

## Make life easy for common citizens: CM Omar Abdullah Reviews Compliance Reduction 2.0 to ease Business Regulations in J&K

KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 06: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to review progress on Compliance Reduction and Deregulation 2.0, a comprehensive national initiative aimed at easing regulatory burdens and fostering a more business-friendly, citizen-centric environment across Jammu and Kashmir.

"We should endeavour to make life easy not just for industry, but for the common population as well," the Chief Minister said while emphasising this core governance philosophy.

Under Phase 1 of the programme, the J&K Government had defined 23 priority reform areas and successfully achieved all set targets. Phase 2 builds on this foundation, expanding the scope across 23 new critical and priority areas covering health-care, education, tourism, and industry besides other sectors.



The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, alongside Ministers Sakeena Itoo, Javed Ahmed Rana, Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma. Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani also participated in the deliberations.

The meeting was attended

by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Additional Chief Secretary for the Chief Minister's Office Dheeraj Gupta. Those also present included Financial Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary of the Power Development Department Ashwani Kumar, Financial Commissioner and Additional

Chief Secretary of the Tourism Department Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma besides other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary presented the current status of the ongoing reforms, highlighting the objective to substantially reduce the permissions | [More on P6](#)

## 17 candidates from J&K qualify prestigious All India Civil Service Exam

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Mar 06: As many as 17 candidates from Jammu & Kashmir have qualified the prestigious All India Civil Services Examination, the results of which were declared by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Friday.

Among the qualifiers from Jammu & Kashmir, Suvan Sharma secured the highest position with an All India Rank of 148, followed by Sugandha Gupta with Rank 207.

According to the result, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Towseef Ahmad Ganaie from south Kashmir's Pulwama district achieved Rank 254, while Ritika Bhan secured Rank 456.

Bhan, a Kashmiri Pandit

whose family currently resides in Jammu, is originally from Batpora, Shopian. She had earlier secured 17th rank in the Jammu & Kashmir Combined Entrance Examination and has completed her Master's in Zoology from Cluster University, Jammu.

Other qualifiers from J&K include Sooyash Raj Shivam (572 rank), Muneeb Afzal Parrah (581 rank), Ghulam Maya Din (683 rank), Dwarka Gaadhi (721 rank), Akash Jaggi (747 rank), Koh E Safa (763 rank) Yassar Ahmed Bhatti (811 rank), Abhishek Kumar Dhyawana (820 rank), Pankaj Kumar (856 rank), Mohd Ajaz Ul Rehman (869 rank), Azhar Asif Khan (886 rank), Mohd Sarfraz Choudhary (936 rank) and Irfan Ahmed Lone (957 rank). KNO

## LG Sinha, CM Omar congratulate successful UPSC candidates



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Mar 06: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday congratulated the candidates from Jammu & Kashmir who have successfully cleared the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2025.

The Office of LG said in a post on X said: "Congratulations to all aspirants from J&K who have successfully cleared UPSC CSE-2025. Your success has brought pride to the UT and will inspire young aspirants across J&K to pursue their dreams. I wish all the successful candidates a bright & fulfilling career in public service."

CM Abdullah describing their achievement as a moment of immense pride for the region. In his felicitation message, the Chief Minister | [More on P6](#)

## Veterinary surgeon from Pulwama cracks prestigious UPSC exam

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Mar 06: Tawseef Ahmad Ganaie from Puchal area of in South Kashmir's Pulwama district has brought laurels to his family and the entire region after securing All India Rank 254 in the prestigious Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services Examination, the results of which were declared today.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Tawseef said that his journey towards the civil services began during his college days and that consistent effort over the years helped him achieve success.

"I completed my graduation in 2022 and started preparing

for the UPSC examination during my graduation itself. This was my third attempt, and I am grateful that my hard work finally paid off," he said.

Currently working as a veterinary surgeon and posted in the Pir Panchal region, Tawseef said balancing a demanding job with UPSC preparation was not easy but became manageable because he had already built a strong academic foundation earlier.

"Obviously, it is difficult to manage a job and prepare for UPSC at the same time. However, since I had already started preparing during my college days, most of the basic syllabus was covered before I joined the job. During my service, | [More on P6](#)

## J&K's gubernatorial legacy: Men who rose to Raj Bhavans

4 politicians among who held Governor's office

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Mar 06: The appointment of Kavinder Gupta, former Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, as the Governor of Himachal Pradesh has generated significant interest in the Union Territory. Very few people, however, know that four other natives of J&K have previously served as Governors in different states across the country.

According to details collected by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) from multiple sources, the number of persons from J&K who have held the office of Governor has now risen to five with Gupta's appointment.



Mohammad Shafi Qureshi, a politician, served as Governor of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh during the 1990s. He held the office of Governor of Bihar for two years and 147 days (March 19, 1991 – August 13, 1993) and Madhya Pradesh for four years and 301 days (June 24, 1993 – April 21,

1998). He also held the additional charge of Governor of Uttar Pradesh for 77 days (May 3, 1996 – July 19, 1996).

DD Thakur  
Devi Das Thakur, former Deputy Chief Minister, served as Governor of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh for less than a year. He held the office of Governor of Assam for 319 days (May 2, 1990 – March 17, 1991) and Arunachal Pradesh for 312 days (May 8, 1990 – March 16, 1991).

