

# Not everyone can secure govt job: CM Omar Abdullah

» Urges youth to explore innovation, become entrepreneurs » Says agriculture, horticulture contribute significantly to J&K's GDP

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Mar 05: Calling upon youth to become job creators instead of job seekers, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said agriculture and allied sectors hold immense potential for startups, value addition and entrepreneurship programmes in the region.

Addressing a Startup Outreach Programme organised under the Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Jammu, the Chief Minister, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and apiculture together form a strong economic base of the region."

He said, "There is a misconception that Jammu and Kashmir's economy is driven



only by tourism. The fact is that agriculture and horticulture contribute significantly to J&K's Gross Domestic Product."

CM Omar told students that government employment opportunities are limited and not everyone can secure a

government job.

He said the youth must explore innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in sectors where the region already has natural strengths. "We do not have resources like coal, iron ore or oil to set up large-scale industries. We have to build industries around what we already possess, and agriculture offers that opportunity," he said.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for value addition to make agriculture viable, noting that shrinking land holdings and market uncertainties have made traditional farming less sustainable.

Citing dairy as an example, he said only a small percentage of milk produced in Jammu and Kashmir undergoes processing, unlike states such as Gujarat where value addition is significantly higher. Processing milk into products such as paneer and other dairy items increases income and creates employment, he added.

He also | More on P6



Worshippers gather in prayer at Dargah Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar on Thursday  
Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

## Major reshuffle in gubernatorial positions

- » Kavinder Gupta appointed Governor of Himachal Pradesh
- » V.K. Saxena transferred to Ladakh
- » Hasnain appointed Governor of Bihar



KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Mar 05: In a sweeping reshuffle of

gubernatorial positions, Kavinder Gupta has been appointed as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh, while Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Vinai Kumar Saxena has been appointed as LG of Ladakh.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the President of India today appointed the Lieutenant | More on P6

## CM calls for mission-mode approach towards future-ready skill

KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 05: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday chaired a preliminary meeting to discuss the formulation of an action plan for Mission SKILL in Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive, mission-mode strategy to equip youth with market-relevant skills. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief

Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Finance Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism & PDD, Commissioner Secretary Planning, Development & Monitoring, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce, Secretary Labour | More on P6

## Preparations for biggest headcount exercise Census commissioner likely to visit J&K today Chief Secy to chair conference

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Mar 05: The Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India is visiting Jammu & Kashmir to participate in a programme relating to the conduct of the Census—the largest headcount exercise in the country, being held after a gap of 15 years.

Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that Census Commissioner

Mritunjay Kumar Narayan is expected to participate in the programme scheduled for March 9, which is being organized in connection with preparations for Census 2027.

The programme will be chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, who also heads the Union Territory-level Census Coordination Committee.

"This is a significant event. It will mark the formal declaration of the | More on P6

## Energy Emergency: '9.5 billion units power gap looms over J&K, Ladakh'

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Mar 05: In the coming ten years Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are unlikely to meet 9.5 Billion Units (BU) of electrical energy requirement considering the existing and planned capacity contracts.

The official documents available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveal that, "Considering the existing and planned capacity contracts, the UTs will not be able to meet its electrical energy requirement and the total unserved energy for the year 2035-36 has been estimated as 9.5 BU."

The study has been carried out considering only the existing and planned capacity contracts as | More on P6

## J&K players meet ICC Chairman Jay Shah after historic Ranji triumph

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Mar 05: ICC chairman Jay Shah met members of Jammu & Kashmir cricket team after their historic Ranji Trophy win, in which they beat the eight-time champions Karnataka at the Hubli Cricket Ground last week to win their maiden title.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) following the memorable victory, the players expressed a heartfelt desire to meet Jay Shah and share their joy with him, acknowledging the role his leadership played in strengthening cricket infrastructure and opportunities in the region during his tenure as Secretary of the Board of Control for | More on P6

## River Jhelum at historic low this March

'Deficient snowfall may affect paddy nursery preparation this season'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Mar 05: The water level in Jhelum River has dropped below the zero-gauge mark in the first week of March, an unusual development that experts say could signal stress for Kashmir's upcoming paddy cultivation season.

According to official flood control data, the river was flowing at minus 0.86 feet at Sangam in south Kashmir at 9 am on Thursday, indicating discharge



below the zero level — a rare occurrence for this time of the year. Faizan Arif, an independent weather forecaster who runs 'Kashmir Weather', said the low-level | More on P6

## MEA monitoring situation in Iran, Indian Embassy in UAE issues advisory

JKSA urges EAM Jaishankar to relocate students to safer places

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Mar 05: Amid escalating tensions in parts of the Middle East, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it is closely monitoring the situation involving Indian nationals in the region, while the

Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi has advised Indians in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to remain vigilant and follow local safety guidelines.

In an advisory issued on Thursday, the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi urged Indian nationals in the UAE to remain calm and adhere to instructions by authorities.

"In view of the prevailing situation in the United Arab Emirates and the region, all Indian nationals currently in the | More on P6

## Govt sets up control room

Sajid Raina

The government on Thursday set up a dedicated control room in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to monitor the safety of Indian nationals in West Asia following escalating hostilities in the region. According to the details available with the news | More on P6



### NASHA MUKT JAMMU KASHMIR ABHIYAAN

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Dated: 05.03.2026  
DIPK-11581/25

## Javed Rana reviews functioning of Tribal Hostels in Jammu

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 05: Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning of tribal hostels across the Jammu division, with a focus on improving living facilities, strengthening nutritional standards, ensuring quality education and expediting the construction of new hostel infrastructure for tribal students.

During the meeting, the Minister, as per an official statement, reviewed the overall functioning of hostels operating under the Tribal Affairs Department and took stock of the progress of hostel buildings currently under construction in various districts of the Jammu division. He directed the concerned officers to immediately identify and remove all bottlenecks hampering the pace of construction so that the works are completed within the stipulated timelines.

Emphasising the importance of adequate accommodation facilities for students belonging to tribal communities, the Minister stated that the construction and upgradation of tribal hostels must be treated as a priority by the department. He observed that these hostels play a crucial role in enabling students from remote and tribal areas to pursue education in urban and semi-urban centres. He also instructed the concerned authorities to resolve issues related to land identification and allotment on priority so that no delay occurs



in the execution of approved projects.

The Minister stressed that hostel facilities should not only provide accommodation but also create a supportive and enabling environment for students to focus on their studies and overall development. He underscored the need to strengthen academic support mechanisms within hostels and ensure that students receive a conducive atmosphere for quality education and personal growth.

Taking serious notice of complaints received from certain areas regarding the quality and availability of food and dietary supplements provided to students, the Minister directed the department to ensure strict monitoring of food supplies. He instructed that hostel menus should be of optimum quality and must be designed to meet the nutritional requirements of students. He also called for the introduction of a standardised and balanced menu across tribal hostels in Jammu and

Kashmir to ensure uniformity in dietary standards and proper nutrition for all students.

The Minister further directed the wardens of hostels to submit detailed requirements of their respective institutions, including repair and renovation works, furnishing needs, maintenance requirements and other infrastructural gaps. He said that the preparation of such requirement reports will enable the department to plan timely interventions and allocate resources for improving hostel facilities in a systematic manner.

Highlighting the importance of holistic development, the Minister emphasised that hostels should actively promote sports, cultural and extracurricular activities among students. He observed that such activities play an important role in nurturing talent, building confidence and ensuring the overall personality development of students from tribal communities.

During the meeting, the Minister also reviewed the staffing position in hostels, including the availability of wardens and supporting staff, and sought details regarding vacancies and the requirement of additional manpower wherever necessary. He emphasised the need to strengthen safety and welfare measures in hostels by ensuring adequate security arrangements, regular health check-ups and access to basic medical facilities for students.

The Minister further directed the department to maintain proper financial discipline and ensure judicious utilisation of funds allocated for hostel management and infrastructure development. He asked the officers to maintain updated records regarding the status of funds received, expenditure incurred and any pending liabilities so that financial management remains transparent and accountable.

## Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar

(NAAC Accredited)

Shamaswari Fateh Kadal Srinagar-190002

Phone: 9419021926, Fax: 0194-2471726

www.gandhicollegesrinagar.edu.in

Email: principal.gmc1@jk.gov.in/ principalgmc1@gmail.com

### Cancellation of College Canteen Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that due to unavoidable circumstances, the tender notice invited for running of the College Canteen at Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, published vide e-NIT No. E-GMC/2026/324 dated 28-02-2026, is hereby cancelled with immediate effect.

Sd/-  
Principal  
Gandhi Memorial College  
Srinagar

Reference No.GMC/26/5115

Dated: 03/03/2026

DIPK-11586/25

DATED: 05-03-2026

## DC Budgam reviews progress under PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojana

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, MARCH 05: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Thursday chaired a meeting to review the progress achieved under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in the district.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, took a comprehensive review of the installation of rooftop solar systems across all electrical sub-divisions of Budgam.

He highlighted the numerous benefits of the initiative and urged the KPDC officials to intensify their public awareness efforts regarding the advantages of installing rooftop solar plants.

Stressing the importance of mass outreach, the DC directed officials to launch an extensive awareness campaign to educate the public about the scheme's financial and environmental benefits. He also emphasized the need for speedy implementation to ensure that residents fully utilize the scheme's benefits.

The meeting was attended by JD planning Budgam, Javid Ahmad Najar, Superintending Engineer, KPDC Budgam; ACD Budgam, Executive Engineer KPDC, LDM Budgam, AEs, and other concerned officials.

## DC Pulwama reviews arrangements for JKSSB Wildlife Guard Examination

KT NEWS DESK

PULWAMA, MARCH 05: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom Thursday chaired a comprehensive meeting at Circuit House Pulwama to review the arrangements put in place for the smooth and successful conduct of the JKSSB Wildlife Guard Examination scheduled to be held on March 08, 2026.

At the outset, Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama (Chief Inspector, JKSSB Examinations) briefed the chair about the preparedness and arrangements finalized for the examination. It was informed that the deployment of Centre Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, Invigilators and Videographers has been completed.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was further apprised about the deployment of Magistrates and Observers, besides the arrangements related to transportation, security, surveillance mechanisms and other logistical support to ensure fair and transparent conduct of the examination.

The DC reviewed the arrangements and interacted with the concerned officers, particularly Centre Superintendents, directing them to strictly adhere to the prescribed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). He stressed upon maintaining transparency, confidentiality and discipline during the conduct of



the examination.

Emphasizing the importance of inter-departmental coordination, the DC called for a collaborative effort among all concerned departments to create a conducive environment for the appearing candidates.

Earlier in the day, a comprehensive training programme was organized at Government Degree College for Boys, Pulwama for Centre Superintendents, Deputy Superintendents, Invigilators and Clerical Staff. The training focused on strict adherence to SOPs, frisking procedures, handling of examination material and ensuring smooth and transparent conduct of the examination.

## DC Budgam reviews progress of 4G Saturation Project

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, MARCH 05: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Thursday chaired a review meeting regarding the implementation and progress of the 4G Saturation Project in the district.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, took a comprehensive review of the status of land transfer and identification of sites for installation of 4G towers aimed at enhancing digital connectivity across Budgam.

It was informed that land has been transferred at 23 locations in the district for the installation of 4G towers under the project. The DC stressed on expediting the necessary procedures so that installation and operationalization of these towers is carried out in a time-bound manner. The meeting also discussed the

identification of additional sites in shadow areas under both General Purpose and Special Purpose categories to ensure seamless mobile connectivity for the general public as well as uncovered tourist destinations across the district.



