ensure that people get access to quality healthcare at all levels – primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Its four major components include AB-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), the world's largest publicly funded health assurance scheme.

Ayushman Arogya Mandir for upgrading sub health centres and primary health centres.

Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) – the largest pan-India scheme for strengthening healthcare infrastructure across the country.

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), which forms the backbone for a citizen centric interoperable digital health ecosystem.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (Prime Minister's People Health Programme)

The Government of India launched the Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) on September 23, 2018, to achieve universal health care. It is the world's largest public healthcare scheme with hundreds of millions of vulnerable Indian families enrolled in it.

AB-PMJAY provides healthcare coverage up to Rs. 5 lakhs per year (~\$5,000 USD) for secondary and tertiary care services and hospitalisation to enrolled socio-economically deprived families and to all senior citizens above 70 years, saving them from catastrophic medical bills. The scheme provides cashless treatment across empanelled government-funded and private hospitals. The scheme is aimed at the bottom 40% of the Indian population, covering 120 million people, with over 434 million Ayushman cards already made.

The scheme has helped reduce the healthcare expenditure of families by increasing government spending on health insurance. The savings for families was over Rs. 1.25 lakh crore (2024-2025) (~\$13.77 billion USD).

The allocation for the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has been raised to Rs. 9,500 crore (~\$1.05 billion USD) in Budget Estimates 2026-27, up by Rs. 500 crore (~\$55 million USD) or 5.56% over the Revised Estimates of Financial Year 2025-26. This increase aims to expand beneficiary coverage, improve service quality, and strengthen hospital networks.

While AB-PMJAY supports secondary and tertiary healthcare, the Ayushman Bharat scheme

runs various other programmes to ensure quality primary healthcare and a robust healthcare infrastructure which is accessible to all.

Ayushman Arogya Mandirs
A strong primary care infrastructure ensures health equity and access. Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are primary health care centres under the Ayushman Bharat scheme that provide a wide range of general health services for people close to their homes.

There are 1,84,235 AAMs across the country (as on February 27, 2026), including in the urban, rural and tribal-dominated areas. There are 30,817 AAMs in 178 tribal districts across 26 states and 24,327 AAMs in 112 aspirational districts across 27 states (as on December 31, 2025).

To ensure healthcare access, teleconsultations are also provided at AAMs – 426.6 million consultations have been conducted last year (as on December 31, 2025).

AAMs are where the community can access preventive and promotive healthcare. Over 58 million wellness sessions with yoga were also held at AAMs for the holistic development of people. The ministry screens millions of people for various non-communicable diseases under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. As on October 31, 2025, these are the number of screenings for various ailments:

Hypertension Screenings: 401.3 million
Diabetes Screenings: 398.6 million
Oral Cancer Screenings: 338.3 million
Breast Cancer Screenings: 158.6 million
Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission

Recognising the vital role of AAMs in mitigating and controlling the impact of pandemics or other disease outbreaks, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) in 2021. PM-ABHIM looks at infrastructure in health, research and surveillance.

PM-ABHIM aims at strengthening the health infrastructure from the grassroots to the district level through establishment and upgradation of the following in every district:

Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs)
Block Public Health Units
Integrated District Public Health Labs
Critical Care Hospital Blocks

PM-ABHIM also prioritises pandemic and disaster preparedness by expanding an IT-enabled, real-time disease surveillance network that integrates laboratories at block, district, regional, and national levels to detect, investigate, and prevent outbreaks effectively.

The Government of India approved Rs. 32,928.82 crore (~\$3.63 billion USD) for a 5-year period from the fiscal years 2021-22 to 2025-26. This fund is for the construction, upgradation and establishment of:

9,519 building-less sub health centres–Ayushman Arogya Mandirs
5,456 urban-AAMs
2,151 block public health units
744 integrated public health laboratories
622 critical care blocks at district hospitals and government medical colleges

Digital Initiatives – Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Technology Integrations

The Ayushman Bharat also supports the creation of a robust digital public infrastructure through the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), one of the most ambitious digital health architectures in the world. Beneficiaries are assigned a unique health identification number, under the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) system, enabling their medical records to be securely stored and accessed online through a "digital health locker".

Over 863 million ABHAs have been created to date (as on February 27, 2026). Through an app, users can also connect with registered healthcare professionals. Verified healthcare professionals can treat patients remotely through teleconsultations and review digital health records. This digital ecosystem enables the last-mile health coverage.

India runs one of the world's largest digital mental health initiatives, operating 53 cells across all 36 states and union territories with 24x7 counselling services in 20 languages and having handled over 3.28 million. Launched on October 10, 2022, Tele MANAS has further expanded accessibility with support in 12 languages, providing comprehensive mental health support from general well-being to disorder management.

Revolutionising Healthcare Access: Drone-Based Delivery of Medical Services

Pilot projects using drones are in process. In 2021, the Indian Council of Medical Research launched the 'i-DRONE' initiative to test drone-based delivery of vaccines and medical supplies

to hard-to-reach areas in the mountainous states of Manipur and Nagaland. Following successful pilots across diverse terrains, the programme expanded nationwide with specialized applications: high-altitude medical deliveries in Himachal Pradesh (above 10,000 feet), TB sample transport in Telangana to reduce diagnostic time, pathological sample transfers in Karnataka for time-sensitive cases, and blood product transportation studies in Delhi NCR. These initiatives demonstrate how drones can strengthen last-mile healthcare connectivity, accelerate diagnostics, and provide critical medical logistics support in challenging geographies.

National Health Mission
Apart from the umbrella Ayushman Bharat scheme, the Government of India has been running the National Health Mission for decades, with its two components – the National Urban Health Mission and the National Rural Health Mission – for the prevention, mitigation and treatment of various kinds of diseases. The National Health Mission (NHM) has significantly contributed to improving India's public health outcomes through its relentless efforts in expanding human resources, addressing critical health issues, and fostering an integrated response to health emergencies.

The NHM works to improve maternal, child, and adolescent health through programmes including immunisation, strengthens health systems by improving quality standards, and manages a range of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) control programmes.

Universal Immunisation Programme
The Universal Immunisation Program (UIP) is one of the largest public health programs targeting close of 26.7 million newborns and 29 million pregnant women annually free of cost.

Strategic interventions like advocacy, social mobilisation, inter-personal communication at the family level by community health workers and media engagement are some measures utilised to improve immunisation coverage. Community health workers called the Accredited Social Health Activists and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives conducted over 13 million immunisation sessions across the country. There are over 1.03 million ASHAs working under the NHM across the country (as of April 4, 2025).

The 11 vaccines given under the programme are:

Hepatitis B Vaccine
Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV)
Bacillus Calmette-Guérin Vaccine (BCG)
Injectable Polio Vaccine (IPV)
Pentavalent Vaccine
Rotavirus Vaccine (RVV)
Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)
Measles & Rubella Vaccine (MR)
Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus Vaccine (DPT)
Tetanus & Adult Diphtheria Vaccine (Td) and Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine (JE)
HPV Vaccination Programme Launched

The Government of India launched a three-month nationwide HPV Vaccination Programme on February 28, 2026, for the prevention of cervical cancer among women. The Gardasil-4 vaccine, which is a single-dose, WHO pre-qualified vaccine used in immunisation programmes across the world, is now being given to adolescent girls aged 14 years, free of cost, at all government primary and community health centres, district and sub-district hospitals, and government medical colleges and hospitals across the country through central-state/UT government collaboration. Gardasil-4, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine protects against HPV types 16 and 18 (which cause cervical cancer), as well as types 6 and 11.

About 11.5 million girls are presently eligible for the vaccine. The 90-day vaccination drive is running daily to ensure maximum coverage and will thereafter be available on routine immunisation days. This nationwide HPV vaccination campaign is a pivotal step towards empowering India's women and safeguarding the health of mothers and daughters across the country. With this landmark campaign, India has joined over 160 countries with HPV vaccination programmes.