Babu Parmanand  
Babu Parmanand, a minister in the erstwhile state as well as Speaker of the Assembly, was Governor of Haryana for four years and 12 days (June 9, 2000 – July 1, 2004). | [More on P6](#)

## Precautionary restrictions lifted, highspeed internet restored

DGP, IGP visit downtown, sensitive areas, assess situation

Police urge media orgs, social media users to act responsibly



Srinagar, Mar 06: Authorities have decided to lift precautionary restrictions across Kashmir from Saturday onwards, while high-speed internet and prepaid mobile calling services

were restored across the Valley on Friday evening.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the decision to | [More on P6](#)

## Infiltration threat rises, forces on high alert across J&K

Intel inputs flag active terrorist launch pads across LoC

Army, BSF intensify surveillance, patrols

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Mar 06: Security forces have been put on high alert in Jammu and Kashmir following intelligence inputs about possible infiltration attempts by terrorists along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border, official sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) on Friday.

According to security officials, several terrorist launching pads across the border have



reportedly become active in recent days, raising concerns about attempts to push infiltrators into

the Union Territory. They said the Army, Border Security Force | [More on P6](#)

## CM inaugurates new Secretariat block in Jammu

Jammu, Mar 06: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday inaugurated a newly constructed block at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, aimed at augmenting office infrastructure and improving the working facilities for employees. The new block is expected to significantly add to the available workspace, further strengthening administrative efficiency and overall functioning at the Secretariat.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Bani Rameshwar Singh, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Estates Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary to



the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Director Estates Jammu Ashwani Khajuria and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

## Omar interacts with delegations

KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 06: Several delegations called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at his residence here today, apprising him of a range of developmental and welfare-related issues concerning their respective areas and communities.

Member of Rajya Sabha Sajjad Ahmad Kichloo called on the Chief Minister along-with a delegation of residents from Paddar in district Kishtwar. The delegation submitted memoranda highlighting development requirements in sectors including | [More on P6](#)

## This year's Union Budget gives strong push to agri, rural transformation: PM Modi 'Technology delivers results when systems adopt it, institutions integrate it, entrepreneurs build innovations on it'

Press Information Bureau

New Delhi, Mar 06: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today addressed the third post-Budget webinar focused on "Agriculture and Rural Transformation," emphasising the importance of translating budget provisions into tangible benefits for farmers and rural communities.

Reflecting on previous sessions that highlighted technological advancements and economic growth, Modi underscored the need for collaborative efforts to unlock India's

agricultural potential. "Now, after the budget, it is equally important that the country reaps the benefits of its full potential, and your suggestions in this direction and this webinar is thus important", Shri Modi emphasised.

The Prime Minister highlighted that agriculture remains the mainstay of the Indian economy and a strategic pillar for the nation's long-term developmental journey. Shri Modi emphasised several programs, such as the 'PM Kisan Samman Nidhi', and 'Minimum Support Price

(MSP)' reforms that provide farmers with 1.5 times returns. "Our government has continuously strengthened the agriculture sector", Shri Modi remarked.

Providing data on the success of existing schemes, the Prime Minister noted that 10 crore farmers have received over 4 lakh crore as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, and nearly 2 lakh crore in insurance claims have been settled under 'PM Fasal Bima Yojana'. Shri Modi also noted that the institutional credit coverage has become more than 75%.



"Such numerous efforts have reduced the risks for farmers and provided them with basic economic security," Shri Modi

affirmed. On record production in food grains and pulses, the Prime Minister called for infusing the

sector with new energy as the 21st century's second quarter begins. Highlighting that renewed efforts have been made in this direction in this year's Union Budget, Shri Modi expressed confidence that the webinar's deliberations would fast-track the implementation of budget provisions. "I am confident that the discussion among you in this webinar and the resulting suggestions will help in implementing the budget provisions on the ground as quickly as possible", Shri Modi asserted.

The Prime Minister

highlighted the shifting global demand and the necessity of making Indian agriculture export-oriented. He urged the full utilization of India's diverse climate to increase productivity and export strength. "In this webinar, it is essential to have maximum discussion on making our farming export-oriented.", Shri Modi remarked.

Focusing on high-value agriculture, the Prime Minister detailed budget proposals for region-specific promotion of crops like cocoa, cashew, and sandalwood. Shri Modi also highlighted | [More on P6](#)

## Labourers backbone of economy, Govt committed to their welfare: Deputy CM

KT NEWS DESK

SAMBA, MARCH 06: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary Friday described labourers as the backbone of the economy, reiterating that the government is committed to ensure their economic welfare and social security across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, was addressing a Workers' Conference organised by the Labour and Employment Department at Ambedkar Bhawan, Bari-Brahmana in Samba district, where he was the chief guest.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the government is committed towards safeguarding the rights and welfare of the workforce through effective implementation of labour laws and welfare schemes.

"Our workers are the driving force behind economic development. The government is committed to ensure safe working conditions, fair wages, social security and dignity of labour for every worker across Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted the ongoing transformation in labour legislation through introduction of four Labour Codes which consolidate 29 existing central labour laws into four comprehensive codes covering wages, industrial relations, occupational safety and social security.

"The new Labour Codes are a landmark reform that simplify labour laws while strengthening protection and welfare of workers. These reforms aim to ensure universal minimum wages, improved workplace safety, enhanced social security and better mechanisms for dispute resolution," he said.

He said that the Code on Wages ensures uniform wage regulation and timely payment of wages while promoting gender equality. The Industrial Relations Code strengthens dispute resolution mechanisms



and facilitates better engagement between employers and workers, he added.

He further said that the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code provides a comprehensive framework for workplace safety and health standards, while the Code on Social Security expands coverage of welfare benefits to workers in organised, unorganised and sectors. "The Labour Department is working towards implementing these reforms effectively in Jammu and Kashmir to create a fair, transparent and worker-friendly labour ecosystem," he added.

Highlighting the department's achievements, the Deputy Chief Minister said, "In the current financial year, 493 cases related to labour welfare have been settled and compensation amounting Rs.14.27 crore has been disbursed to aggrieved labourers under different labour laws," he said.

Stressing the need for extensive awareness campaigns, the Deputy Chief Minister called for ensuring registration of all eligible workers so that they can avail the benefits of various Central and UT level welfare

schemes.