The DC emphasized the importance of strengthening digital infrastructure, stating that improved connectivity will not only benefit residents but also enhance access to online services, education, healthcare and tourism-related activities. He directed the concerned officers to identify all remaining connectivity gaps and ensure prompt coordination with telecom service providers so that the benefits of the 4G Saturation Project reach every remote and underserved area of the district.

The meeting was attended by ADC Budgam, JD

## Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PW(R&B) MECHANICAL DIVISION SOUTH KASHMIR

(NOTICE INVITING TENDERS)

e-NIT No: - 40 of R&B/MDSK/2025-26

Dated: 04 / 03

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited in two-cover system (Technical and Financial) on Percentage basis from Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) / Experienced firms / Authorized dealers of OEM's for the below mentioned work: -

S. No	Name of work	Cost of Tender Documents (Rs)	Estimated cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs)	Time of Completion (months)	Tender Opening Authority	Position of Funds
1.	Design, Manufacturing, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 12 Nos. . . Customized 05 Passengers (G+3) MRL lifts at Transit Accommodation at Allowpora Shopian Phase-I.	5500/-	23736038/-	474721/-	03 Months	Superintending Engineer, PW (R&B) Circle Pulwama-Shopian	Available with intending department

Position of AAA: Authorization conveyed vide no. DMRRR-Plan/47/2023, Dated: 09/08/2024 by the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of

Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Affairs.

Position of TS: Accorded by Chief Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Engineering Department, Kashmir vide order no. MHED/K/TS/170, Dt: 11/02/2026.

S. No	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	04/03/2026
2	Period of Downloading of bidder Documents	From 04/03/2026 (04:45 hrs) To 13/03/2026 (12:00 hrs)
3	Bid Submission Start Date	From 04/03/2026 (04:45 hrs)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 13/03/2026 (12:00 hrs)
		14/03/2026 at/after 12:00 hrs in the office of Superintending Engineer, PW (R&B) Circle Pulwama-Shopian.
6	Date and time of opening of financial bid (online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed.
7		By uploading a scanned copy of Treasury Challan Receipt in favour of the Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Mechanical Division Anantnag to be deposited in Major Head 0059 South Kashmir OR Online Bank transfer acknowledgment including mPay or any other mobile banking App., to be uploaded with online bid. Tender Id to be written on the voucher and then uploaded.
	Submission (Between the start and end date of bid submission)	OR
		Bank Account No: 0014010200000198 favoring Executive Engineer (R&B), Mechanical Division South Kashmir Name of the Bank: Jammu & Kashmir Bank Branch Name: TP Anantnag Branch Code: EMPIRE IFSC Code: JAKA0EMPIRE MICR Code: 19205100

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per below schedule. Note: -1. The bidder must get registered on JKPWDOMS, as no payments shall be made unless the bill is processed on JKPWDOMS in view of circular issued by Finance Department of JK UT. No payment shall be released until and unless bill is processed through JKPWDOMS application and routed through JkPaySys. However, for those bidders who are not yet registered on JKPWDOMS shall submit and undertake that JKPWDOMS registration will be done well on time before release of payment. 2. In case of any technical clarifications, suggestions, comments set forth in the tender documents, the tenderers shall address the Superintending Engineer, PW (R&B) Circle Pulwama - Shopian or Executive Engineer Mechanical South Kashmir in writing at least six days before the last date fixed for submission of tenders. The queries/clarifications can be mailed to @jk.gov.in.

No. R&B/MDSK/ 3041-49

Date:04-03-2026

DIPK-11583/25  
DATED: 05-03-2026

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
R&B Mechanical Division  
South Kashmir

## Precautionary restrictions to continue across Kashmir today

- Only 2G mobile internet continue to operate
- Temporary curbs to be reviewed after Friday prayers

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Mar 05: Authorities have decided to enforce stringent precautionary restrictions across all districts of Kashmir on Friday to maintain law and order.

Senior officials in the security establishment said that the deployment has been intensified in major towns and sensitive pockets, with curbs on movement in identified areas.

The decision comes in wake of processions and rallies that were taken out in different part of Kashmir after the killing of Iran Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, in US-Israel strikes last week.

"Security arrangements have been strengthened and restrictions will remain in place on Friday. The situation is being closely monitored," an official said, adding that any decision on relaxation would be taken only after Friday prayers. The officials said mobile internet



services will continue to operate at 2G speed across the Valley, while prepaid mobile calling services will remain suspended.

The curbs, they said, are temporary and aimed at preventing any escalation and checking the spread of misinformation.

Another senior officer said the measures were taken as a preventive step to avoid mobilisation that could disturb public order. "Further decisions will depend on the ground assessment after Friday congregation prayers," he said—(KNO)

## MeT forecasts light rain from March 7-9

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Mar 05: Day temperatures remained 7-9 degrees Celsius above normal in many parts of Kashmir and 6-11 degrees above normal in several areas of Jammu division, the Meteorological Department said on Thursday.

According to the IMD data, the highest maximum temperature in Kashmir division was recorded at Muzaffarabad at 27.0 degrees Celsius, while in Jammu division, Mirpur registered 35.5 degrees Celsius. In Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, the maximum temperature settled at 24.7 degrees Celsius, which is 11.7 degrees above normal. Jammu recorded a high of 32.4 degrees Celsius, 8.1 degrees above normal.

The MeT office said minimum temperatures also stayed above normal by 2-7 degrees Celsius in many places across the Union Territory. Pahalgam in Kashmir division recorded a low of 2.2 degrees Celsius, while Banihal registered 10.6 degrees Celsius. Jammu recorded a minimum of 15.5 degrees Celsius.

No precipitation was recorded in the past 24 hours across Jammu and Kashmir, and the weather remained dry, the MeT said.

The IMD has forecast generally dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir on March 6. "From March 7 to 9, the weather is expected to remain generally cloudy with

light rain or snow over higher reaches at isolated to scattered places. Between March 10 and 11, the weather is likely to be partly to generally cloudy with light rain or snow at scattered places in higher reaches," the weatherman said.

The MeT office said the weather is expected to remain generally dry from March 12 to 15. On March 16 and 17, gen-



erally cloudy conditions with light rain or snow at isolated places over higher reaches are likely.

An advisory issued by the department said farmers can continue farm operations. It also said that a further rise in day temperature by 2-3 degrees Celsius at most places is likely over the next three days, followed by a fall of 3-5 degrees Celsius at many places thereafter—(KNO)

## Injured leopard cub rescued near Jawahar Tunnel

UMAISAR GUL GANAIE

Anantnag, Mar 05: A wounded leopard cub was rescued by Wildlife officials and J&K Police near Jawahar Tunnel on old Srinagar-Jammu National Highway on Thursday.

The injured cub was found along the roadside near Lower Munda in South Kashmir.

"A police patrol party from Qazigund noticed the cub lying in an unconscious state near Glass Tower on the old National Highway near Imoh crossing. The police informed the Wildlife Department in Dooru," said an official, adding, "Soon after receiving the information, a team of wildlife officials rushed to the spot and rescued the animal."

A wildlife official told KNO that the cub had likely been hit by a vehicle. "The injured leopard cub was provided initial treatment and later shifted to Dachigam National Park for further care," the official said—(KNO)

## Around 2,000 J&K pilgrims stranded in Middle East: Travel operators

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Mar 05: Around 2,000 Umrah pilgrims from Jammu & Kashmir are stranded in different parts of the Middle East following widespread flight cancellations triggered by the escalating US-Israel-Iran tensions, which have disrupted air travel across the region.

Representative of Hajj & Umrah Companies in Jammu and Kashmir Parvez Ahmed Bhat while talking to reporters here said, "Hundreds of pilgrims from the region are currently stuck in Makkah, Madina and Jeddah after airlines suspended or delayed flights due to the prevailing regional situation."

Bhat said the crisis has affected both pilgrims who had already travelled for Umrah as well as those scheduled to depart from Srinagar and other parts of the Union Territory.

"Nearly 2,000 pilgrims linked with different travel groups from Jammu & Kashmir are affected by the ongoing situation. Many are waiting for fresh flight schedules after airlines cancelled services due to the security situation in the region," Bhat said.

He added that the disruption has also caused heavy financial losses to travel operators, as agencies



had already booked hotel accommodations, transport and flight tickets for multiple pilgrimage groups during the ongoing Ramadan season. According to Bhat, several tour operators have had to extend hotel stays for pilgrims in Saudi Arabia, while simultaneously dealing with cancellations or postponements of upcoming travel batches.

"The travel trade is suffering significant losses as bookings, hotel reservations and logistics were arranged in advance. The uncertainty has created serious operational challenges for companies as well as pilgrims," he said.

Meanwhile, international flight operations across parts of the Middle East have been disrupted in recent days amid heightened regional tensions, leading to partial airspace closures and flight cancellations. The situation

has affected travellers and pilgrims from several countries, with many reported stranded in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states after airlines either suspended flights or rerouted services due to security concerns.

Officials said Indian diplomatic missions in Saudi Arabia are monitoring the situation and coordinating with airlines and travel operators to facilitate the safe return of stranded passengers once flight operations stabilise.

Meanwhile, families of several pilgrims in Kashmir have expressed concern over the delay in return flights, particularly for elderly travellers and have urged authorities to ensure their safe and early repatriation.

Travel operators have also appealed to the authorities to issue clear advisories and extend support—(KNO)

## Stranded students seek evacuation via Armenia, Azerbaijan

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 05: Anxiety continues to grip families across Jammu and Kashmir as Indian students studying in different universities in Iran have urged the Government of India (GoI) to facilitate their evacuation through neighbouring countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan, amid the deteriorating security situation in the region.

They have written to the concerned in Iran to allow them to return through the borders of neighbouring countries.

Students said the situation in several Iranian cities has become increasingly uncertain due to the ongoing conflict and reports of explosions in nearby areas, leaving many of them frightened and unsure about their safety.

Several Indian students studying at Shiraz University of Medical

Sciences said that the Vice Chancellor of the university has advised international students to consider returning to their home countries due to the worsening security conditions.

"We have been hearing explosions in different parts of the country, and the situation is unpredictable. Our university authorities have advised foreign students to return home if possible. We request the Government of India to evacuate us through Armenia or Azerbaijan so that we can safely return to India," one of the students said.

Students studying at Urmia University of Medical Sciences, located close to the Armenian border, said that local authorities have informed them that they may be able to leave Iran through the nearby Armenian border due to safety concerns.

Continued on [www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

## Yousmarg awaits its guests

Locals seek govt support to revive footfall



NAVEED UL HAQ GANAIEE

Budgam, Mar 05: Yousmarg, a picturesque tourist destination in central Kashmir's Budgam district, is in urgent need of government support to revive tourism and restore the livelihoods of locals dependent on the sector.

Locals said that although Yousmarg was among several tourist destinations which were recently reopened for the general public after remaining closed for several months but the flow of tourists remains significantly lower than expected.

Riyaz Ahmad, a resident of Nagbal, said that many families in the area rely heavily on tourism-related activities such as pony services, local dhabas, shops, and cab operations.

"Several families are dependent on tourism at Yousmarg for their livelihood. However, we are worried as the tourist flow is far less compared to other destinations," he said.