Mission Indradhanush
Mission Indradhanush was launched on December 25, 2014 under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) to immunise children and pregnant women who have either missed or dropped out of routine immunisation schedules, focusing on regions with low vaccination coverage.

As a result of the continued, sustained efforts and intensified implementation of vaccination drives and campaign across the country, the percentage of zero-dose children to the total population has declined from 0.11% in 2023 to 0.06% in 2024. Recent data on MI vaccination numbers.

Other NHM Programmes, Infrastructure and

Impact

Other than the immunisation programme, the National Health Mission runs a wide network of programmes for all kinds of ailments and health conditions.

Budgetary Increase
Increase in NHM funding and capacity building has resulted in the improvement of India's public health indicators over the past few decades.

Key Achievements of National Health Mission:
COVID-19: Over 2.2 billion vaccine doses administered nationwide
Maternal Health: Maternal Mortality Ratio declined by 83% since 1990, surpassing the global decline of 45%

Child Health: Under-5 Mortality Rate reduced by 75% since 1990, higher than the global reduction of 60%
Tuberculosis: TB incidence reduced from 237 per 1,00,000 population in 2015 to 195 in 2023; over 940,000 TB patients supported by 156,000 Ni-kshay Mitra volunteers under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan

Measles-Rubella: 97.98% vaccination coverage achieved under the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 5.0; over 347.7 million children vaccinated
Sickle Cell Anaemia: Over 26.1 million individuals screened in tribal areas under the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission

Dialysis: Over 220,000 patients have availed dialysis services and over 2.5 million hemodialysis sessions held under the scheme (as on June 30, 2024).
Tobacco Control: 17.3% reduction in tobacco use over the past decade

Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare
From 2022 to 2025, India has fundamentally restructured its public health delivery by integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into a unified strategy, that bridges specialist shortages and scales proactive care. In February 2026 during the AI Summit in New Delhi, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the Strategy for AI in Healthcare for India (SAHI), the first nation in the South-Eastern region to do so. The strategy encourages innovation and rapid increase in the application of AI in healthcare, while emphasising ethical use and conduct. The Government of India has already integrated AI into its ABDM infrastructure and other programmes.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly being operationalised across disease areas and health system functions in India. Some examples are:
Eka Doc, a clinic management system, is an ABDM-enabled application that supports triaging, protocol searching, and summarising patient records for doctors; it has triaged over one million patients and summarised over 1.7 million records.
Sunoh.AI by eClinicalWorks is an AI-powered scribing tool that enables doctors to create electronic prescriptions using voice technology, supporting the creation of hundreds of thousands of ePrescriptions.

In tuberculosis management, an Adverse Outcome Prediction tool uses predictive analytics to flag patients at high risk of treatment failure at the time treatment is initiated, with a reported 27% decline in adverse outcomes following nationwide deployment.
For diabetes-related eye care, MadhuNetrAI enables non-specialists to take retinal photographs which are then graded by AI to prioritise urgent specialist referrals; launched in December 2025 as India's first AI-based community screening programme, it has benefited 7,100 patients across 38 facilities.

Making Medicines Affordable
Apart from making healthcare more accessible and affordable, the Government of India makes available quality generic medicines at affordable prices through the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). The medicines are available at the 17,990 Janaushadhi Kendras country wide. Over 2,000 medicines and 315 surgical products are available at the Kendras and are sold at 50-90% lower rates than the market price. These medicines provide treatment for a range of diseases and ailments, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and others. The scheme has saved beneficiaries about Rs. 30,000 crores (~\$3.31 billion USD) in the past decade.

To complement the PMBJP, the government launched the Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) initiative, aimed specifically at supporting tertiary healthcare. AMRIT Pharmacies act as centralised supply points for branded, branded-generic, and generic drugs, as well as surgical items, consumables, and medical implants—especially those required for high-end treatments. There are 255 pharmacies in India, with a vision to expand this network to 500 outlets across the country (as of November 2025).

Pharmacy of the World

India's strong pharmaceutical sector, the 3rd largest in the world by volume, has enabled it to become the largest supplier of generic medicines providing 20% of the world's supply. The country exports to about 200 countries and territories. India is also a key player in affordable vaccines.

For the Global South, India's pharmaceutical supplies – low cost and of good quality – provides essential health security. The country currently supplies over 70% of global anti-retroviral medicines, ensuring affordable access for nations in need.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), along with the National Regulatory Authority of India (NRA) and affiliated institutions, were found to meet the World Health Organisation's published indicators for a functional vaccine regulatory system in October 2024.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, India developed indigenous vaccines including Covaxin and Covishield, demonstrating its unique capacity to integrate research and large-scale production.

India's pharmaceutical sector has long been a global vaccine supplier, providing 55-60% of UNICEF's vaccines and meeting a significant share of global demand for DPT, BCG, and measles vaccines, saving millions of lives across continents.

India is now using biotechnology to manufacture high-value biologics, biosimilars and innovative therapeutics. India's bio-economy sector has seen a 13-fold increase over the past decade, from \$10 billion USD in 2014 to over \$165.7 billion USD in 2024 and is projected to reach \$300 billion USD by 2030.

The Union Budget 2026-27 lunched of Biopharma SHAKTI, designed to strengthen India's end-to-end ecosystem for biologics and biosimilars through investments in domestic manufacturing, workforce development, a nationwide network of over 1,000 accredited clinical trial sites, and enhanced regulatory capacity at the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). Three new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPERs) will be established, and seven existing ones upgraded, to meet the growing demand for specialised human resources in biopharma. This initiative, along with existing National Biopharma Mission, aims to catalyse India's global role in the next industrial revolution and establish India as a global biomanufacturing hub.

The National Biopharma Mission (NBM) – "Innovate in India (i3)" – has already catalysed transformative outcomes since its launch in 2017. Co-funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), the Mission supports 101 projects involving over 150 organisations and has generated more than 1,000 jobs, including 304 scientists and researchers. Breakthroughs include India's first indigenously developed MRI scanner at a fraction of the cost of imported machines, the country's first biosimilar of Liraglutide for Type 2 diabetes priced at nearly one-third of the imported version, and the world's first DNA-based COVID-19 vaccine, Zycov-D, developed by Zydus Cadila. These innovations are India's contribution to making quality healthcare more affordable.

Health Education Expansion

Due to the growing medical sector and rising demand for services, the Government of India is systematically expanding medical education to keep pace. Over the past 11 years, the Government of India made gains in making quality medical education more accessible. There are now 23 publicly funded and leading All India Institute of Medical Sciences institutes, including the first-ever AIIMS in the northeastern area in Assam. There are 2,045 medical colleges, including 780 allopathy, 323 dental and 942 AYUSH institutions. Medical education seats for the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) increased by 130% (from 51,348 to 118,190), and postgraduate seats grew by 138% (from 31,185 to 74,306).

Conclusion
India's transformation from a nation battling endemic diseases to a global medical tourism hub and health technology leader demonstrates what strategic government intervention can achieve. The infrastructure built—from over 180,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs to the world's largest digital health ecosystem with over 860 million health IDs—has not only improved health outcomes domestically but positioned India as a destination for quality, affordable healthcare worldwide. As the nation moves toward its 2047 vision of Viksit Bharat, the foundation is firmly in place: robust public health systems, cutting-edge digital architecture, and an unwavering commitment to ensuring that every citizen, regardless of geography or income, has access to quality healthcare—making India a model for health equity in the developing world.

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

Tribal Affairs Minister emphasizes evidence-based policy, cultural preservation for G&B welfare

Says coordinated efforts essential to achieve inclusive, sustainable development

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 02: In a move towards intensifying tribal welfare initiatives, Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Monday discussed with the trustees of Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT) the ongoing efforts aimed at the welfare and upliftment of Gujjar-Bakerwal tribe.