He further informed that the department has significantly expanded digital governance by providing 23 services online through the Single Window System. During the current financial year, more than 14,000 registrations and over 11,000 renewals have been processed through the online platform.

The Deputy Chief Minister also highlighted the launch of Shramik Wata, an initiative introduced by the Labour Department to directly address workers' grievances. "Sixteen Shramik Wata sessions have been conducted so far in which 358 grievances were received, most of which have already been resolved," he said.

He also mentioned the 24x7 toll-free helpline "Shram Mitra", has been established to provide timely assistance and effective grievance redressal to labourers.

He appreciated the Department for holding such events, facilitating the Government outreach Workers at their work places and listen to their issues directly. "We will hold these event in all other districts to meet our Workers at their doorsteps.

Moreover, exclusive conferences shall be conducted for women workers as our Government has already taken measures and reforms for their safe and secure work conditions in J&K," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister also spoke about ongoing infrastructure initiatives such as the construction of Labour Sarais across Jammu and Kashmir to provide safe and dignified accommodation to labourers, particularly those coming from distant areas in search of livelihood.

During the programme, the Deputy Chief Minister distributed financial assistance amounting Rs. 84,07,071 among the beneficiaries under various welfare schemes of the Jammu and Kashmir Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (JKBOCW-WB), Employees Compensation Act and ESI schemes.

Earlier, Labour Commissioner Charandeep emphasised the importance of registration of eligible workers under the JKBOCW-WB so that they can avail various welfare schemes provided by the Board.

The programme also provided an open platform for workers to share their experiences and feedback regarding benefits available under different welfare initiatives.

To further enhance awareness, a Nukkad Natak (street play) highlighting the benefits of Building and Other Construction Workers welfare schemes and key provisions of labour laws was also presented during the programme.

Among others present on the occasion were Deputy Labour Commissioner Jammu Sukhpal Singh, Inspector of Factories, Assistant Labour Commissioners of Samba and Jammu, IMO Samba, Lalit Mahajan, President of Bari Brahmana Industries Association (BBIA), Assistant Labour Commissioner Samba Himani Jerath besides a large number of workers and stakeholders.

## DC Kupwara inaugurates Hygienic Fish Sale Outlet in Handwara



KT NEWS DESK

KUPWARA, MARCH 6: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, Friday inaugurated a Hygienic Retail Fish Sale Outlet at Handwara.

The inauguration, as per an official statement, was held in presence of ADC Handwara Javed Naseem Masoodi, AD Fisheries Dr. Salman Rauoof Chalkoo, LDM, Executive Engineer R&B, Lead District Manager J&K Bank Kupwara, Tehsildar Handwara, FDO Handwara and other concerned officers from the Fisheries Department and district administration.

The outlet has been established by the Department of Fisheries Kupwara in collaboration with J&K Bank under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, marking a significant step in strengthening the district's fisheries sector.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said the outlet will serve as a dedicated,

hygienic marketplace for fish farmers, ensuring proper handling, storage, and sale of fish products. He highlighted the tremendous trout production potential of the Mawar belt, adding that the outlet will help farmers market their produce effectively in nearby markets while guaranteeing quality and hygiene for consumers.

The DC inspected the facility and directed officials to maintain strict hygiene and monitoring standards, emphasizing that public health and consumer trust must remain top priorities. He further announced that fish sale at the outlet will be conducted twice a week, every Tuesday and Friday, with scope to increase frequency as demand grows.

The initiative is expected to empower local fish farmers, create career opportunities for youth in fisheries, and strengthen marketing avenues, thereby supporting livelihoods and promoting sustainable growth in the sector.

## Secretary IT reviews progress of key digital Initiatives

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 6: Secretary, Information Technology, Dr. Piyush Singla, Friday chaired a review meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu to assess the progress on various digital initiatives being implemented by the department.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by CEO J&KGA Mahima Madan, Additional Secretary IT Devinder Singh Bhatt, Senior Director NIC Anil Kumar Sharma along with other officers and officials of the Information Technology Department and J&KGA.

During the meeting, a detailed review was undertaken regarding several important projects including upgradation of the LAN network at the Civil Secretariat, strengthening of Wi-Fi connectivity across government offices and implementation of the Chief Minister's Internship



Scheme. Dr. Singla emphasized the need for robust digital infrastructure to support efficient governance and seamless communication within government departments. He directed the concerned officers to ensure

timely completion of the ongoing works related to network upgradation and to further strengthen connectivity infrastructure in the Secretariat.

The Secretary also reviewed the progress and implementation framework of the Chief Minister's Internship Scheme. He highlighted the importance of the initiative in providing valuable exposure and skill development opportunities to the youth of the Union Territory.

The officers present in the meeting briefed the chair regarding the status of the projects and the timelines for completion of the remaining works. Dr. Singla stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all implementing agencies to ensure effective execution of the initiatives and further strengthen the digital governance ecosystem in Jammu & Kashmir.

## DC Kulgam reviews implementation of Social Welfare Schemes

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, MARCH 06: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Friday chaired a meeting of officers to review the implementation and progress of various schemes and programmes of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in the district. During the meeting, the DC reviewed the functioning of One Stop Centre, integrated Child protection scheme, SANKALP Hub for Women, Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), Drug De-addiction Centre and implementation of State Marriage Assistance Scheme, ISSS, scholarships and other welfare initiatives being implemented by the department.

On the occasion, District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) Kulgam, Snobar Altaf, briefed the chair about the number of

beneficiaries enrolled under various pension schemes and other social welfare programmes in the district.

The DC directed the concerned officers to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries are covered under different social welfare schemes so that the intended support reaches every deserving person.