He added that while the

government has actively promoted other tourist spots such as Pahalgam, Doodhpathri, and Sonmarg, Yousmarg has not received similar attention.

"Tourists frequently visit other destinations, but Yousmarg hardly sees the same footfall," he said. Another local, Shabir Ahmad, said residents had hoped that reopening the destination would bring tourists back and help them earn their livelihood.

"We were hopeful that once the destination reopened, tourists would return in large numbers. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened, and the number of visitors remains very low," he said.

The locals have urged the government to promote Yousmarg and improve infrastructure at the destination to attract more tourists.

"We request the government to promote Yousmarg and work on its infrastructure and development so that it becomes a major tourist attraction. This will also help locals earn a sustainable livelihood," he said.

## Rare musk deer rescued from barbed wire along Gurez LoC

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Mar 05: An endangered female musk deer was rescued after it got entangled in a barbed wire fence along the Line of Control (LoC) in Gurez sector in North Kashmir's Bandipora district.

An official said that the animal was spotted by residents in the Shitalbagh area near a Border Roads Organisation (BRO) camp in Gurez Valley.

"Locals noticed that the deer was trapped in the fencing and appeared to be injured, following which they alerted the Wildlife Department," said an official, adding, "A rescue team rushed to the site and carefully extricated the animal from the

barbed wire."

The deer had suffered minor injuries while attempting to free itself from the fence along the LoC, he said.

After being freed, the animal was shifted to a veterinary facility in Dawar for treatment. Veterinary staff examined the deer and provided necessary medical care, the official said, adding that the injuries were not serious. After treatment and observation, the deer was released back into a nearby forest area.

The rescued animal has been identified as a Himalayan musk deer, a species listed as endangered and found in high-altitude forests of the Himalayas, including parts of Kashmir and neighbouring regions, the official said—(KNO)

## Ceiling collapses during drug awareness programme

UMAISAR GULL GANAIE

Anantnag, Mar 05: Two employees sustained minor injuries after a portion of the ceiling at the Town Hall in Dooru area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district collapsed during a drug awareness conference on Thursday.

Officials said that the programme, organised as part of a drug-free society campaign, was attended by employees from various departments.

Eyewitnesses said that during the programme, a portion of the ceiling suddenly caved in with a loud noise, creating panic among the participants present in the hall. Two female employees fainted due to shock and

sustained minor injuries.

The injured employees were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where they were provided treatment. Officials said the injured female employees are stable.

Executive Officer of the Municipal Committee Dooru, Mohammad Iqbal Bhat, said that only minor injuries were reported in the incident.

"A portion of the ceiling collapsed during the programme, but fortunately, no serious injuries were reported. All the injured persons were given medical attention and are stable," he said.

He said the exact cause behind the collapse will be known only after an investigation—(KNO)

## 12 vehicles seized for illegal mining operations

KNO

Srinagar, Mar 05: Continuing its sustained drive against illegal mining, Police have seized 12 vehicles in Shopian, Ganderbal & Baramulla.

According to a statement, in Shopian, during routine patrolling, a police party from Police Post Keegam intercepted three tractors engaged in illegal mining activities without mandatory permissions. In this regard FIR No. 27/2026 under relevant provisions of law has been registered at Police Station Shopian and further investigation has been initiated.

In Ganderbal, Police Post Nagbal conducted a special drive within its jurisdiction

and successfully seized 03 tippers found transporting illegally extracted Minor Minerals. Acting swiftly, the vehicles were seized on the spot to prevent further illegal extraction and transportation of minerals. Subsequently, the matter was taken up with the Department of Geology and Mining, and challans have been issued against the violators as per the relevant provisions of law.

Meanwhile in Baramulla, during a routine checking drive by Police Post Delina, Baramulla, Police intercepted six tippers carrying sand. During inspection, the drivers of the vehicles were unable to produce valid royalty documents required for lawful

transportation of the mineral. Accordingly, action has been initiated under Section 21 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, and further legal proceedings have been taken as per law.

J&K Police reiterates its firm commitment to safeguarding the natural resources and ensuring strict legal action against individuals involved in illegal mining activities. The general public is urged to cooperate with the police by reporting any such unlawful practices. The identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential and stringent action will be taken against violators—(KNO)

## EDITORIAL

### Friday Brief: Charity In Ramadan – The Infinite Multiplier

In the divine economy of Ramadan, charity is an investment with returns multiplied beyond human comprehension. The holy month transforms ordinary generosity into extraordinary worship, as every grain given in the path of Allah becomes a mountain of reward. The Quran and Hadith illuminate this sacred season as the supreme opportunity for charitable giving, where the believer's hand becomes the instrument of divine mercy. The Quran establishes the foundational principle: "The example of those who spend

their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed of grain which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies His reward for whom He wills" (2:261). In Ramadan, this multiplication is magnified further, as the month itself carries inherent blessings that amplify every good deed. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) embodied this generosity most perfectly in Ramadan. Ibn Abbas reported: "The Messenger of Allah was the most generous of people, and he was even more generous

during Ramadan when Gabriel (Jibra'eel) would meet him... He was more generous than the fast wind" (Sahih al-Bukhari). Ramadan charity takes two blessed forms. Zakat, the obligatory alms, is often discharged during this month to maximise reward and fulfil the pillar of Islam at the most virtuous time. Sadaqah, voluntary charity, becomes a daily opportunity—feeding a fasting person for iftar carries the immense reward of the fasting person's own blessing without diminishing their reward. The spiritual benefits extend

beyond the recipient. Charity purifies the giver's wealth and soul, as the Quran states: "Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase" (9:103). In Ramadan, this purification is intensified, cleansing the heart of attachment to worldly possessions and cultivating the noble quality of *ithar*—preferring others over oneself. Moreover, charity in Ramadan builds the Ummah's solidarity. When the wealthy feed the hungry, clothe the needy, and support the orphan, the bonds of brotherhood

strengthen. The month becomes a living embodiment of the prophetic teaching that believers are like a single body—when one part suffers, the whole responds. The blessed days are passing swiftly; let us seize this unparalleled opportunity. Every coin given, every meal shared, every hand extended in these sacred weeks becomes a seed planted for the eternal harvest. In Ramadan, charity is investing in the currency of the hereafter, where returns are guaranteed by the Most Generous.

# Ramadan: The Season Of Healing And Empowerment

The holy month establishes a recurring cycle of constructive spiritual and civilisational advancement. It is, in truth, a cycle of human destiny.

Spahic Omer

Ramadan is not merely a month of fasting and abstinence. It is the divinely prescribed therapy against the two greatest enemies of man: Satan, who whispers from without, and the *nafs* (lower self, ego), which conspires from within. In its discipline of hunger, restraint, and remembrance, Ramadan dismantles the illusions of self worship and silences the whispers of arrogance. It trains the believer to master desire, to confront temptation, and to rise above the tyranny of ego.

Through fasting, prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and contemplation, the believer is healed from the diseases of pride, greed, and heedlessness. Ramadan thus stands as the fortress of certainty (*yaqin*), the cure for spiritual weakness, and the weapon by which the true heirs of Ibrahim resist the modern idols of materialism and relativism, championed by none other than the proud progeny of King Nimrud, symbols of arrogance, ignorance, and false sovereignty. Ramadan is furthermore the month in which the believer learns that true freedom lies not in indulgence but in submission; not in letting the self run loose to wreak spiritual and moral havoc, but in disciplining and aligning it with the will of the Creator. Indeed, victory over Satan begins with victory over the *nafs*, and peace and tranquility in the outer world can only be achieved through peace and tranquillity within.

For example, a person may refuse to fast, imagining that he does so freely, unwilling to be dictated to by any power or authority. Yet this supposed freedom is but an illusion. In rejecting the command of his Creator, he has not liberated himself but has instead bowed to the dictatorship of his animal desires and raging ego. What he calls autonomy is, in fact, enslavement—submission not to God, but to the *nafs*. As a matter of fact, to refuse fasting in the name of freedom is to betray freedom itself.

In short, Ramadan shatters the alliance between external satanic whispers and the internal ravaging impulses of the *nafs*. In doing so, it also disrupts the channels through which each reinforces the other, severing their mutual support and dismantling the points at which they converge within the human moral-existential axis.

The stories of Adam and his son Qabil To illustrate the operation of the two greatest enemies of humanity—Satan and the *nafs*—the Qur'an presents the story of Adam in Jannah and that of his children, including the account of Qabil killing Habil during their qurban (sacrificial offering).

Adam in Jannah Firstly, there is Adam and his wife in Jannah, who were deceived by Satan, leading to their descent to earth. In the narrative, the emphasis is placed on Satan instead of the *nafs*. This indicates that initially, it was Satan alone, from outside, who, through cunning unimaginable to the pure and innocent Adam, was able to breach Adam's spiritual defences.

The next stage was the penetration into the realm of Adam's *nafs*, allowing it to continue inside what Satan had initiated outside, thereby threatening Adam's ruin. Yet Adam swiftly realised the partial breakdown in his spiritual and moral disposition. He regretted, repented, and immediately set out to remedy the situation before the transgression became complete and overtook his entire being.

Adam effectively severed the connection between Satan and the *nafs*, preventing their mutual reinforcement. He created a protective barrier around his *nafs*, distancing it from Satan's influence. In this way, the damage remained partial and easily correctable. His sincere repentance was promptly accepted by Allah, demonstrating that timely recognition and corrective action can



avert greater spiritual catastrophe.

This is why Adam's - and his wife's - lapse is described in the Qur'an as a mere "slip" ("azallahuma," al Baqarah 2:36), not a full sin. He momentarily succumbed to inherent human weakness but recovered his purity before ruin set in. His repentance was immediate and sincere: "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves" (al A'raf 7:23). Allah accepted his repentance, as the Qur'an states: "Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation), and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, He is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful" (al Baqarah 2:37).

Adam's story validates that without Almighty Allah, man is destined to collapse, whether surrounded by fortune or misfortune. No speculative philosophy, moral subjectivism, or faith relativism can replace revelation as divine guidance. To attempt so is to play directly into the hands of both Satan and the *nafs*.

Adam's repentance shows that lapses are human, but salvation lies in instantaneous recognition, sincere return, and reliance on Allah's mercy. His words—"We have wronged, or have done injustice to ourselves"—indicate that he did not utterly destroy himself, but rather unsettled and endangered his inner self, part of which is the *nafs*, by allowing Satan to draw temporarily close to it.

The case of Qabil

The Qur'an narrates the tragic conflict between Adam's sons, Qabil and Habil, which functions as a profound illustration of the dangers of allowing the *nafs* and Satan's external influences to converge unchecked. When both sons offered their qurban (sacrifice), only Habil's was accepted by Allah. The acceptance symbolised the alignment of Habil's *nafs* with divine guidance, while Qabil's intention reflected the unbridled impulses of a *nafs* poisoned by envy, resentment, and Satanic whispering. In this episode, the *nafs* moved from vulnerability to moral corruption, allowing Satan's influence to manifest in its most destructive form.

What is striking is that, although the Qur'an records the first act of murder in human history, one of the gravest evils man can commit, it does not mention Satan as a cause. Instead, it identifies the *nafs* as the immediate agent: "fa tawwaha'at lahu nafsu qatla akhihi fa qatalahu fa asbaha mina al khasirin" (al Ma'idah 5:30) - "And his *nafs* prompted him to kill his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers."