The meeting, as per an official statement, featured in-depth deliberations on the preservation and promotion of Gojri culture, art and language. Besides, discussion was held on the Trust's expanding initiatives in education, tribal welfare and community development.

Emphasizing the importance of safeguarding indigenous identity, the Minister underlined that cultural preservation must go hand in hand with socio-economic empowerment.

During the consultation, the Minister also highlighted key interventions undertaken by the Tribal Affairs Department to accelerate the socio-economic advancement of tribal communities across J&K.

Emphasising the need for synergy between civil society and government institutions, Rana stressed that coordinated efforts are essential to achieving



inclusive and sustainable development. He urged the Trust to strengthen its collaboration with the Tribal Research Institute to undertake high-quality, evidence-based research on various dimensions of tribal life including traditions, language, cultural practices and contemporary socio-economic challenges.

"Policy must be rooted in credible data and field-based

research," the Minister observed, adding that evidence-driven insights would enable the government to design the targeted interventions and formulate responsive policies that genuinely address the needs of tribal communities.

Chairman of the Trust, Arshad Choudhary briefed the Minister on the Trust's ongoing programs and future roadmap, particularly initiatives focused

on educational outreach, youth empowerment and cultural documentation.

The meeting was attended by Mohammad Mumtaz Ali, Director Tribal Affairs and Dr. Abdul Khahir, Director, Tribal Research Institute, J&K besides trustees of GDCT including Dr. Showkat Choudhary, General Secretary Sadiq Azad and Advocate Zulkarnain Choudhary.

DC Udhampur reviews performance of ICDS

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 02: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Minga Sherpa Monday convened a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning of the ICDS Project in the district.

At the outset, Programme Officer Poshan Subash Dogra delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation outlining the overall performance and key activities of the ICDS Project in the District.

The DC, as per an official statement, conducted a detailed block-wise review covering the functioning of AWCs, construction of AWCs proposed for the year 2025-26, status of registered beneficiaries, implementation of the Poshan Tracker application, growth monitoring, Aadhaar enrolment, progress under PMMVY 2025-26 and infrastructural



requirements.

The DC impressed upon the officers and field functionaries to work with enhanced dedication and coordination to ensure saturation of all targets under the Poshan schemes. He stressed the need to expedite Aadhaar enrolment and achieve full coverage of eligible beneficiaries.

He further directed the officers to mobilize field staff to intensify door-to-door surveys

and ensure inclusion of all pending beneficiaries. CDPOs were instructed to identify suitable land for the construction of new Anganwadi Centres.

Emphasizing inclusive development, the DC underscored the need to prioritize the welfare of impoverished and marginalized sections residing in remote areas of the district and ensure that government benefits reach every eligible household.

DLSA Rajouri invites public to avail mediation process

KT News Desk

RAJOURI, MARCH 02: District Legal Services Authority, Rajouri and all Tehsil Legal Services Committees of District Rajouri have invited the general public and litigants to avail National Lok Adalat scheduled on March 14, 2026 for dispute resolution through mediation.

"The interested Parties/Litigants, Lawyers and the general public are hereby called upon to physically approach the Office of the District Legal Services Authority Rajouri and all Tehsil Legal Services Committees of District Rajouri for any advice/assistance with respect to their case or matter, or may call on the contact No. PLSV 9858424128, 9596626010, DLSA Contact No 01962-264200 during working days from 10 am to 4 pm. DLSA Rajouri would welcome your response. Partie(s) can directly approach the concerned courts as well with an application for listing matters/cases in National Lok Adalat for amicable settlement. No matter with respect to pending Electricity Bills and Water Bills will be taken up in this National Lok Adalat," a handout issued Monday reads.

CAP: 76 Bn CRPF organises Volleyball Tournament



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 02: A Volleyball Tournament under Civic Action Programme-2026 was organized Monday by 76 Bn, CRPF at M.A. Stadium Jammu. Five local teams participated in the tournament.

Volleyball Team - Panjal Club Sanjay Nagar Jammu, as per an official statement, secured the first position (WINNER) and team of Rathua Panchayat Jammu secured the second position (Runner-up). T-shirts and caps were also distributed among players.

Commandant-76 Bn Vezoto Tinyi graced the occasion and motivated the participants to stay healthy and have a positive attitude for the betterment of society.

57 Samba Women attend Mushroom Cultivation Training at SKUAST Jammu

KT NEWS DESK

SAMBA, MARCH 02: A group of 57 women farmers and members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) engaged in mushroom cultivation attended a one-day training programme at the Sher-e-Kashmir University

of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), Jammu.

The exposure visit, as per an official statement, was organized under the HADP project - "Promotion of Mushroom Cultivation" and the group was flagged off from the DC Office Complex by District

Development Commissioner Ayushi Sudan, in the presence of Chief Agriculture Officer, District Agriculture Officer and officers from DCTS Rakh Dahisar.

The women farmers were acquainted with the latest innovations, scientific techniques and technological interventions

in the field of mushroom cultivation.

Earlier, the District Development Commissioner encouraged the participants to make optimum use of the exposure visit and adopt the advanced methods and best practices demonstrated during the training.

Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station coming up in Bhaderwah

KT News Desk

BHADERWAH, MARCH 02: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sunil Kumar Bhutyal Monday laid the foundation stone for the construction of an Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Station at the premises of Divisional Forest Office Bhaderwah.

The station, as per an official statement, is being established by the Divisional Office of the Jammu & Kashmir Pollution Control Committee under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAAQMP).



The monitoring station will analyze the concentration levels of key air pollutants including PM10, PM2.5, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) to assess the ambient air quality in Bhaderwah and its surrounding areas.

Divisional Officer JKPC, Gurpreet Singh informed that

the monitoring station shall help generate accurate scientific data regarding air pollution levels. He stated that regular monitoring will enable the authorities to take timely and effective measures for environmental protection and pollution control.

The ADC appreciated the initiative of JKPC and emphasized the importance of maintaining clean air for public health and sustainable development.

Range Officer Sameer Ahmed Rishu and all the staff members of the Forest Department were also present during the foundation laying ceremony.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban 2.0

DC reviews progress across 3 Municipal towns in Udhampur

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 02: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Minga Sherpa Monday chaired a meeting of officers from the Urban Local Bodies to review the progress of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban scheme in the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Jugal Kishore; Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Umesh Shan and other concerned officers.

The DC conducted a detailed review of the scheme's



implementation across one Municipal Council and two Municipal Committees in the district. The review covered the status of PMAY-U 2.0, District Capex Budget works for 2025-26, progress of mega projects undertaken by the Municipal Council, construction of

multi-storey parking facilities, installation and maintenance of street lights, garbage collection and disposal mechanisms, night illumination in all three towns, identification of garbage dumping points, non-commenced works under PMAY-U and construction of

the Town Hall building.

The DC directed the Tehsildars to clear all pending revenue papers of PMAY-U beneficiaries within a week. He further instructed initiation of recovery proceedings against beneficiaries who have failed to commence construction despite availing benefits and called for expediting the overall pace of progress.

Emphasizing effective sanitation and urban infrastructure management, the DC directed the MCs to identify garbage dumping points, ensure timely collection and proper disposal of waste in all three towns and maintain adequate night illumination.

IIMC Jammu's 6-day capacity building programme for DIPR staff concludes

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 02: The six-day Capacity Building and Skill Enhancement Training Programme for officers and officials of Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) concluded at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) here Monday.

The training programme was attended by around 50 staff members of DIPR, who received intensive training in Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications and contemporary media practices.

Addressing the valedictory session of the programme, Regional Director, IIMC Jammu, Dr. Dilip Kumar, as per an official statement, congratulated the participants for successfully completing the training and encouraged them to apply the newly acquired skills in their professional responsibilities. He appreciated their enthusiasm in learning AI Fundamentals and Applications, Advanced AI & Practical Applications, Print Media Basics and Advanced Practices, as well as Electronic Media Basics and Advanced

Practices.

Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director (Hqr) DIPR, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina congratulated the participants and expressed confidence that they would implement their learning in a professional and effective manner within the department.

Prof. Anil Saumitra and Information Officer DIPR, Alka Misra were also present at the valedictory session and extended their best wishes to the participants.

During the session, Course Coordinator of the training programme, Dr. Vinit Kumar Jha Utpal presented the comprehensive training report.

The participants also received certificates during the valedictory session of the training programme.

Pertinently, the programme commenced on 23rd February, 2026 and was designed to strengthen the institutional communication capacity of DIPR personnel by equipping them with modern media skills aligned with evolving public information needs and governance requirements.



The training programme was structured into three batches. The first batch underwent training in 'AI Fundamentals and Applications and Advanced AI & Practical Applications'. The second batch focused on 'Print Media Basics and Advanced

Practices' while as the third batch received training in "Electronic Media Basics and Advanced Practices" between February 27 and March 2, 2026.

On the first day, Dr. Vinit Kumar Jha Utpal spoke about the changing patterns of

government communication. Shri Bhawani Singh conducted sessions on fact-checking, digital verification tools, and AI-based multilingual drafting and speechwriting. Shri Rajeev Kumar delivered a session on AI-enhanced multimedia and

visual public relations.

On the second day, Dr. Rajendra P. Misra delivered a lecture on government communication in an AI-driven digital media ecology. Shri Divyvasu Sharma trained participants in AI-powered crisis communication and guided them in developing AI-based projects. Dr. Dilip Kumar concluded the day with a session on AI ethics and cyber safety in government organizations.

The third day focused on content creation and print media practices. Shri Divyvasu Sharma conducted a session on content creation and linguistic design using AI tools. Shri Vishav conducted practical classes on print media basics, layout principles, and QuarkXPress. Shri Gulshan Kumar trained participants in graphics and image editing basics.

On the fourth day, Prof. Anil Saumitra delivered a lecture on press release writing with AI integration. Dr. Ravinder Singh discussed the basics of feature writing and success stories. Dr. Vinit Kumar Jha Utpal trained participants in print production using MS Word, while Bhawani

Singh conducted a session on fact-checking and verification in print media.

The fifth day was dedicated to electronic media. Ramesh Kumar Raina, former officer of Doordarshan Jammu, and Vinod Cheervi delivered sessions on the introduction to electronic media and camera basics. Dr. Vinit Kumar Jha Utpal trained participants in AI-assisted news packaging and editing. Bhawani Singh conducted a session on AI applications for social media reels and short videos.

On the sixth day, Dr. Rajendra P. Misra trained participants in government communication within an AI-driven digital media ecology, along with scripting, packaging, and voice-over techniques for electronic media. Divyvasu Sharma conducted sessions on fact-checking, deepfake detection, and emerging trends such as live AI streaming and digital archiving.

The initiative reflects IIMC Jammu's continued commitment to enhancing professional competencies in government communication through structured, technology-driven training programmes.

Jammu Railways implements 'Seva Sankalp Resolution' 'Will enhance public service, transparency'

KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 02: As per the directives of the Ministry of Railways, the "Service Resolution" was formally read in the Divisional Railway Manager's meeting room on Monday. This resolution was adopted by the Government of India with the aim of strengthening the commitment to public service, transparency, accountability, and good governance.

On this occasion, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Divisional Railway Manager, Vivek Kumar, and all branch officers, including the Additional Divisional Railway Manager, were present.

During the meeting, the resolution was read and various points for its effective implementation were discussed in detail.

The officers reiterated their resolve to discharge their duties with a spirit of service, efficiency, punctuality, and giving top priority to public interest.

Vivek Kumar said the "Seva



Sankalp Resolution" is not merely a formality, but a symbol of every railway employee's dedication and responsibility to public service. He urged all

officers to embody the spirit of this resolution in their respective areas of work and provide better services to passengers and the public.

The program concluded with a collective pledge, in which all officers expressed their commitment to excellent service and transparent working practices.

Middle East turmoil Indian airlines cancel 357 int'l flights on Mon

PTI

New Delhi/ Mumbai, Mar 02: Indian airlines cancelled 357 international flights on Monday as the operational disruptions caused by the Middle East conflict continued for the third day.

Over 300 flights, including arrivals and departures, were cancelled at the country's four main airports -- Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai -- on Monday, officials told PTI.

Many airspaces in the Middle East region remained closed amid the escalating conflict involving the US, Israel, and Iran.

"The situation in the Middle East region continues to be closely monitored to facilitate relief for passengers. Due to the ongoing situation, 357 flights planned for operation today were cancelled," the civil aviation ministry said in a post on X on Monday.

In three days starting from February 28, Indian carriers



cancelled 1,117 international flights to various destinations due to the conflict.

On Monday, IndiGo cancelled more than 163 flights while Air India Group -- Air India and Air India Express -- cancelled over 110 services. SpiceJet cancelled at least 20 flights whereas Akasa Air did not operate eight flights, according to officials and information gathered from websites and X.

Air India operated around 20 flights to North America and Europe on Monday. The flights took the longer route of overflying Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt before entering Europe.

Meanwhile, Mumbai and Delhi airports saw 116 and 87 cancellations, respectively, during the day. The cancellations at Bengaluru and

Chennai airports stood at 72 and 28 services, respectively.

Delhi airport operator DIAL on Monday said due to the ongoing political developments in the Middle East, there are delays or schedule changes for some West-bound international flights.

The ministry on Monday also said a total of 559 passenger grievances have been addressed through AirSewa, social media platforms and dedicated helpline calls in coordination with airlines and concerned stakeholders.

Various flights have been cancelled for Tuesday also.

In a post on X, Akasa Air said its flights to and from Abu Dhabi, Doha, Jeddah, Kuwait, and Riyadh remain suspended for Tuesday.

"As part of our continued precautionary approach, the temporary suspension of select international flights operating through parts of the Middle Eastern airspace has been extended," IndiGo said in a post on X.

Trump says Iran ops likely to last 4-5 weeks

AP

Washington, Mar 02: US President Donald Trump says Iran operations are likely to last 4 to 5 weeks but that he's prepared "to go far longer than that."

Trump spoke Monday at a White House ceremony.

The war in the Middle East spiralled further Monday as Israel and the US pounded Iran. Tehran and its allies hit back against Israel, neighbouring Gulf states, and targets critical to the world's production of oil and natural gas.

The intensity of the attacks, the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the lack of any apparent exit plan set the stage for a prolonged conflict with far-reaching consequences.

Safe havens in the Mideast like Dubai have seen incoming fire; hundreds of thousands of airline passengers are stranded around the globe; oil prices shot up; and US allies pledged to help stop Iranian missiles and drones.

UK PM defends decision not to join US strikes on Iran

PTI

London, Mar 02: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday defended his decision not to join the US-Israel strikes on Iran over the weekend, saying his Labour Party government did not believe in "regime change from the skies".

Starmer was updating Parliament on his earlier announcement that the UK had granted permission for the Americans to use British bases for "limited defensive purpose" in West Asia.

His statement to MPs in the House of Commons came after President Donald Trump said he was "very disappointed" that the UK PM took "far too long" to change his mind over the use of British bases.

"This government does not believe in regime change from the skies," Starmer told the Commons.

"The United Kingdom was not involved in the initial strikes on Iran by the US and Israel. That decision was deliberate. We believe that the best way forward for the region and for the world is



a negotiated settlement in which Iran agrees to give up any aspirations to develop a nuclear weapon and ceases its destabilising activity across the region.

"That has been the long-standing position of successive British governments. President Trump has expressed his disagreement with our decision not to get involved in the initial strikes, but it is my duty to judge what is in Britain's national interest. That is what I've done, and I stand by it," he said.