He further instructed the department to formulate a comprehensive calendar of awareness programmes under the SANKALP Hub for Women to enhance public awareness about the schemes and services available for women and other vulnerable sections of society.

The DC emphasized effective implementation, regular monitoring, and greater outreach to ensure that the benefits of social welfare schemes reach the grassroots level.

## SKUAST-K issues advisory for combating dry weather

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, MARCH 6: In response to the persistent dry weather across the Kashmir Valley, experts from Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir have issued an urgent advisory.

Farmers are strongly urged to prioritize soil moisture conservation and immediate crop protection measures to mitigate the impact of rising temperatures and lack of precipitation.

The university has strongly urged farmers across the Valley to adopt timely crop management practices, emphasising that the primary goal during this period must be to

protect crops from heat stress and soil desiccation. For fruit growers, the most critical recommendation is the application of 4-6 inches of organic mulch, such as paddy straw or grass clippings, to tree basins to retain moisture. Experts from SKUAST-K's Division of Agrometeorology have specifically warned against the use of inorganic mulches like polythene sheets, which can inadvertently increase soil temperature and damage root systems. In orchards lacking irrigation, the university advises delaying all fertilizer applications until sufficient soil moisture is available and cautions against excessive hoeing or heavy tractor movement that could further dry out the land.

KT NEWS DESK

ANANTNAG, MARCH 06: In a proactive move to discuss and streamline traffic movement within main town and its adjoining areas, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat Friday chaired a comprehensive review meeting with the stakeholders, at DC office.

The meeting was aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of existing traffic arrangements and identifying bottlenecks that hinder the smooth movement of vehicles and commuters.

Recognizing the importance of a well-regulated transport system in the town, the DC called for a coordinated approach and solicited cooperation from all the stakeholders, adding the ultimate goal

is to minimise inconvenience to the general public, commuters and local businesses/traders.

During the meeting, representatives from the Traders Union, Market Association, and Transport Association raised their concerns regarding traffic congestion at Mehndi Kadal, Lal Chowk, Ganjipora, Court Road, Ashajipora and other places besides provision for parking places, taxi stands and utilities of importance. They also shared grassroots-level insights and raised the issues faced by them due to heavy traffic, roadside parking and jamming.

The chair decided that a field visit will soon be conducted to get a first hand stock of the bottlenecks and other challenges. Also a robust strategy on traffic management will be put in place in consultation with all stakeholders.

Instructions were issued to the officials from MVD, Traffic Police, and MCA to explore modalities for decongesting the main town besides improving its beautification and drainage system.

On the occasion, the CEO, MCA informed that under town beautification Phase II, funds to the tune of Rs. 1 crore have been released, out of which 64 lakh stand allotted for construction of passenger sheds at multiple locations. He further informed that Rs 10 lakh have been released under CDF under which street lights will be installed particularly at the dark spots.

The meeting was also attended by the ADC (M), ACR, Tehsildar, SHO Anantnag, officials from traffic police, MVD, MCA, representatives from street vendors and other stakeholders.

## DC Anantnag reviews traffic regulation



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### NOTICE

I, Prince Parwaiz, hereby inform the general public that the old name of my ward is Mariya Parwaiz and the updated new name is Toiba Jan. I request the Social Welfare Office, Srinagar to kindly update/change the old name to the new name of my ward in their official records.

If anyone has any objection regarding this change, he/she may contact the Social Welfare Office, Srinagar within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no claim shall be entertained.

Prince Parwaiz  
Father of Toiba Jan  
R/o Chandpora Harwan, Srinagar

### NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that I want to change the name and father's name of my ward recorded in the school records as Wajid Rafiq and father's name Mohammad Rafiq Famda. However, the correct name of my ward is Wajid Rafiq Phamda and the correct father's name is Mohammad Rafiq Phamda.

If anybody has any objection regarding this correction, he/she may contact the Head Master, Govt. Middle School Mulnar, Srinagar within 7 days After that, no claim or objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Rafiq Phamda  
Father of Wajid Rafiq Phamda  
Mother's Name: Ameena Bano  
Class: 8th, Roll No. 01  
R/o: Mulnar New Theed, Harwan, Srinagar

## CS reviews Mission YUVA progress in J&K



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Mar 06: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Friday chaired a meeting to review the district-wise performance of Mission YUVA across Jammu and Kashmir, assessing progress on key parameters of Culture, Capital, Capacity and Connectivity aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and employment generation among the youth.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism; Vice Chancellors of Universities; Director, IIM Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, Planning; Secretary, Labour & Employment; DG, Codes; Managing Director, JKRLM; Director, Employment; Director, Colleges; Convenor, UTLBC and other concerned officers.

Deputy Commissioners participated in the meeting through video conferencing from their respective districts.

Taking note of the progress achieved so far, the Chief Secretary impressed upon the Deputy Commissioners to take earnest steps towards completing the institutional framework in their districts. He directed them to ensure that SBDUs and BHDs become fully functional at the earliest and that Motivators and Yuva Doots are onboarded in a time-bound manner to ensure effective implementation of the Mission across the Union Territory.

Emphasising the need to expand outreach, the Chief Secretary asked the concerned departments to

further intensify Udyam Jagriti initiatives in colleges and among Self Help Groups (SHGs). He stressed that aspiring entrepreneurs should receive proper mentoring, counselling and handholding support so that they are able to translate their ideas into viable enterprises.

Reviewing the role of financial institutions in supporting the Mission, the Chief Secretary observed that loan sanctions amounting to around Rs 1,200 crore and disbursements of nearly Rs 964 crore indicate encouraging progress. However, he advised the banks to maintain a steady pace of 150-200 loan disbursements per day so that legacy dependencies are cleared and annual targets under the Mission are achieved in a timely manner.