The verb "tawwaha'a" derives from "ta'ah" (obedience, yielding, compliance). As a verb, it denotes "to make something easy," "to bend toward," or "to prompt." When paired with the *nafs* as subject, the construction conveys internal persuasion, moral distortion, and the most effective functioning of the alliance between the *nafs* and Satan. It captures the moment of surrender to the *nafs*, behind which Satan stands, pulling the strings and orchestrating the proceedings.

Thus, Satan is not mentioned because the chief and immediate cause was the *nafs*, with Satan playing only an indirect-cum-complementary role. The Qur'anic narrative

emphasises the substance and the true protagonist responsible for the crime. Given that the story of Adam's children and Qabil's murder exemplifies both the quintessence and commencement of human destiny, the Qur'an condenses its existential philosophy in emphatic, unambiguous, and precise terms, setting priorities straight.

The story illustrates a crucial principle: when the *nafs* is left unimpeded and Satan is allowed access, even minor grievances can escalate into catastrophic consequences. It likewise underlines that man himself is guilty and responsible for his crimes, not Satan. The Qur'an is unequivocal: Satan has no authority or control over humankind, especially the servants of Allah who, by His grace, restrain and manage their *nafs*.

The most Satan can do, as he will admit on the Day of Judgment, is to invite through trickery and fraud. People, however, follow of their own accord. His damning declaration will be concluded with: "So do not blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. Indeed, I disown your past association of me with Allah. Surely, the wrongdoers will have a painful punishment" (Ibrahim 14:22).

Correspondingly, the furthest Satan can go in disturbing man is to whisper into the breasts (al Nas 114:5). To penetrate the heart and meddle with its treasures is beyond his reach. That is why Allah says that Hellfire will penetrate directly into the hearts of its dwellers (al Humazah 104:7): because the heart is the innermost spiritual asset of humankind, the seat of decisions, discernments, and judgments for which people are held accountable. Hence, if a person is punished in Hell, the punishment will centre on the agency most responsible for wrong decisions—the heart, the deepest and most personal recess of the human being.

Last but not least, unlike his father Adam—who confessed his slip, repented, and through Allah's acceptance disrupted the Satan *nafs* axis, thereby escaping loss (*khusr*) (al A'raf 7:23)—Qabil neither repented nor resisted, and thus, as the Qur'an affirms, was of the losers (fa asbaha mina al khasirin) (al Ma'idah 5:30). The two incidents help illuminate how one may remedy the very paradigm that, in general, leads to human loss, of which Allah warns in Surah al 'Asr (103:1-2): "By the Time, indeed, mankind is in loss (*khusr*)."

It is as though to be among the losers—that is, to fail in this world and the Hereafter—means surrendering oneself to Satan, losing moral orientation, rational discernment, natural balance, and true humanity. Conversely, to be among the winners is to succeed in both worlds, preserving oneself from irrationality, unnaturalness, and inhumanity—in a nutshell, from becoming satanic.

Ramadan as a school of transformation and liberation

Needless to say, all of the above places into sharp relief Allah's justice and the truest meaning of freedom—freedom that man ought to cherish, cultivate, and optimise. Ramadan is indeed the occasion when these realities come to the fore: for the believer, it is the season of integrity, righteousness,

and self-determination, the liberation of the soul through submission to its Creator; for the non believer, it exposes the oppression of the self, the enslavement to desire, and the fantasy of freedom that is in truth bondage to the *nafs*.

Ramadan is a school whose term lasts long enough for a person to examine and diagnose himself, devise a transformative and rehabilitative program, and embark on an implementation process that begins during Ramadan and continues afterwards. Each Ramadan ought to signify an upward stage in spiritual, moral, and intellectual progression.

The spiritually charged atmosphere of Ramadan empowers decisiveness and intensifies action, enabling larger strides than outside its bounds. Its overall barakah and blessings provide extraordinary support. Everything is put in place to facilitate motivation, willpower, and definitive success. Satan is neutralised and kept at bay, allowing the believer to make up his mind and initiate change with ease. Meanwhile, the *nafs*-tamed by fasting and other intensive forms of worship—becomes manageable and defeatable.

Devoid of external temptations, the battlefield is reduced to the solitary struggle against the *nafs*, and the conditions are entirely in favour of the seeker of enlightenment and rebirth. Ramadan, like so, becomes not only a month of fasting but a divinely coordinated program of self renewal, where justice and freedom congregate, and where the believer is given every opportunity to rise higher in his journey towards Allah.

The often seemingly unachievable level of self-fulfilment suddenly begins to appear on the horizon. Ramadan, with its atmosphere of mercy and discipline, makes attainable what once felt distant. The believer who struggled with weakness and distraction outside its confines now finds clarity, decisiveness, and strength within it. The month becomes a bridge between aspiration and realisation, where the impossible begins to look possible, and the distant goal draws near.

This is the secret of Ramadan's transformative power. It compresses time, intensifies effort, and magnifies reward. What might take months or years of wavering outside Ramadan can be achieved in days within it, because the conditions are divinely aligned, the *nafs* subdued, Satan restrained, and the heart illuminated by revelation.

Consequently, horizons of self-fulfilment open, and the believer is invited to walk towards them with confidence and hope. The Qur'an summarises the entire set of Ramadan's boons in a single word—the objective of fasting: "so that you may become *muttaqin*" (al Baqarah 2:183). And to be *muttaqin* means to be God fearing, God conscious, and righteous; to cultivate vigilance of the heart and the ability to ward off evil.

Certainly, it is no coincidence that within the context of Ramadan and fasting, Allah speaks about His nearness to the faithful, assuring them that He listens and answers their calls. Immediately after prescribing fasting, the Qur'an declares: "And when My servants ask you concerning Me, indeed I am near. I respond to the call of the caller when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me that they may be rightly guided" (al Baqarah 2:186).

In this regard, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) also said that when Ramadan comes, the gates of Jannah are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils (*satans*) are chained (Sahih Muslim). He also said: "Fasting is a shield (or a screen or a shelter). So, the person observing fasting should avoid sexual relations with his wife and should not behave foolishly and impudently, and if somebody fights with him or abuses him, he

should tell him twice: 'I am fasting'" (Sahih al-Bukhari).

Ramadan and the power of the Furqan (criterion)

This is not all, though. Associated with Ramadan is also the power by which a person is able to realise his Ramadan related ambitions and plans. That power is the Furqan, or the objective Criterion, understood as the capacity to decisively distinguish truth from falsehood, right from wrong, and light from darkness.

Ordinarily, human beings are prone to confusion and disorientation, uncertain about what to do, where to proceed, and by which means to advance. This condition is particularly acute in the present age of (post)modern jahiliyyah, marked by pervasive relativism, in which truth and values are misconceived as subjective and contingent upon socio-political, cultural, or experiential factors. The result is a state of epistemological disarray and spiritual-moral chaos, gradually drawing humanity towards the abyss of ontological inconsequentiality and nihilism.

What humanity fundamentally lacks is an impartial criterion and a stable point of reference amid its struggles and confusions. The Qur'an addresses this need by describing itself—revealed in Ramadan—as "guidance for mankind, clear proofs of guidance, and the Criterion (Furqan)" (al-Baqarah 2:185). Furthermore, the Battle of Badr, which similarly occurred during Ramadan, is described by the Qur'an as "the Day of Furqan"—the moment when truth and its adherents were conclusively distinguished from falsehood and its followers, and after which the path forward became unmistakably clear, whether to be embraced or rejected.

One may go further still. In Surah al-Anfal, revealed in connection with Badr, Allah promises the believers that if they possess taqwa, the very objective of fasting and of Ramadan itself, He will grant them Furqan, expiate their misdeeds, and forgive them (al-Anfal 8:29).

Taken together, these three dimensions of the Furqan—the Qur'an revealed in Ramadan, the historical Furqan of the Battle of Badr which also took place in Ramadan, and the personal as well as collective Furqan granted to believers endowed with taqwa, cultivated in particular through the transformative discipline of fasting—demonstrate both what humanity stands most in need of and what believers are most generously bestowed with.

With the Furqan as their compass, believers, unlike nonbelievers, are able to read and engage with the realities of life correctly, forging meaningful and productive relationships with them. This, moreover, represents the most authentic meaning of literacy and knowledge. Such realities encompass both the animate and the inanimate, the physical and the metaphysical, including the subtle yet pivotal realities of Satan and the *nafs*.

Equipped with the power of the Furqan, believers do not drift passively within the forces and currents of life; rather, they exercise discernment and agency. They govern their engagement with reality instead of being governed by it. In this sense, the Furqan restores proper moral orientation and existential mastery, enabling believers to act as responsible movers rather than as subjects of manipulation and confusion.

In conclusion, though outwardly marked by abstention, self-denial, and apparent hardship, Ramadan is, in its essence, a period of unveiling and empowerment. It acts simultaneously as the threshold of all goodness and positivity and as the abode of spiritual rejoicing and celebration. It establishes a recurring cycle of constructive spiritual and civilizational advancement. It is, in truth, a cycle of human destiny.

Source: IslamiCity

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## J&K Govt initiates steps for establishment of Artificial Intelligence Mission

Prepare detailed concept note, implementation framework for Mission: Dr Piyush Singla

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 5: The government has initiated steps for establishing the Jammu & Kashmir Artificial Intelligence Mission (JK-AIM) to promote adoption of Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies in governance across the Union Territory.

A meeting in this regard was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Piyush Singla, Administrative Secretary, Information Technology Department, to deliberate on creating a structured institutional framework for enabling AI-based solutions in government functioning and public service delivery.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in strengthening governance, enabling data-driven decision-making and improving citizen service delivery was discussed. It was observed that AI



technologies can help analyse large volumes of data generated by government systems and improve policy formulation, operational efficiency and service accessibility.

Secretary IT emphasized that the proposed JK-AIM will promote the use of Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies across government departments and support development of AI-based solutions such as intelligent chatbots, automated grievance systems,

multilingual communication platforms, predictive analytics and AI-enabled cybersecurity solutions.

He stressed that the Mission will also encourage collaboration with research institutions, startups and technology partners to foster innovation.

It was proposed that JK-AIM will function as a mission-mode initiative under the Information Technology Department, supported by a structured governance mechanism including a

Mission Steering Committee for strategic oversight and a Technical Wing for implementation and coordination with departments.

The Secretary asked the officers to prepare a detailed concept note and implementation framework for the Mission, including institutional structure, implementation roadmap, staffing requirements and financial implications, which will be submitted to the competent authority for further consideration. He said that the proposed JK-AIM is expected to strengthen digital governance in Jammu and Kashmir and support the adoption of advanced technologies to improve public service delivery and administrative efficiency.

The meeting was attended by CEO JaKeGA Mahima Madaan, Deputy Secretary IT Department Rachna Sharma and Senior Consultant SeMT Puneet Kant.

## Div Com Kashmir reviews Traffic Management, Road safety projects in Srinagar

KT News Desk

Srinagar, March 05: The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Thursday chaired a meeting to review finalization of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for parking sites, roads and bridges, besides identifying black spots to ensure smooth traffic movement and decongestion of Srinagar.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, CEO of Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), SSP Traffic Srinagar, RTO Kashmir, and officers from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department, Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Addressing the officers, the Divisional Commissioner directed all departments to submit reports on developmental projects related to roads, bridges and parking areas, including details of approved works, proposals under



submission and new project proposals.

He also instructed the departments to submit a report on traffic black spots and bottlenecks along with proposed interventions by Monday.