Starmer, a former barrister, repeatedly referred to

the need for a "lawful basis" and a "viable, thought-through plan" before committing British forces into action.

"That is one of the lessons from Iraq," he stressed.

His parliamentary statement revealed that more than 20 "potentially lethal" attacks on UK soil backed by Iran have been foiled in the last year.

"So, it's clear the Iranian regime must never be allowed to get their hands on nuclear weapons. That remains the primary aim of the United Kingdom and our allies, including the US, and

ultimately, this will have to be achieved at the negotiating table," he said.

Starmer conceded that the situation on the ground "may remain challenging for some time" and urged all British citizens in the region to register their presence.

"We want to ensure that they can return home as swiftly and safely as possible. The FCDO (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office) phone lines are open to provide consular support, and ministers are available to meet MPs to discuss any individual cases," he said.

Bengal govt clears in-principle transfer of 105 acres to Centre for border fencing

PTI

Kolkata, Mar 02: The West Bengal government has in-principle approved the transfer of around 105 acres to the Centre for border fencing and construction of outposts, official sources said on Monday.

The land will be transferred to the Border Security Force (BSF) for fencing nearly 17 km and for setting up border outposts (BOPs), he said.

A ministerial group constituted to examine proposals involving the transfer of land to central agencies held a meeting at the state secretariat 'Nabanna' on Friday and cleared the proposal in principle, he added.

However, the final approval will be given by the state Cabinet.

"The proposal to hand over land to the BSF for border fencing and construction of border outposts was discussed in detail. It will now be placed before the Cabinet for final approval," a senior official said.

According to administrative sources, the Centre plans to erect fencing along a 17-km stretch of the border and had sought land from the state government for the purpose.

The BSF also requires land to construct nine border outposts in the area.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had earlier entrusted a special

ministerial group with examining proposals involving the transfer of land to central agencies.

On Friday, ministers Chandrima Bhattacharya, Firhad Hakim and Aroop Biswas deliberated on the quantum and location of land required and the extent to which the state could provide it, sources said.

Sources in the state secretariat said it was decided that around 67 acres would be provided for fencing the 17-km stretch, while about 18 acres would be required for constructing the nine BOPs. These parcels are currently owned by private individuals, and the state government will purchase the land from them before handing it over to the BSF.

If the Chief Minister's Office clears the proposal, it will be placed before the state Cabinet. Upon receiving the Cabinet's nod, the district administration will initiate discussions with landowners to acquire the required plots.

In addition, the ministerial group is expected to recommend transferring around 20-25 acres of government land in nine border-adjacent locations to the BSF, sources added.

"The objective is to strengthen border infrastructure and enhance security arrangements in the area," an official said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

PM Modi calls

conversation with Al Khalifa, Modi said India stands in solidarity with the people of Bahrain in this "difficult hour".

"India condemned the attacks on Bahrain and stands in solidarity with its people in this difficult hour. I thank him for the steadfast support extended to the Indian community in Bahrain," he added.

Iran has carried out a wave of attacks mainly targeting Israel and American military bases in several Gulf countries, including the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, after the US and Israel attacked Iran on Saturday.

The Iranian retaliation increased after Tehran announced early Sunday that the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had been killed in the Israel-US strike.

For 7th consecutive

Shopian saw one of the steepest shortfalls at 82 per cent below normal, while Kulgam recorded an 80 per cent deficit. Kupwara, Budgam and Anantnag also reported deficits exceeding 60 per cent.

In the Jammu division, Kishtwar recorded a 90 per cent deficit, while Kathua and Jammu districts were 66 per cent and 64 per cent below normal respectively. Ramban and Udhampur also reported significant shortfalls.

Experts said winter precipitation is critical for the Union Territory as snowfall in higher reaches feeds rivers and streams, recharges groundwater and supports irrigation during the spring and summer months. Consecutive deficient winters may affect snow accumulation and meltwater availability later in the year. "This year's winter passing away without any significant weather activity can trigger water crisis across Jammu and Kashmir," they added.

They attributed the trend to changes in the frequency and intensity of western

disturbances, which are the primary source of winter precipitation in the region.

They also said the situation would be monitored in the coming months, particularly in view of its potential impact on agriculture, horticulture and water resources. (KNO)

MoE mulls AI in

90.84 percent of toilet facilities for the girls', 88.49 percent for boys.

It also said 75.10 percent of students have access to libraries and electricity was available in 91.44 percent of schools.

Pertinently, the MoE has said that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is developing the framework for AI integration for all students from Class 3 onwards from the academic year 2026-27.

Earlier in the second week of February, KNO reported that with nearly 28 percent of students in Jammu and Kashmir failing to transition from secondary to higher secondary level, the retention rate post 8th standard poses a real challenge for the School Education Department in ensuring the consistency of the learners.

The official figures in this regard has revealed that the transition rates have improved significantly with 94.8 percent transition from primary to upper primary and 90.7 percent from elementary to secondary levels.

The documents further reveal that the J&K was facing a transition rate of 72.9 percent from secondary to higher secondary and Gross Access Ratio remains above 98 percent across stages. (KNO)

Kashmiri families

peaceful protest, urging immediate government intervention.

"We are living in constant fear. Our children are in the heart of Tehran, where tensions are at their peak. Every moment feels

uncertain," said another parent. "We appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to personally intervene and ensure the safe return of our children, where around 1100 Kashmiri students are trapped."

Several parents alleged that although advisories had been issued urging Indian nationals to leave Iran, many students were unable to do so due to delays in receiving their original documents from universities.

"Our children are willing to leave immediately, but without essential documents, they are stranded. This delay is putting their lives at serious risk," a parent said, calling for urgent diplomatic coordination to resolve the issue.

Meanwhile, the All India Medical Students Association (AIMSA) confirmed that Indian students enrolled in institutions such as Shaheed Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Tehran University of Medical Sciences are being relocated to safer areas under the supervision of the Indian Embassy.

According to official communications shared with students, the relocation is a temporary precautionary measure aimed at ensuring immediate safety. Students have been instructed to carry only essential belongings in a small backpack and strictly adhere to guidelines issued by the university and embassy authorities.

Officials further said that students from major institutions in Tehran, including SBUMS, TUMS, and IUIMS, have been directed to assemble early Tuesday for coordinated relocation to designated safe zones.

"The priority at this stage is the safety and security of all students. Further arrangements will be communicated in due course," he said. (KNO)

MHA alerts states

intensify checks in crowded areas and vulnerable sites and to conduct regular inspection drives to detect explosives, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Directors General of Police have been instructed to ensure that quick response teams remain operational and ready to respond swiftly to any untoward incident.

The Home Ministry has also placed special emphasis on monitoring social media platforms to curb the spread of inflammatory messages, misinformation and rumours that could disturb communal harmony. Cyber cells have been directed to keep a close watch on online content and take prompt action wherever necessary.

The MHA said it is continuously reviewing the security situation and remains in close coordination with state authorities to ensure preparedness and prevent any escalation of law-and-order issues. (KNO)

Kashmir mourns

interior areas and outskirts, crowds raised anti-US and anti-Israel slogans. Security was tightened across the Valley and additional police personnel were deployed to maintain order amid the gatherings.

Security forces were stationed at key intersections and sensitive locations, particularly in Srinagar, to prevent any untoward incident.

Notably, religious leaders including Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari and Imran Raza Ansari joined public calls urging mourners and protesters "not to take the law into their own hands" and to express their sentiments peacefully and within the ambit of law.

Officials said all restrictions and precautionary measures are temporary and subject to review depending on the evolving situation.