He also emphasised the importance of periodic review and output tracking of enterprises established through these loans, so that their progress is closely monitored and necessary guidance is provided to ensure the sustainability and success of these ventures.

The Chief Secretary further underscored the need to address gaps identified in incubation centres established in higher educational institutions. He asked the concerned department to share the detailed assessment criteria used for evaluating these institutions so that corrective measures can be taken to strengthen the incubation ecosystem and ensure optimal utilisation of the facilities.

Additionally, he advised the

Deputy Commissioners to encourage local businesses and enterprises to onboard themselves on the ONDC seller platform, enabling them to expand market access, promote their products and strengthen their businesses through digital commerce.

Earlier, Secretary, Labour & Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, in his detailed presentation, highlighted the district-wise status of Mission YUVA implementation across Jammu and Kashmir. He apprised the meeting of the progress achieved under the four pillars of Culture, Capital, Capacity and Connectivity, while also identifying areas requiring greater focus by the respective districts.

The Chief Secretary was informed by Director, Employment, Harvinder Singh, that the ongoing Udyam Jagriti 4.0 awareness campaign has achieved substantial outreach across the Union Territory, covering 95 percent of Panchayats and reaching 2,51,352 individuals so far. He added that the Mission YUVA mobile application has recorded 2,20,928 downloads, reflecting a 47 percent increase during the last one month.

The meeting was further informed that the campaign's focused outreach initiatives have yielded encouraging results. Around 47,672 students have been covered through college-level engagements, while 1,97,400 women associated with Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been reached through targeted awareness programmes.

These efforts have resulted in 1,937 SHG credit applications and

facilitated handholding support to 6,281 sanctioned applicants, registering significant growth over the previous month.

Regarding institutional strengthening, the meeting was apprised that 187 posts have been filled out of 367 sanctioned positions under SBDU/BHD recruitment, while 180 posts remain vacant. Officials informed that 28 percent of these posts have been filled since the last Apex Committee meeting, increasing the number from 90 to 187.

Similarly, under Motivator empanelment, 582 motivators have been empanelled out of 1,000 sanctioned positions, including 65 Lakhpati Didis, while 418 positions are yet to be filled.

It was also informed that 13 out of 20 districts have completed the establishment of SBDU centres, while the remaining centres in Jammu, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Reasi, Samba, Udhampur and Anantnag are at various stages of completion. All 20 SBDU centres are expected to become operational by March 20, 2026.

The meeting was further informed that Mission YUVA has recorded steady growth in registrations, applications and loan disbursements over the past months. As of March 6, 2026, the number of registrations has reached 1,83,306, while 72,037 applications have been received under the scheme.

It was also informed that applications for neo-innovative enterprises have witnessed significant growth, increasing from 119 on January 19, 2026 to 364 by February 4, 2026, marking nearly a threefold increase within a short span.

While reviewing the overall progress, the Chief Secretary emphasised that Mission YUVA is a transformative initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, generating employment opportunities and building a vibrant start-up ecosystem for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. He called upon all stakeholders to work in close coordination to achieve the objectives of the Mission in a time-bound

## MeT forecasts shift in weather pattern soon



SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Mar 06: Predicting that weather patterns will change in coming days, the Meteorological Department has said that the day temperatures across J&K remained significantly above normal on Friday.

The weather man stated that maximum temperatures in many parts of Kashmir division remained 10-12 degrees Celsius above normal, while several areas of Jammu division recorded temperatures about 10-12 degrees above the seasonal average.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 24.5°C, which was 11.5 degrees above normal, while Qazigund registered 25.0°C, around 12.4 degrees above the usual level. Pahalgam recorded a high of 22.7°C and Kupwara 23.8°C, both significantly above the seasonal average.

In Gulmarg, the day temperature settled at 16.6°C, which was about 13.1 degrees above normal, according to the data.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 31.8°C, around 7.5 degrees above the normal level. Banihal registered 27.4°C, Batote 27.2°C, Katra 31.8°C and Baderwah 25.8°C, all remaining above the seasonal average.

Night temperatures also stayed above normal in several places. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 6.6°C, which was 4.1 degrees above normal, while Qazigund recorded 5.0°C and Pahalgam 3.1°C.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department has forecast a change in weather conditions from March 7 onwards.

"Generally cloudy weather is expected between March 7 and 9, with the possibility of light rain or

snowfall in higher reaches at isolated places," the MeT said.

From March 10 to 12, the department has predicted generally cloudy conditions with light rain or snowfall over higher reaches at scattered places across the Union Territory.

Weather conditions are expected to remain mostly dry again between March 13 and 15, while another spell of cloudy weather with the possibility of light rain or snowfall in higher reaches is likely between March 16 and 17.

The department has also said that daytime temperatures are likely to fall by around 3 to 5 degrees Celsius at many places after March 7 and may remain below the current levels until March 12.

Meanwhile, farmers have been advised to continue farm operations as the current weather conditions are favourable for agricultural activities—(KNO)

## Kashmir poultry sector faces sharp decline

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 06: Poultry farming, once considered a reliable source of livelihood for thousands of families across Kashmir, is witnessing a sharp decline as farmers grapple with recurring disease outbreaks, poor market returns and stiff competition from cheaper chicken supplied from outside the region.

In south Kashmir's Pulwama district, traditionally known as one of the major poultry production hubs, farmers say the sector is facing an unprecedented crisis.

The farmers that nearly 2000 poultry farms in the district have shut down over the past few years, leaving hundreds of families without a stable source of income.

They allege that the situation has worsened due to the spread of diseases among poultry birds and what they describe as a lack of timely intervention and support from the concerned departments.

"We invested our life savings in poultry farming, hoping it would sustain our families. But repeated disease outbreaks have wiped out our flocks several times. Without proper support or compensation, many farmers were forced to shut their farms," said Abdul Rashid, a poultry farmer from Pulwama.