The CEO of Srinagar Smart City Limited was directed to rationalize e-bus routes, ensure adherence to time schedules and designate proper bus stops.

The R&B Department and Border Roads Organisation (BEACON) were asked to submit a report regarding the closure of crossings along the National Highway from Parimpora to Narbal. The Divisional

Commissioner also urged SSP Traffic to ensure optimum utilization of ITMS cameras for effective enforcement of traffic regulations and generation of challans.

Further, the CEO SSCL was directed to ensure painting of stop lines and marking of zebra crossings on roads.

The Divisional Commissioner instructed that work on the IT-based car parking be completed by March 31.

The R&B Department was also directed to submit a report identifying bridges requiring intervention to facilitate inland waterway transport on the Jhelum River.

## Mission YUVA: 362 cases approved by DLIC Anantnag



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, MARCH 05: In a significant step to boost self employment in the district, Mission YUVA District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC), Anantnag Thursday approved 362 cases during its 26th meeting held at the DC office.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was chaired by District Development Commissioner (DDC), Chairman DLIC, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat and was attended by ADDC (DNO, Mission YUVA), DD Employment, DSWO, representative of GM DIC, District LBM, DNO JKEDI, DDM NABARD and other concerned officials from Employment Department, Banks and other institutions.

Sector-wise, the approved cases included 114 in Retail, 107 in Transport, and 34 in the Service sector, besides other small business ventures associated with meaningful employment. With these

362 fresh cases, the district's tally of sanctioned cases has reached 5511, out of which 2215 have received bank loans so far.

Notably, 29.5 percent of the applications were submitted by women aspirants, indicating their increasing interest in entrepreneurial initiatives in the district.

Addressing the meeting, the DDC directed the concerned departments and banking institutions to ensure expeditious processing of loan cases and provide necessary facilitation to the applicants so the benefits of Mission YUVA are accrued by them. He emphasized the need for close coordination between banks and line departments for smooth implementation of the scheme.

At the conclusion, the DLIC reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening entrepreneurship avenues, promoting self-reliance and providing sustainable employment opportunities to the youth through Mission YUVA in the district.

## Secretary RDD reviews implementation of O&M, FSSM policies under SBM-G

Reviews status of sanitation infrastructure



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MARCH 05: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Thursday chaired a review meeting to finalise the implementation framework for Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of sanitation assets and Faecal Sludge & Septage Management (FSSM) under Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G).

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Director General Rural Sanitation Anoo Malhotra, Director Finance Umar Khan, Joint Director Planning Kamal Kumar, Superintending Engineers REW Jammu/Kashmir and other officials.

The Secretary reviewed the status of sanitation infrastructure created under SBM-G and stressed the need for a structured mechanism for maintenance of assets such as community sanitary complexes, solid and liquid waste management facilities and faecal sludge treatment systems.

It was informed that over 20 lakh sanitation assets,

including individual household toilets, Community Sanitary complexes, compost pits, Soak pits, segregation sheds and other sanitation facilities have been created across rural Jammu and Kashmir under SBM-G. The O&M policy aims to ensure their long-term sustainability and upkeep.

Emphasising decentralised implementation, the Secretary directed that operational powers related to sanitation management be streamlined through the Directorate while execution of activities be ensured at the district level under Deputy Commissioners. He also called for strengthening digital monitoring systems, including development of an online SBM dashboard for asset tracking, user-charge monitoring and grievance redressal.

Highlighting financial sustainability, he noted that 10 percent of PRI Capex allocation has been earmarked for operation and maintenance of sanitation assets and stressed the need to mobilise additional resources through user charges and community participation.

The Secretary further directed that regulatory provisions

relating to waste management be aligned with the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, with a clearly defined penalty and appeal mechanism. It was decided that BDOs will enforce sanitation regulations at the block level, with appeals against penalties lying before the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD).

He also stressed strengthening door-to-door waste collection systems, rationalising user charges and developing a dedicated IEC strategy for the O&M policy.

Highlighting the importance of scientific treatment of faecal sludge, the Secretary emphasised effective functioning and expansion of Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs). He also called for systematic surveys and mapping of toilets and containment systems to assess desludging demand and ensure proper linkage of villages with treatment facilities.

The Secretary further directed officials to develop clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for desludging, transportation and treatment under the FSSM framework.

## Avoid unnecessary delays in execution of works: MLA Bandipora

Reviews progress of works under Constituency Development Fund, stresses timely completion of all projects

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, MARCH 05: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Bandipora, Nizam Ud Din Bhat Thursday reviewed the progress and status of works being executed under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Assembly Constituency Bandipora during a meeting held at the Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

During the meeting, the MLA, as per an official statement, took a detailed review of the status of works, including the number of works accorded, tendered, allotted and completed by various departments.

The review covered works executed by Rural Development Department (RDD) Bandipora, Municipal Committee Bandipora, JAKEDA, Education Department, Ground Water Division Srinagar, PHE Hydraulic Division Bandipora, Electric Division Bandipora/Sumbal, REW Bandipora, R&B Division Bandipora, District Youth Services & Sports Office, Block Development Offices of Arin, Alosa, Bandipora, Bonakoot and Naidkhai, besides G&B Hostel Bandipora.

The MLA emphasized that unnecessary delays in execution of works must be avoided and stressed the need for timely completion of all projects sanctioned



under the CDF. He directed the concerned officers to ensure that the ground staff remains fully geared up to achieve maximum outcomes from the developmental works being undertaken.

Highlighting the importance of public service delivery, the MLA said that public welfare must remain the top priority while implementing development projects. He further stressed that departments must work in close coordination with each other to ensure smooth execution and effective implementation of works on the ground.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Bandipora, Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Executive Engineers of Ground Water Division Srinagar, PHE Hydraulic Division Bandipora, Electric Division Bandipora/Sumbal, REW Bandipora and R&B Division Bandipora, District Youth Services and Sports Officer Bandipora, Dy Chief Education Officer Bandipora, Block Development Officers of Arin, Alosa, Bandipora, Bonakoot and Naidkhai, besides Warden C&B Hostel Bandipora.

## Mission YUVA: DC Budgam chairs DLIC Meeting, approves 382 cases

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, MARCH 5: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Thursday chaired a meeting of the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) under Mission YUVA at the District Headquarters to review the progress of youth entrepreneurship initiatives and consider cases submitted under the mission.

During the meeting, 382 cases, duly verified by the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs), were placed before the committee for consideration. After thorough evaluation, the committee approved all 382 cases for financial assistance, capacity building and handholding support under Mission YUVA. The approved cases include a wide range of entrepreneurial ventures, spanning traditional crafts such as shawl embroidery, sozni, aari work, tailoring and cutting units, carpentry and joinery workshops, as well as modern and service-oriented businesses including load carriers, dairy units, repair shops, stationery and printing units, food businesses, retail stores,

packaging units and other micro-enterprise activities.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that Mission YUVA is a transformative initiative aimed at empowering young men and women by enabling them to become self-reliant entrepreneurs. He emphasised that the objective of the programme is not only to provide financial support but also to create a sustainable ecosystem where youth have access to training, market linkages, guidance and long-term mentorship.

The DC directed all concerned departments, banks and implementing agencies to ensure time-bound sanctioning, hassle-free disbursement and continuous mentoring of the approved cases. He further instructed that Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) must be completed without delay and stressed that no application should remain pending unnecessarily at any level.

The DC stressed the need for regular monitoring, skill development programmes and facilitation of market access so that young entrepreneurs can expand and scale their businesses effectively.

## DHJ reviews progress of horticulture development initiatives in Samba

KT News Desk

SAMBA, MARCH 05: Director Horticulture Jammu (DHJ) Gul Syed Thursday conducted an extensive tour of Samba district to review the progress of the Horticulture Development initiatives being implemented in the district.

The Director, as per an official statement, was accompanied by the Chief Horticulture Officer Jammu Anil Gorkha; Horticulture Development Officer Samba Varinder Sharma; Horticulture Development Officer Purmandal Rakesh Kumar and Horticulture Development Officer Vijaypur Manmohan Kumar, besides other functionaries of the department.

A review meeting was also held at the Government Fruit Plants Nursery Vijaypur where the Director assessed the overall performance and implementation of different horticulture schemes, including Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MID), Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project, Holistic Agriculture Development



Programme (HADP) and Revised Modified High Density Plantation Scheme. He stressed upon field officers to ensure effective outreach of government programmes among the farming community.

Later, the Director inspected the strawberry plantations at Nanga in the Ramgarh area, belonging to the beneficiary Sanjay Verma. He expressed satisfaction and appreciation over the bumper crop of strawberries and encouraged the farmer to continue adopting modern horticulture practices for higher productivity and income.

The Director emphasized that diversification towards high-value crops like strawberries can significantly enhance farmers' income and further strengthen the horticulture sector in the region.

## Mission Director reviews physical, financial progress of HADP

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 05: Mission Director HADP/JKICP Sandeep Kumar Thursday chaired a review meeting in the Conference Hall, Directorate of Agriculture, Talab Tillo to assess the physical and financial progress and expenditure status under different projects of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP).

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Director Agriculture Jammu, Director Horticulture Jammu, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu, besides technical officers and representatives from SKUAST-Jammu. HoDs, technical officers and representatives from SKUAST-Kashmir also participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

The Mission Director emphasized the need for close coordination among the stakeholder departments and executing agencies to ensure effective implementation and timely completion of the projects under HADP. He stressed that strong inter-departmental collaboration is essential for achieving the intended outcomes of the



programme.

Highlighting the growing popularity of millet-based food, he asked for promoting Millet Restaurants to enhance awareness and consumption of millets. He also directed the concerned officers to achieve the targets of Millet Mills in a time-bound manner, ensuring that these mills are established in areas where millet cultivation is already taking place or where area expansion has been undertaken.

Reviewing the beekeeping component, Sandeep Kumar took note of the issues related to unit tracking. He directed the officials to resolve the bottlenecks at the earliest to ensure smooth monitoring and implementation. The Mission Director also emphasized the importance of strengthening

Seed Village and Village Seed Bank activities to enhance the availability of quality seeds at the grassroots level.

The MD conducted district-wise and project-wise review of financial expenditure and physical progress. He reviewed the expenditure status of SKUAST-Jammu and SKUAST-Kashmir under the HADP, while directing for completion of works within the stipulated framework. He further emphasized the need to strengthen research, extension support and field-level interventions for the successful implementation of HADP initiatives across the Union Territory. He also reviewed the status of public sector activities and directed the concerned departments to ensure their timely progress.

## Samson, Bumrah help India tide over England challenge to reach second successive T20 WC final

PTI

Mumbai, Mar 05: Sanju Samson's sublime fifty and Jasprit Bumrah's spell touched with unearthly genius on a batting beauty helped India secure a seven-run win over gallant England, as the defending champions powered to the T20 World Cup final here on Thursday.

Sanju Samson (89 off 42) overcame the Jofra Archer challenge through a slice of luck for his second successive fifty, firing India to a mammoth 253 for seven, the highest total in a knock-out game in the tournament's history.

It was an above-par total at Wankhede but Jacob Bethell (105 off 48) led England's fight-back with a sublime hundred after they lost three wickets in the powerplay for 68 runs.

In the end, critical contribution from Bumrah (1/33 in 4 overs) in the death overs allowed India to stop England at 246/7 in 20 overs.