Meanwhile, processions and rallies were also taken out in Ladakh and Kargil districts underscoring the broader spread of the public

response following the news of Khamenei's death. (KNO)

Precautionary restrictions

incidents," the officials added. (KNO)

DIGs NKR, CRPF

urged the mourners to maintain peace and cooperate with the administration in preserving harmony and normalcy across the districts. (KNO)

High-level meeting

three tiers of Panchayati Raj institutions and Urban Local Bodies in Jammu & Kashmir remain non-existent due to the inordinate delay in conducting elections.

While the chances of holding Panchayat polls in 2026 appear bleak, there is a possibility that Urban Local Body elections could take place this year.

During the ongoing budget session, the J&K Government revealed that the delimitation process is incomplete in five out of 77 ULBs across the Union Territory.

"Delimitation has been completed for 72 ULBs and is under process for the remaining five," the government stated.

The Government also disclosed that the report submitted by the Dedicated Backward Classes Commission is under consideration of the Competent Authority, and further steps for conducting ULB elections will be taken accordingly. The report aims to grant reservation for OBCs in both ULBs and Panchayats.

It is worth mentioning that the term of the first two tiers of the Panchayati Raj system-Panchayats and Block Development Councils-ended on January 9, 2024, while the tenure of the third tier-District Development Councils-concluded on February 24, 2026. The tenure of elected Urban Local Bodies came to an end in October-November 2023. (KNO)

Centre prepared to bring back Indians stranded in West Asia: Union Minister

PTI

Bengaluru, Mar 02: The Centre is fully prepared to bring back Indians stranded in the Gulf region and is in touch with Indian missions abroad to ensure their safety, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Monday.

In a statement, Joshi said discussions have been held with senior officials of the concerned embassies to facilitate the safe return of those affected by the war situation.

"Whenever Kannadigas and other Indians face distress anywhere in the world, the Central Government has ensured their safe return. Earlier, we brought back those stranded in Ukraine. Wherever Indians are, their safety remains our first priority," he said.

Joshi said information has been received about Kannadigas facing hardship due to the severity of the Iran-Israel conflict, and urgent consultations have been held with senior ministers to take necessary measures for their protection.



Reassuring anxious families, the Minister said there was no need to panic and that the government is committed to bringing back all Indians safely.

He noted that air travel in war-affected regions is currently risky and expert advice is being sought before

taking further steps.

Joshi said efforts are also underway to assist those stranded in Dubai, where flight operations have been affected.

"No one should be anxious. Serious efforts are being made to bring them back safely," he added.

Amit Shah vows to 'throw out infiltrators from Bengal' if BJP wins in assembly polls

PTI

Mathurapur (WB), Mar 02: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday sharpened the BJP's pitch on infiltration, declaring that while "only names of infiltrators are being deleted now" from voter rolls, they would be "pushed out of the state" once the party comes to power with a full majority in West Bengal.

Addressing the BJP's Poriborton Yatra here in South 24 Parganas district, his first visit to the state since the publication of the revised electoral rolls on Saturday, Shah said the Trinamool Congress (TMC) had turned Bengal into a "swarg (heaven)" for infiltrators and alleged that the border state's security was compromised because the ruling dispensation allowed illegal immigration.

"Bengal is a bordering state. The TMC cannot ensure security because they allow infiltration. Only the BJP can provide security to a bordering state like Bengal," he said. His remarks come against the backdrop of the post-Special Intensive Revision (SIR) electoral rolls published on Saturday, which recorded 63.66 lakh deletions, 8.3 per cent of the electorate, since the exercise began in November, reducing the voter base to just over 7.04 crore and significantly redrawing constituency arithmetic ahead of the 2026 Assembly

polls.

"I want to assure Hindu refugees that not a single one among them will lose their citizenship," he said, seeking to draw a distinction between what the BJP terms "infiltrators" and persecuted minorities who migrated from neighbouring countries.

"Right now only names are being deleted from voter rolls, and Mamata Didi is nervous. Once BJP forms the government, we will identify and remove every infiltrator from Bengal," Shah said.

Infiltration and corruption will stop when the BJP comes to power with a full majority, the Union home minister said, repeating the charge that the TMC government under Mamata Banerjee had failed to secure the borders.

In a sharp personal attack, he alleged that Banerjee was "busy inaugurating temples" while "allowing the building of Babri Masjid in Bengal", and claimed that the exit of TMC leader Humayun Kabir was part of a "well-crafted conspiracy" to facilitate the construction of such a mosque. Kabir in December last year laid the

foundation stone for a mosque - modelled on Ayodhya's Babri Masjid - at Rejinagar in West Bengal's Murshidabad district.

"If the people here make the mistake of voting again for the TMC, Bengal will have a government run by nephew Abhishek Banerjee and not by Mamata Didi," Shah said, seeking to revive the BJP's "bhaipo"



(nephew) attack line.

In a sweeping electoral reset barely months before the 2026 Assembly polls, the 116-day SIR drive, the first intensive revision since 2002, has also placed more than 60.06 lakh electors in the "under adjudication" category, their eligibility now subject to judicial scrutiny in the coming weeks.

Criminals will be behind bars within month of BJP govt in Bengal: Rajnath

PTI

Howrah (WB), Mar 02: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday asserted that criminals in West Bengal would be "in jail or God knows where" within a month of a BJP government coming to power in the state.

He, however, said eliminating joblessness in Bengal, from where a significant number of people migrate for work to other states, would take around five to 10 years.

Singh was addressing a 'Parivartan Yatra' rally at Amta in Howrah district.

"Within a month of formation of a BJP government in Bengal, criminals will either be in jail, or God knows where," he said.

He added that a BJP government in Bengal would create jobs for the youth. "It will take us five to 10 years to eliminate the problem of joblessness here," Singh said.

Singh alleged that the Trinamool Congress (TMC) was dividing people in the state.

"The BJP does not engage



in politics merely to form governments, but to reform society. The TMC, on the other hand, is dividing the people of the state," he said.

He asked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, "Why are those involved in crimes not punished in the state? You have run the government for 15 years. Why has poverty not been eradicated in West Bengal, and why do women not feel safe?"

Accusing Banerjee of favouring criminals, Singh

said, "Her affection is for the criminals, the corrupt, and people of a particular religion."

He added that criminals now believe nothing will happen to them under her regime.

Singh claimed that according to NCRB records, the highest incidents of atrocities on women take place in Bengal.

"In Bengal, rule of law breakers prevail and not that of the law," he alleged.

Stating that the time for change in Bengal has come,

he urged the people of the poll-bound state not to falter this time.

"The soil of Bengal is giving the clarion call that TMC's atrocities will not continue anymore in the state," he said.

He added that violence and fear of atrocities against women were widespread. "If anyone dares to harm the womenfolk of the state, they will be taught a lesson by a BJP government," he said.

"Situation has turned so bad in the state that people are afraid, and women think twice before venturing out of their houses," Singh said.

Maintaining that corruption is prevalent in all parts of West Bengal, he said people across the state are complaining about it.

"But the people are now confident that the Mamata Banerjee government is on its way out and the BJP is coming to power," he said.

Singh asserted that once a BJP government is formed in the state, Bengal will see unforeseen development and progress.

Govt discusses potential impact of West Asia crisis on trade; ensures all facilitation

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 02: The government on Monday held inter-ministerial deliberations with exporters and logistics players to assess the impact of escalating tensions in the West Asian region on India's trade and assured all measures to mitigate any disruptions.

The US and Israel jointly launched military strikes on Iran on Saturday. Iran responded by firing drones and missiles at Israel and US military installations around the Gulf, and also at the global business hub of Dubai.

The meeting was called by the Department of Commerce.

It held a consultation with all stakeholder ministries, key logistics and trade facilitation partners to review the emerging geopolitical situation and its potential impact on India's export-import (EXIM) cargo flows, including the export ecosystem.

The ministry said that stakeholders presented an assessment of the evolving operational environment, including routing and transit-time changes, vessel scheduling adjustments, container/equipment availability, freight and insurance

cost trends, and implications for time-sensitive exports.