Another farmer from the district said the influx of cheaper chicken from outside markets has further pushed local poultry to the brink.

"Chicken brought from outside states is sold at lower rates,



and local farmers cannot compete with that. Our production costs are higher due to feed prices and other expenses. When the market price drops, we incur huge losses," said Ghulam Mohammad, a poultry unit owner.

Farmers said that Pulwama once had thousands of active poultry units supplying chicken to markets across Kashmir, but the number has drastically reduced in recent years. "We had around 10,000 birds earlier, but after repeated losses due to disease, we had to close our farm last year. Many others in our area have also abandoned poultry farming," said Bashir Ahmad, another farmer, adding that the sector, which once generated employment for thousands of youth, is now struggling for survival.

The crisis is not limited to Pulwama alone. Farmers in other districts of Kashmir also report similar challenges, including frequent poultry diseases, lack of proper disease control mechanisms, high feed costs and declining

market rates. The farmers said that without strict monitoring of poultry imports from outside the Valley and better veterinary services, the situation could worsen further.

"Poultry farming once provided livelihood to thousands and contributed significantly to the local economy. If the government does not intervene now, the sector may collapse completely," said poultry farmers, urging authorities to introduce disease management programs, financial assistance and market regulation to revive the industry.

Farmers have appealed to the concerned departments to conduct regular inspections, ensure vaccination drives and provide compensation to those who suffered heavy losses due to disease outbreaks.

They said that reviving poultry farming is crucial not only for the livelihoods of farmers but also for ensuring local production and reducing dependence on poultry imports from outside the region—(KNO)

## Almond blossoms paint Kashmir pink

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Mar 06: The blooming of almond trees across Kashmir Valley has signalled the arrival of spring, with delicate pink and white blossoms transforming several parts of the region into beautiful landscapes.

Gardens and parks known for their almond trees are seeing a steady influx of visitors, as tourists and locals gather to witness the seasonal spectacle after the long winter months.

The early spring bloom, which typically begins in the first week of March, is considered one of the first natural indicators of the changing season in Kashmir.

Riya Sharma, a tourist visiting Srinagar said, "I had seen pictures of almond blossoms earlier, but witnessing them in person is truly beautiful. The entire garden looks like it has turned pink."

Visitors were seen strolling through blooming gardens, taking photographs and enjoying the weather as the Valley gradually transitions from winter to spring.

Locals said the blooming season not only enhances the Valley's natural charm but also attracts tourists eager



to witness the first colours of spring.

"After months of winter, the almond blossoms bring life back to the Valley. People wait for this time every year," said Ghulam Ahmad.

Meanwhile, with spring setting in, preparations are underway for the opening of the Indra Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden in Srinagar, which officials earlier said is likely to open around mid-March, subject to favourable weather.

The garden, located at the foothills of the Zabarwan range overlooking

Dal Lake, is expected to feature nearly 1.8 million tulips of around 70 to 75 varieties this season, offering visitors another major attraction in the coming weeks. Last year, the garden witnessed a record footfall of more than 8.5 lakh visitors during its month-long opening, highlighting the growing interest of tourists in Kashmir's spring bloom.

The almond blossoms usually last for a few weeks before the delicate flowers give way to fresh green leaves, signalling the full arrival of spring across the Valley—(KNO)

## Ramadan drives demand for Kashmiri bakery items

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 06: The demand for traditional Kashmiri bakery items is witnessing a significant surge across the Valley in the ongoing month of Ramadan.

From busy markets to small neighbourhood bakeries, people are seen lining up to purchase a variety of traditional Kashmiri rotis that form an essential part of Ramadan meals in many households.

These traditional bakery items are prepared in special tandoors fueled by firewood. Bakers said that popular varieties, including Chulcha, Roath, Afghani Roti, Bagerkhani, and Makai Roti, are witnessing high demand this year.

Local bakers said that despite the intense heat from the tandoors and the long working hours, they continue to prepare fresh



and hygienic products for customers.

"It is very difficult to work in front of high flames, but we do it so that the people of Kashmir do not face any difficulties during Suhoor and Iftar," a local baker said.

However, bakers expressed concern over the rising prices of flour in

the market, saying that the increasing costs are affecting their livelihood. They urged the government to provide relief to traditional Kashmiri bakers so that they can continue their trade without financial burden.

Renowned traditional baker Manzoor Ahmad from Ganderbal said the demand

for bakery products increases significantly during Ramadan.

"During this holy month, there is a huge demand for traditional Kashmiri rotis. We ensure hygienic and high-quality products to customers," he said.

Another renowned traditional baker, Ashraf Ahmad, said Kashmiri bakery items hold deep cultural and religious importance during Ramadan. "Traditional Kashmiri rotis are an important part of Sehri and Iftar in almost every household. Despite challenges, we are committed to maintaining quality and meeting the growing demand during Ramadan," he said.

To meet the increased demand, many bakers have stepped up production while ensuring that customers receive fresh bakery items throughout the holy month—(KNO)

## Police arrest drug peddler in Sopore

KNO

Srinagar, Mar 06: Continuing its sustained drive against the drug menace, police have arrested a drug peddler in Sopore and recovered contraband substance from his possession.

According to a statement, a police party from PS Tarzoo during naka checking at Krankshivan Colony, Sopore, intercepted a suspicious person. During search, SpasmoProxyvon Plus capsules were recovered from his possession. He has been identified as

Mohammad Shabuddin @Sbabu son of Bashir Ahmad resident of Krankshivan Sopore. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 29/2026 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Tarzoo, and further investigation is underway to ascertain the source and wider linkages involved.