India will now face New Zealand in the title clash in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Tom Banton (17 off 5) was the fourth wicket to fall but sixes kept



coming, propelling England to 119 for four at the halfway stage, equalising India's mark after 10 overs.

Varun Chakaravathy was again the weakest link in the attack as he failed to find the right length on an unforgiving surface to leak 64 runs in his four overs.

Bumrah had got rid of the dangerous Harry Brook in the power play with slow cutter, and Axar Patel took a sensational backward running catch from the cover region.

With Will Jacks (35 off 20) and Bethell on the offensive in the middle overs, it was another brilliant work of fielding from Axar in the deep that saw the former's back, ending a 77-run

stand off 39 balls.

Curran joined Bethell in the middle and the equation was brought down to a gettable 45 off the last three overs, forcing Suryakumar Yadav to bring Bumrah for one final time in the game.

The Indian wizard delivered once again by conceding only six runs. With both Arshdeep and Bumrah not available, Shivam Dube was called upon to defend 30 in the final over.

England's hopes ended with a heartbreaking run out of Bethell, who played a memorable innings.

Samson wins Archer battle with fair share of luck

After single-handedly taking

India to the semifinals, a supremely confident Samson (89) bludgeoned the England bowling attack including Archer, who had dominated his battle against the Indian opener in last year's bilateral series.

Having lost the toss at a ground with short boundaries, India had to put up a big total and Samson helped them do that after being dropped by Harry Brook on 15 off Archer in the third over.

England had already removed Abhishek Sharma the over before and a Samson dismissal would have put India under pressure, but Brook dropped a sitter at mid-on, leaving Archer in disbelief.

That was all the luck Samson need to make England pay, hammering seven sixes and eight fours in his sizzling knock.

Dismissed thrice by Archer last year when he did not have the answers for short balls into the body, Samson subdued the England pace spearhead with a flurry of pu ll shots.

He picked up length quickly and was aided by a wayward Archer who was too short in his opening spell of two overs.

His first maximum off Archer

came via a pull over fine leg before the opener dispatched a slower ball off the pacer over deep mid-wicket for another maximum.

Samson shared a 97-run stand off 45 balls with Ishan Kishan (39 off 19) who too picked up the boundaries against an erring England bowling line-up. India raced to 67 for one in the power play and maintained the onslaught to reach 119 for two in 10 overs.

Shivam Dube (43 off 25) was promoted to number four to maintain the left-right combination after Kishan fell to Rashid.

Samson, at the other end, was equally menacing against the other bowlers including Curran and Jamie Overton.

Archer returned for his second spell only to get hammered by Samson again. The opener smashed him for a six over backward point before smoking Archer for another maximum over long-off.

Archer ended up leaking 61 runs in four overs as Tilak Varma (21 off 7) added to his forgettable night with three sixes in the 19th over.

## Unbelievable feeling, heart rate at 160-175': Suryakumar

PTI

Mumbai, Mar 05: Captain Suryakumar Yadav admitted that his heart beating rate shot up to "160-175" during the tense closing stages of the semifinal as India edged past England to enter their second successive T20 World Cup final here on Thursday.

Defending champions India defeated England by seven runs in a high-scoring semifinal at the Wankhede Stadium.

"It's an unbelievable feeling. Obviously, playing in India, leading such a wonderful side, and with the World Cup happening here, going to Ahmedabad to play that final. I think it's a special feeling for all the boys," Suryakumar said during the post-match presentation.

"Was very nervous, heart rate would've been 160-175," he added.

Sent in to bat, opener Samson blasted seven sixes and eight fours on his way to a 42-ball 89 as India posted a challenging 253.

Shivam Dube (43), Ishan Kishan (39), Hardik Pandya (27) and Tilak Varma (21) also chipped in with brisk knocks.

"I think he knew what he

wanted to do as soon as he went in to bat. Even when a wicket fell, he knew the wicket was good, so he kept pressing the pedal.

"The way he batted was exactly what the team required. It was due after all the hard work he's been putting in over the last year. It was a special knock today."

But was 253 enough? "I told Harry (Brook) how much more do we need to score against them. They were always in the chase, but the way the bowlers pulled the game away was unbelievable," he said.

Chasing the massive target, Jacob Bethell's sensational 105 off 48 balls went in vain as England managed 246 for seven in 20 overs, with Bumrah (1/33) emerging as the most effective bowler, bowling beautifully at the death. Pandya (2/38) picked up two wickets.

"We all know what Bumrah is capable of and what he's done for India over the years. He did the same thing again today, raised his hand and showed character to pull the game away from them. It was a special bowling performance. The way Bumrah, Arshdeep and other guys pulled it back was unbelievable," Suryakumar said.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Not everyone

highlighted opportunities in meat processing, fisheries, honey production, floriculture and horticulture, saying small innovations can open new markets. Referring to a young innovator who improved flower packaging to enhance shelf life, he said such ideas can generate viable enterprises.

Encouraging students to take risks, Abdullah said failure should not deter aspiring entrepreneurs. Drawing a parallel with global entrepreneur Elon Musk, he said setbacks are part of innovation and learning.

The chief minister assured institutional and government support for young entrepreneurs and called upon them to harness schemes such as JKPCIP and the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme to modernise the sector.

On the occasion, he launched 808 Kisan Khidmat Ghars aimed at strengthening grassroots agricultural services and felicitated start-ups and farmers' producer organisations for their achievements. (KNO)

### CM calls for mission-mode

& Employment, Managing Director and CEO Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Vice Chancellors of all universities of Jammu and Kashmir, Directors of Indian Institute of Management and Indian Institute of Technology, senior professors and other concerned officials.

Addressing the participants, the Chief Minister underscored that the traditional education system often does not fully equip students with the skills required for the evolving job market or entrepreneurship.

"Formal education more often than not does not prepare us with the skills that we require in the job market or as entrepreneurs. What this presentation and the idea behind this mission seeks to achieve is to bridge that gap between education and employability," the Chief Minister said.

He noted that the proposed mission recognizes the existing gap between the skills youth possess and the skills demanded by the market.

"This mission acknowledges that there is a gap between what we want and what we have. The challenge before us is how to fill that gap and at what stage we begin the process," he said, adding that while ideally skill development would begin from the early stages of schooling.

Emphasizing the importance of a large-scale and structured approach, the Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir must adopt a mission-mode framework to systematically address the skill deficit.

"Jammu and Kashmir needs to adopt a mission scale. We need to plug the gap between education and employability and identify the skills that are actually required in the job market," he said.

Highlighting the rapidly evolving nature of modern employment, the Chief Minister said that skill requirements change quickly with technological advancements.

"What is required today may not be required tomorrow. You will require skills tomorrow that you haven't even heard about today," he observed.

Referring to emerging technologies, he noted how quickly innovations have reshaped everyday life.

"Three or four years ago, very few of us were talking about artificial intelligence. Perhaps those in institutions like IIT or IIM were, but for the rest of us, our idea of using intelligence on the internet was limited to search engines. None of us imagined the impact tools like ChatGPT or Gemini would have on our lives," he said.

The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of the concerned department in preparing the initial framework for the mission.

"The department has done an excellent job in putting this report together. It will certainly require some tweaking and consultation, but we must also be mindful about keeping the process efficient," he said.

Calling for a clear implementation roadmap,

the Chief Minister emphasized the need for defined timelines and resource planning.

"We must decide what we want to achieve over the next six months, one year, one and a half years and two years. Within the constraints we have, we need to identify the resources required and commit to them," he said.

He further stressed the importance of collaboration with universities, academic institutions and the private sector to make the mission impactful and sustainable.

"We must determine how universities and other institutions will be involved and how we can effectively bring the private sector into this effort. Once that framework is in place, the mission can be rolled out in a structured manner," he added.

Earlier, participants shared their feedback and suggestions to help refine the framework and ensure the successful implementation of Mission SKILL in Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, Secretary Labour & Employment Kumar Rajeev Ranjan delivered a detailed presentation outlining the proposed action plan for skill development under Mission SKILL.

He highlighted the mission's objectives, proposed institutional framework and phased implementation strategy aimed at equipping youth with industry-relevant skills. The presentation also emphasized aligning education with evolving market demands, strengthening collaboration between government, academic institutions and the private sector, and creating a sustainable ecosystem to enhance employability and entrepreneurship opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir.

### Major reshuffle

Governor of Ladakh as Governor of Himachal Pradesh in place of Shiv Pratap Shukla, who has been appointed as Governor of Telangana. As per details, Jishnu Dev Varma, Governor of Telangana, has been shifted to Maharashtra.

The President of India also appointed Nand Kishore Yadav as Governor of Nagaland and former Lieutenant General (Retired) Syed Ata Hasnain as Governor of Bihar. Hasnain, a decorated Army officer, commanded the Srinagar-based 15 Corps among other key assignments during his distinguished military career.

R.N. Ravi, Governor of Tamil Nadu, has been appointed as Governor of West Bengal.

Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Governor of Kerala, will discharge the functions of Governor of Tamil Nadu.

According to details, Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, has been appointed as Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, while Taranjit Singh Sandhu has been appointed as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. (KNO)

### J&K players meet

Cricket in India. The ICC chairman met them and shared words of encouragement with the players as they celebrated their historic success. "The historic triumph of Jammu & Kashmir in the Ranji Trophy will remain a proud milestone for cricket in the region," The BCCI wrote on X, sharing photos of the meet.

"After their memorable victory, the players expressed a heartfelt desire to meet Hon. ICC Chair @JayShah and share this special moment with him, acknowledging the role his leadership played in strengthening cricket in Jammu & Kashmir during his tenure as BCCI Secretary," the board added.

The BCCI also congratulated the entire Jammu and Kashmir squad and the cricket fraternity for scripting what it described as a remarkable chapter in Indian domestic cricket while thanking Shah for meeting the winning team.

"We sincerely thank Mr Shah for taking the time to meet the team and for sharing his words of encouragement with the players as they celebrate this historic achievement." "Congratulations to the entire J&K team and the cricket fraternity for scripting a remarkable chapter in Indian domestic cricket."

In a post on X, the Board of Control for Cricket in India congratulated the team and appreciated their achievement.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir scripted history by clinching their maiden Ranji Trophy title, marking a proud and defining moment for cricket in the region after decades of struggle and perseverance.

The historic triumph has been widely celebrated across the Union Territory, with cricket lovers, former players and sports officials hailing the achievement as a turning point for the growth of the sport in Jammu & Kashmir.

The victory was powered by exceptional performances from several players, particularly all-rounder Abdul Samad, who emerged as one of the top performers with the bat. Samad scored more than 700 runs in the tournament, playing crucial innings at key moments and helping his side dominate opponents throughout the season.

The more impressive was the performance of young pacer Auqib Nabi, who spearheaded the bowling attack. Nabi picked up an astonishing 60 wickets in the tournament and registered seven five-wicket hauls, making him one of the standout bowlers of the competition.

His remarkable performance has drawn praise from several former Indian cricketers, including Sourav Ganguly, Virender Sehwag and Irfan Pathan, who have backed the young pacer as a strong contender for future international selection.

Cricket experts believe that Auqib Nabi's consistent wicket-taking ability and match-winning spells could soon earn him a place in the national setup if he continues to perform at the same level.

Jammu & Kashmir's victory is even more significant as it comes after 66 years of participation in the domestic cricket circuit. The triumph has been hailed as a symbol of resilience, talent and the growing cricket culture in the region.