The participants emphasised the need to maintain predictability in cargo movement, minimise avoidable delays, and ensure seamless documentation and payment processes for exporters and importers.

"The Department reiterated the Government of India's priority of ensuring continuity of EXIM logistics and mitigating any disruptions to India's trade flows," it said.

It was also emphasised that the approach will remain facilitative and coordinated, with a focus on maintaining supply chain resilience, protecting the interests of exporters—particularly MSMEs—with a view that essential imports required for domestic production and consumption are not adversely affected.

"During the meeting, it was agreed amongst the stakeholders to maintain close, real-time coordination for monitoring route and capacity developments, surcharges, and equipment availability," it said.

Mechanisms for facilitation of time-sensitive export segments such as perishables, pharmaceuticals, and high-value manufactured exports were also discussed.

The meeting emphasised strengthening facilitation at ports/ICDs and ensuring smooth cargo evacuation to avoid congestion and extended dwell times.

The government reiterated its readiness to facilitate trade operations, including procedural flexibilities in export-related authorisations in cases of genuine disruption; coordination with Customs authorities to ensure smooth clearance; and engagement with financial and insurance institutions to support exporter interests.

"The Department reaffirmed that it will continue to engage closely with all stakeholders and relevant Ministries/ Departments to ensure that India's trade continues to move efficiently and that any emerging issues are addressed in a timely manner," the ministry said.

The meeting was chaired by Special Secretary in the Department, Suchindra Misra, and Lav Agarwal, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

The meeting was attended by representatives from logistics operators and shipping lines/forwarders, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Petroleum and

Curbing non-CO2 pollutants key to tackling rising temps, says climate researcher

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 02: Slashing non-carbon dioxide (CO2) pollutants, particularly short-lived climate pollutants, such as methane, could put the emergency brake on rising temperatures, avoiding between 0.4 degrees Celsius and 0.6 degrees Celsius of warming by 2050, said Dr Durwood Zaelke, co-founder of the Washington-based Institute for Governance and Sustainable Development.

For comparison, if the world successfully decarbonises by just targeting CO2 emissions by 2050, only 0.1 degrees Celsius of warming could be avoided.

"This is because when you shut down fossil-fuel facilities, you unmask existing warming, as short-lived sulphates, which cool the planet, fall out in a matter of days," said Zaelke, who is also a professor and author. He was one of the key speakers at last week's World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). In an interview with PTI, Zaelke said for example, the International Maritime Organisation introduced strict limits on the sulphur content of marine fuels in 2020. While this reduced sulphur dioxide (SO2) emissions, the move has warmed the planet by an estimated 0.04 degrees Celsius.

The world is rapidly approaching a sustained breach of the 1.5-degree Celsius threshold set by the 2015 Paris Agreement. The last three years have been the warmest on record, with the average temperature rise being



1.51 degrees Celsius.

"That is why cutting non-CO2 pollutants is crucial. For example, methane is the biggest and fastest way to cool the planet, capable of avoiding 0.29 degrees Celsius of warming by the 2040s," said Zaelke, whose organisation aims to build resilience by accelerating fast climate-mitigation actions to slow near-term warming.

Apart from methane, other key non-CO2 pollutants are hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), tropospheric ozone and black carbon soot. However, coming up with a collective action to slash these pollutants would be a challenge for the world, as global efforts to tackle the climate crisis have been undermined in recent months. In January, the United States withdrew from 66 international organisations and conventions -- the most significant being its exit from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC). According to Zaelke, the world needs to take inspiration from the 1989 Montreal Protocol, which helped recover the ozone layer by phasing out the production and use of ozone-depleting substances.

"The Montreal Protocol has shown that we can start small -- with citizen boycotts of CFCs in hairspray -- and grow into a treaty with universal membership that has avoided nearly 100 per cent of damaging chemicals. It has kept us from going over the cliff of disaster," Zaelke said. Also, adopting sectoral agreement models could help curb non-CO2 pollutants. For instance, mandatory leak detection and repair programmes could reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector.

"Europe already has strong methane regulations for domestic production and imports, telling sellers they must have low methane intensity and no flaring if they want to sell gas to the European market," Zaelke said.

Sensex falls 1,048 points, Nifty ends 312 points lower amid geopolitical tensions in Middle East

PTI

Mumbai, Mar 02: Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty nosedived over 1 per cent on Monday as investors' sentiment were hit hard following a sharp spike in crude oil prices amid escalating tensions in West Asia.

Weak trends in global markets and heavy foreign fund outflows also dented sentiments.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 2,743.46 points or 3.37 per cent to 78,543.73 in early trade. It later ended at 80,238.85, down 1,048.34 points or 1.29 per cent.

The 50-share NSE Nifty tumbled 575.15 points or 2.28 per cent to 24,603.50 in intra-day trade. The benchmark later settled 312.95 points or 1.24 per cent down at 24,865.70.

From the Sensex pack, InterGlobe Aviation, Larsen & Toubro, Adani Ports, Maruti, Asian Paints, and Bajaj Finserv were among the biggest laggards.

Bharat Electronics, Sun Pharma and ITC were the only gainers. Brent crude,

the global oil benchmark, Japan's Nikkei 225 fell



jumped 8.34 per cent to USD 78.95 per barrel.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in a coordinated US-Israeli airstrike on Tehran early Saturday, with the Iranian state media confirming the death on Sunday.

Iran began firing missiles at Israel and the Arab countries in the region in retaliation for the killing of its supreme leader.

In Asian markets,

over 1 per cent and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index tumbled more than 2 per cent, while Shanghai's SSE Composite index ended in positive territory. Equity markets were closed in South Korea due to a holiday.

Markets in Europe were trading sharply lower.

The US market ended lower on Friday.

"Rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have unsettled global

markets, with concerns over possible extension of the situation given the killing of Iran's supreme leader.

"Rising crude oil prices and a weakening INR reflect concerns over potential disruptions to oil supply, which could increase inflationary pressures in India and impact fiscals and strain margins for energy and chemical-dependent sectors," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

The India VIX has edged higher, signalling increased uncertainty and risk aversion among market participants, he added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 7,536.36 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), however, bought stocks worth Rs 12,292.81 crore.

On Friday, the Sensex tanked 961.42 points or 1.17 per cent to settle at 81,287.19. The Nifty tumbled 317.90 points or 1.25 per cent to end at 25,178.65.

Equity markets would remain closed on Tuesday for Holi.

Oil prices soar and stock prices fall as US-Israel war with Iran rattles markets

AP
Bangkok, Mar 02: The US and Israeli attacks on Iran rattled world markets on Monday, with U.S. futures falling more than 1% and oil prices soaring, though gains for defense contractors and oil companies helped limit losses in Asian trading.



The futures for the S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 1.7%.

The price of a barrel of US benchmark jumped 9% to \$73 per barrel. Brent crude jumped nearly 10% to nearly \$80 per barrel.

European markets opened sharply lower. Germany's DAX dropped 2.2% to 24,737.47, while in Paris the CAC 40 lost 1.9% to 8,413.91. Britain's FTSE 100 slipped 1% to 10,800.63.

Shares fell in most Asian markets but they rose in Shanghai, where higher oil prices lifted some oil company stocks such as CNOOC, China Petroleum & Chemical and PetroChina to the 10% limit.

The Shanghai Composite index climbed 0.5% to 4,182.59, while in Hong Kong, the Hang Seng lost 2.1% to 26,059.85.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index initially fell more than 2%. It closed 1.4% lower at 58,057.24. Offsetting other losses, shares in defence-related stocks including Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and IHI Corp. advanced.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200

ended flat, at 9,200.90. In India, which could face disruptions to its access to oil due to the hostilities, the Sensex fell 2.1%.