Police reiterate their zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking and reaffirm their commitment to sustained enforcement to safeguard youth and society from the menace of drugs—(KNO)

## EDITORIAL

### CM Tells Hard Truth – Not Everyone Will Get Govt Job

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's message from the Startup Outreach Programme at SKUAST-Jammu carries a powerful and transformative idea: the youth of Jammu and Kashmir must move from looking for jobs to creating opportunities for themselves and others. This call to embrace innovation and entrepreneurship, especially in farming and related fields, represents a fresh new way of thinking about the region's economic future. Agriculture, often seen as a traditional way of life, is actually a field full

of exciting possibilities for new businesses. Many people mistakenly believe that Jammu and Kashmir's economy depends mainly on tourism. But this overlooks the strong contribution of farming, horticulture, fisheries, and beekeeping to the region's economy. These sectors form a vast network ready for innovation and growth. Shifting from old-fashioned farming to modern, technology-driven, and value-added agriculture is essential. As farmland becomes scarcer, the only way to survive and thrive is through change. Similarly,

the huge gap between Jammu and Kashmir's low milk processing rate of just 6 to 7 per cent and Gujarat's impressive 93 per cent reveals enormous untapped potential in dairy and other related sectors. This vision of entrepreneurship addresses a basic truth: government jobs cannot accommodate everyone. Honestly admitting that not all young people will find government employment is not pessimism. It is simply being practical. This realisation shifts focus toward the endless possibilities of self-employment and starting

new ventures. Programmes like the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme, JKIP, and Mission YUVA are designed specifically to help make this shift happen—turning agriculture into a modern, value-added sector. Equally important is closing the gap between formal education and actual employability. The proposed Mission SKILL recognises that traditional schooling often does not equip students with skills that the market actually needs. In a world changing so fast that today's required skills may be useless tomorrow, the

ability to keep learning and adapting is essential. The rise of artificial intelligence and other new technologies makes this need even more urgent. The message to young people is clear: success requires intention, fresh ideas, and genuine passion. Failure is not something to fear but a valuable teacher. By harnessing innovation and embracing the spirit of business, the young people of Jammu and Kashmir can build not just their own futures, but the future of their communities and their land.

## Trust, Diversity And Inclusion: AI In Healthcare

The vision of #AIforAll demands nothing less than an AI ecosystem that works for every patient, in every region, regardless of income, language, or geography

### Press Information Bureau

Artificial Intelligence is transforming the healthcare sector in various innovative ways. AI-based tools can diagnose and predict diseases, streamline clinical practices, improve hospital management, assist in drug discoveries and aid in healthcare research. However, integration of AI in healthcare is not without its obstacles and challenges. AI powered healthcare devices and tools are being developed, but their adoption is low. There is a significant lack of diverse, and representative data informing many AI-driven tools, which can reduce their accuracy and reinforce biases against certain populations. Across multiple discussions on artificial intelligence, a clear consensus has emerged: while AI has the potential to revolutionise healthcare, its development and deployment must remain patient-centered. It should expand equitable and affordable access to care, be trained on diverse and inclusive datasets, and be grounded in transparency and trust.

To encapsulate these principles, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the Strategy for AI in Healthcare for India (SAHI) during the recently held India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi. SAHI sets out a national framework to guide the responsible integration of AI into India's health system. It recognises AI as a strategic enabler of health system strengthening, while affirming that its adoption must be anchored in public interest, trust, and long-term system resilience. The various discussions held during the Summit also highlighted the importance of diversity in data, and accountable and trustworthy AI systems, along with the importance of using AI for public good.

### Strategy for AI in Healthcare for India (SAHI)

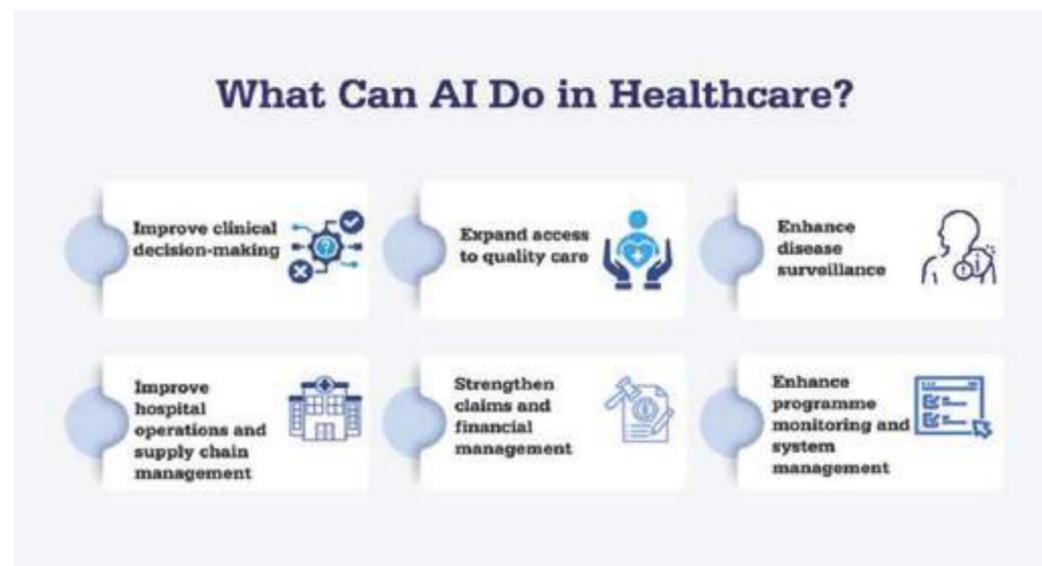
SAHI works as a recommendatory national framework on the way AI can be integrated into healthcare services.

Launched as a national framework, SAHI outlines a structured roadmap for integrating AI into healthcare delivery across India. It seeks to guide policymakers, healthcare providers, and technology developers on the responsible adoption of AI, ensuring innovation is aligned with clinical needs, regulatory standards, equity considerations, and public trust.