Sports enthusiasts and cricket experts say the achievement will inspire a new generation of young cricketers in Jammu & Kashmir and strengthen the region's presence in Indian domestic cricket. (KNO)

### Census commissioner

Census and trainings for Phase-1 of the Census-House Listing Operations (HLO)- will immediately start after it," sources said, adding that all Deputy Commissioners, Divisional Commissioners, and the Commissioners of Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Jammu Municipal Corporation will participate in the programme.

When contacted, Director of Census Operations and Citizen Registration for the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Amit Kumar Sharma, said that a conference is being organized regarding the Census.

"As part of preparations for the Census, we are holding a one-day conference on Monday," Sharma said.

He added that preparations are in full swing for the first digital Census.

The programme is being held ahead of the House Listing Operations (HLO) which will be undertaken from June 1 to June 30 in the Union Territory.

The phase 2-the population enumeration exercise-will be undertaken in September 2026 in snow-bound areas and in February 2027 in the plains of the Union Territory.

The Census carries added significance for Jammu & Kashmir, as it will be the first time since 1941 that Paharis- granted Scheduled Tribe status by the Union Government in 2023-will be counted as a separate tribe.

Like other parts of the country, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in J&K will also be enumerated as a separate entity for the first time.

It will further provide authentic data about the actual number of people availing benefits under reserved categories, except the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category. The Census data will also become the basis for the next delimitation exercise, which could begin immediately after the completion of the Census in 2027. (KNO)

### Energy Emergency

per J&K State Load Despatch Centre (SLDC).

"The study has also analyzed the daily and monthly pattern of unserved energy in the year 2035-36 and it can be seen that contracted capacity including the existing and planned is unable to meet the projected electricity demand," it reads.

The document further said that the total unserved energy in the year 2035-36 is expected to be about 9.5 BU which is about 29% of the annual projected electrical energy requirement during the year 2035-36.

It also said that the unmet demand occurs during both solar and non-solar hours throughout the year.

Pertinently, KNO in September-2025 had reported that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is likely to witness an energy deficit ranging from more than 4,200 Megawatts (MWs) to 10,000 MWs in next ten years.

In the month of April-2025, the news agency has reported that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh is likely to witness around 62 percent of share from non-fossil fuel-based capacity in mixed electricity generation by 2034-35.

"The share of non-fossil fuel-based capacity in the generation mix is projected to be around 62% by 2034-35 with higher contribution from non-fossil fuel-based capacities in alignment with Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) trajectory," (KNO)

### River Jhelum at

points to deficient winter precipitation and poor snow accumulation in the higher reaches.

"Early March usually sees better flow due to gradual snowmelt. This year, despite warm spells in February, the rise in water level was brief and weak," Arif told the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO). "Historically, such temperature spikes would push the river up by several feet. That response was missing."

He said temperatures in February remained above normal on several occasions, at times crossing the average by a significant margin. While the warmth triggered some melt, the limited snowpack meant there was little sustained discharge into the river system.

Agriculture experts and farmers expressed concern that if the trend continues, it may affect irrigation during the crucial nursery preparation period for paddy, which begins in April.

Chulam Mohammad Bhat, a farmer from Pulwama district, said water availability during April and May is critical. "We depend on canals fed by the Jhelum and streams from the mountains. If the water remains low, nursery sowing will be delayed," he said.

An official in the irrigation department said the situation is being monitored. "At present, there is no immediate crisis, but the trend is not encouraging. If we do not receive adequate rainfall or late snowfall in the coming weeks, it could impact irrigation planning," he said.

The Jhelum, which flows through the Kashmir Valley and sustains agriculture across several districts, relies heavily on winter snow and spring meltwater. Reduced precipitation this winter has already raised concerns among hydrology experts.

Arif said the coming weeks will be crucial. "If March brings normal rainfall, some recovery is possible. Otherwise, this could be an early warning for a challenging water year," he added. (KNO)

### MEA monitoring situation

UAE are advised to remain vigilant, calm, adhere to the safety guidelines of the UAE authorities and follow official advisories issued from time to time," the embassy said in an advisory available with the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The advisory noted that due to exceptional circumstances, UAE airspace and regular scheduled flight operations remain temporarily suspended.

It says, however, limited non-scheduled flights operated by Indian and UAE airlines have commenced to multiple destinations in India in coordination with UAE authorities, subject to operational approvals.

The embassy said stranded Indian nationals

may avail these flights by contacting their respective airlines. It also noted that the UAE Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security has announced a waiver of overstay fines for visitors and others whose visas expired after February 28 due to the prevailing circumstances.

According to the advisory, the Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General of India in Dubai, along with their outsourced passport, consular and visa services, continue to function normally.

Indian nationals facing any issues have been advised to contact the embassy's 24x7 helpline, including the toll-free number 800-46342 and WhatsApp number +971 543090571, or send queries through email to [pbsk.dubai@mea.gov.in](mailto:pbsk.dubai@mea.gov.in) and [ca.abudhabi@mea.gov.in](mailto:ca.abudhabi@mea.gov.in).

Meanwhile, reports of airstrikes in the northwestern Iranian city of Urmia have triggered panic among Indian students studying at Urmia University, including several from Jammu and Kashmir.

The Jammu & Kashmir Students Association (JKSA) said explosions occurred close to the university dormitories, with students reporting that a recent strike took place nearly 300 metres from their boys' hostels, shaking the buildings and causing alarm among residents.

In a statement, JKSA National Convenor Nasir Khuehami said the association has been in contact with several Kashmiri students who described the situation as tense and frightening.

"The situation on the ground is extremely volatile. Students are frightened and anxious, and fighter jets can reportedly be heard frequently, creating an atmosphere of constant fear and uncertainty," he said.

The association has urged External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar to take immediate steps to facilitate the relocation of Indian students, particularly those from Jammu and Kashmir, to safer locations until evacuation becomes possible.

The Government of India, the advisory added, continues to attach the highest importance to the safety and well-being of Indians abroad and is closely monitoring developments in the region. (KNO)

### Govt sets up

agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the move comes amid rising tensions after the killing of Iran Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, in US-Israel strikes last week.

An official spokesperson said the control room has been established to provide assistance to Indian citizens, including residents of Jammu and Kashmir, students, businesspersons, travellers and pilgrims who may be affected by the situation.

"A special control room has been set up in the MEA in view of the prevailing situation in West Asia and the Gulf region. It will extend all possible assistance to affected Indians," the spokesperson said.

The control room will function daily from 9 am to 9 pm. Indian nationals can contact the toll-free number 1800118797 or reach out through the designated landline numbers of the MEA for assistance.

In addition, the government has shared emergency contact details of Indian missions in several countries across the region, including Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the Representative Office in Ramallah.

Indian nationals have been advised to remain vigilant, follow local advisories and stay in regular contact with the respective Indian embassies and consulates.

Officials said the situation is being closely monitored and further measures will be taken as required to ensure the safety and security of Indian citizens.

The MEA has in the past activated similar mechanisms during crises in the Gulf region to coordinate evacuation efforts and provide timely assistance to Indians stranded abroad. (KNO)

## Cong wants India to blindly side with Iran, even China distancing itself from Tehran: BJP

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 05: Lashing out at the Congress for wanting India to "blindly side with Iran", the BJP on Thursday said the country's foreign policy must be guided by national interest and the safety of its citizens not by the compulsions of the opposition party's "outdated ideological reflexes".

Several BJP leaders, including Amit Malviya and Pradeep Bhandari, spoke on the issue, calling the Congress "anti-India" and alleging that the main opposition party pursues divisive politics. It only loves its vote bank, not the country and its people, the ruling party said.

"Even China, which spent years diplomatically shielding Iran, overlooking its support for proxy terror groups and buying the bulk of its oil, is now distancing itself from Tehran," Malviya said in a post on X.

"Yet the Indian National Congress wants India to blindly side with Iran, even as it continues reckless actions across the Gulf, threatens vital oil shipping routes, and escalates tensions in a region where millions of Indians live and work," the BJP's IT department head said. India's



foreign policy, Malviya added, must be "guided by national interest and the safety of its citizens, not by the compulsions of Congress' outdated ideological reflexes".

A day after a US submarine torpedoed and sank an Iranian warship in international waters off Sri Lanka's coast, the Congress said it is shocking that there has been no response from the Modi government and claimed that never before has the Indian government looked so "timid and fearful".

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also

attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying the West Asia conflict has reached India's backyard but he has not spoken. While the country needed a steady hand at the wheel, it has a "compromised PM who has surrendered our strategic autonomy", the opposition leader said.

BJP national spokesperson Bhandari said in his sharp response, "Anti India Congress wants India to comment on a conflict; where it is not directly involved; whereas its own track record is that of silence at the cost of national interest!"

He alleged in a post on X that when the Congress was in power Sonia Gandhi "instructed" then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to not let any minister express grief on loss of innocent lives because of Naxal terror.

"Tukde-Tukde Congress hates India and Indians; loves vote bank," he added.

Shehzad Poonawalla, another BJP national spokesperson, echoed the view.

"The 2010 letter from Cabinet Secretary, on PM Manmohan Singh's directions, gagged all Union ministers from commenting on the Naxal/Maoist issue publicly-right after the brutal Dantewada massacre of 76 CRPF jawans," Poonawalla said in a post on X.

"Classic Congress soft-pedaling on Left-wing extremism: muzzle your own ministers, treat Maoists with kid gloves and let security forces pay the price," the BJP spokesperson said, alleging that the Congress was "weak then and now" as well.

Instead of showing strong resolve and unity against India's "greatest internal security threat", the Congress chose "silence, damage control and shielding criticism," he alleged.

## BJP's earning accounted for 85 per cent of total income of national parties in 2024-25: ADR Report

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 05: The ruling BJP declared an income of Rs 6769.14 crore in FY 2024-25, the highest among national parties, while the Congress was a distant second, declaring an income of around Rs 918.28 crore, said a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

According to the report analysing the declarations made by political parties to the Election Commission, six national parties (BJP, INC, CPI(M), AAP, BSP and NPEP) declared a total income of Rs 7960.09 crore in 2024-25, and the BJP accounted for 85.03 per cent of it.

The BJP spent around 55.76 per cent of its income, amounting to Rs 3774.58 crore, while the Congress spent around 1111.94 crore, which is 21.09 per cent (Rs 193.66 crore) more than its total income.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) reported a total income of Rs 172.60 crore during the year, while its total expenditure amounted to Rs 173.86 crore, Rs 1.26 cr (0.73 per cent) less than its income.

The BSP's total income was Rs 58.58 crore, while its expenditure for the year was Rs 106.30 crore. The party's expenditure for that year exceeded its total income by Rs 47.71 crore (81.45 per cent).

AAP reported a total income of Rs 39.28 crore and a total expenditure of Rs 36.46 crore, meaning the party spent 92.83 per cent of its total income. The National People's Party (NPEP) declared a total income of Rs 2.18 crore and a total expenditure of Rs 1.19 crore, indicating the party spent 54.72 per cent of its total income.

The six national parties have declared a total income of Rs 7960.09 crore, collected from all over India. The Congress was second with an income of Rs 918.28 crore, which forms 11.53 per cent of the total income of national parties, while the NPEP declared the least income of Rs 2.18 crore, which forms 0.02 per cent of the total.

Between 2023-24 and 2024-25, the BJP's income increased by 55.95 per cent (Rs 2428.6768 crore), while the CPI(M) registered a marginal rise of 2.96 per cent (Rs 4.96 crore).