Taiwan's benchmark lost 0.9% and Singapore's dropped 2.3%. In Bangkok, a major tourism destination for the Middle East, the SET fell 3.1%.

Markets were closed in South Korea for a holiday.

The price of gold, which usually is viewed as a safe haven for investment in times of uncertainty, rose 3.4% to about \$5,426 per ounce.

The US dollar also gained, rising to 157.20 Japanese yen from 156.27 yen late Friday. The euro slipped to \$1.1708 from \$1.1762.

Traders are betting the war will disrupt oil supplies from Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East. Attacks throughout the region, including on two vessels travelling through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, have constrained oil exports to the rest

of the world.

"Roughly one-fifth of global oil and LNG (liquefied natural gas) flows squeeze through the Strait of Hormuz. This is not an obscure canal. It is the aorta of the global energy system," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

A prolonged war would likely result in higher prices for other fuels and gasoline and could cascade throughout the global economy, adding to production costs overall.

Prolonged interruptions to oil flows through the Middle East would have "huge implications for oil and LNG and every market everywhere if it occurs. Energy is an input to ALL production," RaboResearch Global Economics & Markets said in a report.

Iran exports roughly 1.6 million barrels of oil a day, mostly to China. It may need to look elsewhere for supply if Iran's exports are disrupted, another factor that could increase energy prices.

No sign Iran's nuclear sites were hit, IAEA says, but Iran alleges one was

REUTERS

Vienna, Mar 02: The UN nuclear watchdog has no indication Israeli and US attacks on Iran have hit any nuclear facilities, its chief Rafael Grossi told the agency's Board of Governors on Monday, moments before Iran's envoy said one was targeted a day earlier.

Iran's nuclear program has been among the reasons Israel and the US have given for the attacks, alleging Iran was getting too close to being able to eventually make an atom bomb.

At the same time, what remains of Iran's atomic facilities after the two militaries attacked them in June appears to have been largely spared in this campaign so far.

"We have no indication that any of the nuclear installations ... have been damaged or hit," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said in a statement to a meeting of his agency's 35-nation Board of Governors.

What that assessment was

based on is unclear, since he also said his agency had not been able to reach its counterparts in Iran. Tehran has not let the IAEA return to its bombed facilities since they were attacked in June.

"Efforts to contact the Iranian nuclear regulatory authorities ... continue, with no response so far. We hope this indispensable channel of communication can be re-established as soon as possible," he said.

Moments later, Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, Reza Najafi, told reporters outside the closed-door meeting that the sprawling nuclear complex at Natanz had been attacked.

Natanz housed two uranium-enrichment plants that were attacked in June — an above-ground one that the IAEA says was destroyed and an underground one that was at least badly damaged, among other facilities.

"Again they attacked Iran's peaceful, safeguarded nuclear facilities yesterday," Najafi said. Asked by Reuters which facilities were hit, he replied: "Natanz" and left.

China calls for ceasefire, diplomacy to end Middle East conflict



AFP

Beijing, Mar 02: China called on Monday for a ceasefire and diplomatic talks to end the conflict in the Middle East as it stretched into a third day.

Israel and the United States have been conducting strikes on Iran and Lebanon, with the conflict extending to regional neighbours.

"The most urgent task is an immediate cessation of military operations and preventing a spread and spillover of conflict," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a news conference, urging "a resolution through dialogue and negotiation".

One Chinese citizen was killed as a result of the conflict in Tehran, she said, where Israel and the United States have been carrying

out strikes in an operation that killed the Islamic republic's supreme leader. "The foreign ministry has instructed the Chinese embassy in Iran to provide assistance to the individuals involved and the family," Mao added, without giving further details of the victim or incident.

Beijing warned its citizens last week against travelling to Iran for the time being "in light of the current security situation". More than 3,000 Chinese nationals have left Iran as of Monday.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have vowed to launch the "most ferocious" operation in history against Israel and US bases, which are located in Gulf countries that were already counting the cost of an unprecedented series of deadly Iranian strikes.

International Women's Day MoS Sports Khadse announces nationwide ASMITA League

On March 8, four centres across J&K, Ladakh will focus on athletics across age groups of under 13, 13-18 & 18+ categories

KT News Desk

New Delhi, March 2: In a unique initiative to celebrate women in sport, a massive nationwide athletics league at 250 locations will be held under the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports' ASMITA (Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action) programme to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8. This was announced by Minister of State, Shrimati Raksha Nikhil Khadse here on Monday.



Khelo India women's leagues across multiple age groups at both zonal and national levels. Started in 2021, ASMITA leagues not only aim to increase the participation of women in sports but to utilise the leagues as a platform for identification of new talent across the length and breadth of India.

So far, more than 2600 leagues have been conducted across 34 sports disciplines in over 550 districts and 700 cities in the country. Significantly, ASMITA has reached the farthest corners of the country, like Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram in the North-east. It has also been held in areas that were once tormented by Naxalism. More than 300,000 women have taken part.

Shrimati Khadse said events will be conducted at 250 locations nationwide, focusing on athletics (100m, 200m, 400m) across the age groups of Under-13, 13-18

years and 18+ categories. Each venue will deploy 5 technical officials, 10 volunteers, one competition manager, one PCA (Past Champion Athlete) and District Youth Officer. It is expected that a record 2,50,000 women will participate on a single day to celebrate International Women's Day. This initiative will be implemented in collaboration with MY Bharat, Khelo India Centres (KICs), SAI ecosystem & NCOEs, State & District Sports Associations as well as District Youth Officers (DYOs).

"The League will be organized in more than 30 States and Union Territories, including North-east States. The objective is to encourage more and more girls in villages and small towns to take up sports as a career as it is envisioned by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Shrimati Khadse said.

PCB considering financial penalties on Pak players for T20WC debacle

PTI

Karachi, Mar 02: Livid with the Pakistan team's early elimination from the T20 World Cup, the country's cricket board is contemplating financial penalties on the players for their below-par show.

A reliable source said that while reports of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) deducting remuneration of the players were incorrect, appropriate action is being considered in the wake of the team's exit from the Super Eight stage of the event co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

"No final decision has been taken on this as yet. But yes it is under consideration to

financially penalise the players," he confirmed to PTI without revealing the details.

He said it is being debated whether it would be the right step to hit the players financially.

Pakistan failed to qualify for the semifinals and lost to big teams like arch-foes India and England while their Super Eight game against New Zealand was washed out.

They beat Sri Lanka in their final Super Eight game but couldn't qualify for the semi-finals.

The performance of the players, according to the source, has not only upset the PCB but also influential figures in the government.

"The feeling is enough is enough and these players despite so much backing let down the nation in big events," the source added.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

رَمَضَانَ الْمُبَارَكِ

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وقت افطار	اعتقاص سحری	رمضان المبارک	تاریخ	وقت افطار	اعتقاص سحری	رمضان المبارک	تاریخ
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06:36 PM	05:27 AM	19	09	06:24 PM	05:46 AM	4	22
06:37 PM	05:26 AM	20	10	06:24 PM	05:45 AM	5	23
06:38 PM	05:25 AM	21	11	06:25 PM	05:44 AM	6	24
06:38 PM	05:24 AM	22	12	06:26 PM	05:42 AM	7	25
06:39 PM	05:23 AM	23	13	06:27 PM	05:41 AM	8	26
06:40 PM	05:20 AM	24	14	06:28 PM	05:40 AM	9	27
06:41 PM	05:19 AM	25	15	06:29 PM	05:39 AM	10	28
06:42 PM	05:18 AM	26	16	06:30 PM	05:38 AM	11	01 MAR
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06:44 PM	05:14 AM	29	19	06:33 PM	05:34 AM	14	04
06:45 PM	05:12 AM	30	20	06:33 PM	05:33 AM	15	05

DUA FOR SEHRI

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

DUA FOR IFTAAR

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

Kashmir Thunder
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