During the same period, the income of the Congress declined by 25.05 per cent (Rs 306.83 crore), and the BSP's income decreased by 9.56 per cent (Rs 6.19 crore). AAP's income witnessed a significant growth of 73.20 per cent (Rs 16.60 crore).

In FY 2024-25, national parties declared a total income of Rs 7960.09 crore, of which 85.08 per cent (Rs 6772.53 crore) came from donations/contributions and 14.92 per cent (Rs 1187.56 crore) from other sources.

The BJP derived 90.48 per cent of its total income from donations amounting to Rs 6124.85 crore, while AAP received 99.85 per cent (Rs 39.22 crore) and NPEP received 97.74 per cent (Rs 2.14 crore) of their total income through contributions.

In contrast, the BSP reported 100 per cent



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of its income (Rs 58.58 crore) from other sources with no donations, whereas INC received 56.86 per cent (Rs 522.13 crore) from donations and 43.14 per cent (Rs 396.15 crore) from other sources, and CPI(M) received 48.77 per cent (Rs 84.17 crore) from donations and 51.23 per cent (Rs 88.42 crore) from other sources.

National parties that received the highest income from donations/contributions include the BJP (Rs 6124.85 crore), Congress (Rs 522.13 crore), CPI(M) (Rs 84.17 crore), AAP (Rs 39.22 crore) and NPEP (Rs 2.14 crore).

The collection from issuing coupons, Rs 350.12 crore declared by the Congress, formed 38.12 per cent of its total income during 2024-25.

The report said the most common and popular items of expenditure for national parties are the election expenses and administrative/general expenses.

The BJP spent Rs 3335.36 crore on election/general propaganda, followed by Rs 323.05 crore for administrative costs.

The Congress spent Rs 896.22 crore on election expenditure, followed by expenses towards administrative and general expenses of around Rs 159.68 crore.

CPI(M) spent Rs 78.11 crore on administrative and general expenses followed by Rs 51.03 crore on Employee Cost.

## 7.5 crore working women can unlock Rs 2.8 lakh crore opportunity for BFSI sector in India



IANS

New Delhi, March 5: Nearly 7.5 crore working women in India represent an untapped market opportunity worth around Rs 2.8 lakh crore for the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sector, a report showed on Thursday.

Women's participation in India's digital ecosystem has grown rapidly in recent years, but ownership of financial products remains disproportionately low despite higher access, according to a report by RedSeer Strategy Consultants.

India's financial inclusion index has risen from 46.0 in 2018 to 67.0 in 2025, and women now account for nearly 47 per cent of internet users but remain under-represented across key financial products, the report added.

Women account for only 17 per cent of active personal loans, 13 per cent of credit card outstanding, and about 23 per cent of mutual fund assets under management (AUM), indicating a gap between digital access and financial adoption.

The report also noted a key barrier is the information gap, with 97 per cent of women surveyed citing lack of information as a reason for hesitation toward new financial products.

"About 93 per cent of women save to grow their corpus, while 56 per cent link financial decisions to life goals such as education, healthcare, or long-term security. Fewer than 10 per cent prefer high-risk, return-maximising investment strategies," the report mentioned.

Family influence also plays a significant role in financial decision-making, with nearly 84 per cent of women relying on family members for financial advice.

Despite this, women borrowers demonstrate stronger credit behaviour. Around 66 per cent fall into prime or higher credit score brackets compared with 60 per cent of men, while delinquency rates are lower at 1.6 per cent versus 2.2 per cent among men.

Jasbir S. Juneja, Partner at RedSeer Strategy Consultants, said the next phase of growth in the BFSI sector will depend on converting access into adoption.

"Women are emerging as one of the highest-quality cohorts in BFSI — disciplined borrowers, consistent savers, and goal-oriented investors," Juneja said.

## As Nitish heads to Rajya Sabha, Bihar likely to get its first 'BJP sarkar'

PTI

Patna, Mar 05: JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar's "wish to become a Rajya Sabha member" has paved the way for the formation of a new government, with the BJP now appearing poised to have its "own CM" in the only Hindi heartland state where the post has eluded the party.

The writing had been on the wall ever since the BJP emerged as the single largest party, with 89 seats, in the assembly polls held less than four months ago, outperforming the JD(U) for the second time after 2020.

The swearing-in ceremony verily looked like a BJP affair, with the party getting a lion's share in the new council of ministers and the all-important Home portfolio. The function was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and a number of their cabinet colleagues, besides CMs of several states ruled by the BJP.

RJD national working president Tejashwi Yadav, the Leader of the Opposition in the assembly, told reporters, "The BJP has done a Maharashtra in Bihar. It is a party that has always been opposed to Dalits and OBCs. Now, it will seek to implement its agenda in the socialist stronghold."

Notably, Kumar, like Yadav's father and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, has been a product of the Mandal churn of the 1990s, which ended the dominance of upper castes in Bihar politics.

Speculations are rife that the BJP, too, may go for a CM from the weaker sections, mindful of the social realities.

Among the names doing the rounds for the CM's post is Samrat Choudhary, whom Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the BJP's veritable principal strategist, had vowed to make "a big man" during the assembly poll campaign. Choudhary,



currently a Deputy CM with the crucial portfolio of Home, is a Koeri, an OBC caste which has been sore over never having its "own chief minister".

However, it remains to be seen whether the party, known to put a premium on ideology, would be willing to place more trust in Choudhary, who had started off with the RJD and joined the BJP less than a decade ago.

Another name that is doing the rounds is that of Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, a Sangh Parivar veteran who started off as a fiery ABVP activist when the Ayodhya movement was at its peak.

Rai is a Yadav, the most populous of all castes in Bihar, which has so far been aligned with Lalu Prasad and his RJD.

According to BJP sources, his elevation is "fraught with the risk of annoying the upper castes and alarming the numerically small Kurmis, the caste to which Nitish Kumar belongs, besides extremely backward classes, as these social groups consider the Yadavs to be too aggressive".

BJP sources also admit that the next CM of Bihar could be one of the less fancied leaders of the party, as was seen recently in states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi and Odisha. A BJP leader, who spoke on condition of anonymity,

said, "We must not completely rule out the possibility of an upper caste chief minister. We have demonstrated that the BJP has a place for all. But the Mandal agitation had given rise to an unhealthy impression that henceforth the post of CM in states shall be out of bounds for the upper castes."

"The BJP has successfully changed that perception in UP, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, where the caste dynamics are very much in place, but the top post was given on merit. There is no reason why it should not be the case in Bihar as well, given the fact that we have decimated casteist parties like RJD in the last assembly polls," he added.

Meanwhile, the JD(U) is in turmoil, with a diminution in its clout almost certain. It is being speculated that Nitish Kumar's son Nishant, whose entry into politics was announced two days back, notwithstanding the father's aversion to "dynasty politics", could be accommodated as a Deputy CM.

A JD(U) leader, who did not wish to be named, however, said, "Things are never going to be the same again for us. All ministers in our party, even if these include the son of 'saheb' (Nitish Kumar) shall now have to depend on the BJP's goodwill for survival."

## CJI Surya Kant meets Bhutan king in Thimphu Offers support to digitalise judicial processes

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 05: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Thursday met the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, in Thimphu and offered comprehensive support for technical assistance and development of best practices in the digitisation and digitalisation of judicial processes in the Himalayan nation.

The CJI also met Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay on Wednesday to discuss judicial cooperation, legal education, technological challenges and bilateral ties between the two countries, officials said.

A press statement issued by the Supreme Court said CJI Kant received an audience with the king and both exchanged views to further enhance and strengthen bilateral ties between

India and Bhutan.

"They discussed the deep and long-lasting relationship shared by the two countries and expressed a commitment to taking the cooperation forward in the shape of judicial partnerships," the statement said.

"CJI Kant offered extensive and comprehensive support for technical assistance and development of best practices in the digitisation and digitalisation of judicial processes in Bhutan," it said.

A separate press release said the discussions between the CJI and Prime Minister Tobgay addressed the emerging challenges posed by cybercrime and digital fraud.

"Both sides acknowledged that rapid technological advancement has enabled transnational criminal activities, often targeting vulnerable populations such



as the elderly and economically disadvantaged," it said.

It was emphasised that conventional law-making struggles to keep pace with such developments, and that judicial systems must evolve to interpret and apply existing laws in ways that protect the spirit and intent of the legal

framework, the release added.

"Strengthening judicial awareness, cross-border cooperation, and technological capacity were identified as key priorities in this regard," it said.

"The CJI also highlighted the ongoing efforts to support technological modernisation in the judiciary of Bhutan, including digitisation and e-filing systems and incorporating artificial intelligence as a powerful tool for improving procedural assistance in the realm of judicial administration, the release said.

It added that both CJI Kant and Prime Minister Tobgay reaffirmed that strong cooperation between India and Bhutan, anchored in shared values, institutional collaboration, and people-to-people engagement, would continue to play an important role in addressing the emerging challenges while advancing

development and justice in the region.

During the deliberations, CJI Kant offered to facilitate internship opportunities for students from the JSW School of Law in Bhutan. "These internships would provide exposure to the functioning of courts, legal drafting, pleadings and advocacy, as well as insights into how senior lawyers prepare and argue cases," the release said.

The statement on the CJI's meeting with the king of Bhutan said both leaders also deliberated on the emergent proliferation of cybercrimes and how India and Bhutan can make joint efforts to prevent and prosecute such offences.

"The conversations reaffirmed the cultural, spiritual and intellectual bond between the two countries and the resolve to sustain the exchange of ideas, philosophies and support," the statement said.

## Russia always ready to supply crude oil to India: Envoy

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 05: Russia has always been open to supplying crude oil to India, Russian Ambassador Denis Alipov said on Thursday, amid increasing concerns over spiralling prices of petroleum products in view of the West Asia crisis.

Global oil and gas prices have surged after Iran has virtually blocked the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow shipping lane between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, that handles roughly 20 per cent of global oil and LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas).

India imports 88 per cent of its crude oil needs and roughly half of its natural gas requirement. These mostly come via the Strait of Hormuz.

Any prolonged instability in West Asia is set to be detrimental to India's national interests as the region remains a major source of New Delhi's energy security.

"We have been open to supplying crude oil to India," Alipov told reporters while responding to a question on Russian crude oil supplies to India in view of the West Asia crisis. The US launched military strikes

on Iran on February 28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

Following the military offensive, 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.

In the last three days, the conflict has widened significantly with attacks and counter-attacks by both the sides.

India's procurement of crude oil from Russia has seen sharp fall in the last few weeks.

US President Donald Trump, while announcing a trade deal with New Delhi last month, claimed India has agreed to not procure crude oil from Russia.

In an executive order, Trump had rolled back an additional 25 per cent tariffs on India that he imposed in August last for India's procurement of crude oil from Russia.

In the order, the US said it would monitor whether India resumed Russian oil purchases directly or indirectly and that would determine whether a 25 per cent tariff would again be re-imposed.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# رمضان المبارك

1447 H / 2026 CE

وقت افطار	اختتام سحری	رمضان المبارک	تاریخ
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06:32 PM	05:36 AM	13	03
06:33 PM	05:34 AM	14	04
06:33 PM	05:33 AM	15	05

### DUA FOR SEHRI

وَبِصَوْمٍ غَدٍ نَّوَيْتُ 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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