SAHI makes inclusive development its main goal – emphasising the necessity of using this frontier technology for the purpose of public good and creating a Viksit Bharat 2047. The strategy recognises AI's transformative role and potential in making healthcare more accessible, timely, high-quality and affordable, envisioning it both as a powerful innovative force as well as an enabler for improving public health. It seeks to establish trusted, risk-proportionate governance and robust digital and data foundations to ensure the safe, ethical, and accountable use of AI at scale. It also aims to build a future-ready health workforce and institutions, while fostering a sustainable and inclusive AI-for-health ecosystem that advances equity, quality, efficiency, and public trust.

The framework's 5 core pillars address governance and evidence generation standards; safe, ethical, robust and transparent digital and data infrastructure; and workforce readiness.

SAHI is a step ahead and builds on India's National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, released in 2018 after the government announced the National Program on AI, which emphasised #AIforAll. The 2018 strategy, made by India's policy think tank NITI Aayog, aims to use AI for scalable solutions for emerging economies, for the greater good of humanity. In the healthcare sector, the strategy envisioned AI as a technology enabling universal health coverage, particularly in rural areas that suffer from poor connectivity and limited supply of healthcare professionals. AI is seen as a democratising tool to enable communities to access healthcare services through AI-driven tools such as AI



driven diagnostics, personalised treatment, early identification of potential pandemics, and imaging diagnostics, among others. **BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI)**

BODH, also launched during the Summit, provides a structured mechanism for testing and validating Health AI solutions before deployment at scale. It will play a critical role in ensuring that AI tools used by clinicians are safe, reliable, and validated against real-world parameters before deployment. Trust, safety, and accountability must remain central to India's health AI journey. It was developed by the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in collaboration with the National Health Authority.

### India's AI-Related Healthcare Policies

India has been progressing towards the goal of using AI for public good set by the 2018 strategy. In the same year, the NITI Aayog released the National Health Stack: Strategy and Approach. The health-stack strategy set a policy framework for the establishment of a unifying digital public infrastructure with national health electronic registries, a coverage and claims platform, a health records framework for patients to access their own health data and enable medical research, and other digital components such as a digital health ID, health data dictionaries, and payment gateways. This architecture is enabling many AI integrations.

The National Health Stack aims to deploy a powerful technology arsenal, from big data analytics and machine learning all the way to AI – with the goal of completely redesigning the flow of people, money, and information, bringing down the costs of health protection, converging disparate systems to ensure a cashless and seamlessly integrated experience for the poorest beneficiaries, and promoting wellness across the population.

Building on this foundation, the National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB, 2019) identified AI, machine learning, IoT, and big data as emerging technologies that a national initiative of this scale must leverage at the earliest and called for tapping India's growing start-up innovation ecosystem to develop AI-driven solutions for the health sector.

The National Digital Health Mission Strategy Overview (2020) further translated this vision into an implementation roadmap. It recognised that AI, IoT, blockchain, and cloud computing offered additional opportunities for a more holistic digital health ecosystem – one that could increase equitable access, improve health outcomes, and reduce costs. It envisaged that modern AI techniques would help health providers

extract relevant information from existing health record formats and transition to interoperable data standards – while committing the government to laying down guidelines and standards to ensure the reliability of AI systems.

This policy trajectory culminated in the launch of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare – the operational realisation of the broader digital health vision. With over 860 million ABDM created for citizens, ABDM represents India's first large-scale healthcare digital public infrastructure.

It encompasses longitudinal health records, national registries of healthcare providers, facilities, and citizens, and a consent-based data exchange architecture. This infrastructure creates a strong foundation for AI integration, several applications of which are already underway. In parallel, the Ministry has deployed AI-enabled tools for disease surveillance and early detection, including AI-supported chest X-ray interpretation systems for tuberculosis screening.

### Impact of AI in Healthcare

During the AI Summit, the Government of India, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) published the India AI Impact Summit 2026 Compendium on the Real-World Impact of AI in Health and a compendium on the Real-World Impact of AI in Accessibility. The use cases span from AI in computer vision, assistive tools for disabled people, clinical decision support, predictive analysis to ambient AI for health.

Dr. Catharina Boehm, Officer-in-Charge of the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office, leading WHO's health initiatives across one of the world's most populous and diverse regions, framed the compendium's purpose plainly: to move the conversation on AI in health from promise to practice. She noted that innovation is not just confined to high-income countries – in resource-constrained settings is precisely where the most relevant ideas emerge. She emphasised that AI's transformative potential must be accompanied by strong ethical stewardship, grounding her remarks in WHO's six core principles for AI in health, from protecting human autonomy to advancing equity and accountability. In conclusion, she said AI will not replace health workers – it will empower them.

Dr. Mona Duggal, Director of ICMR's National Institute of Research and Digital Health (NIRDH), echoed this, noting the compendium represented a shift away from adapting Western solutions towards building on India's own successes. She outlined ICMR's four priorities for AI in health –

Collating quality data across research institutions

Forging private sector partnerships

Generating real-world evidence through ICMR's network of institutes

Urgently integrating health and medical professionals into the AI workforce pipeline

She observed that the pursuit of AI tools had driven a valuable secondary effect: pushing institutions to take data quality far more seriously, creating a virtuous cycle – from better data to stronger evidence to more informed policy.

The casebooks compiled real stories of impactful AI tools and systems in improving healthcare access, diagnosis speed and access, and enabling disabled people to function with ease. Some examples from the two casebooks are given below.

### Bridging the Neuroradiology Divide

Neuroradiology is focused on diagnosing and treating diseases of the brain, spine, head and neck using advanced imaging like MRIs and CT scans. Over the past 15 years, radiology workload, particularly for emergency and on-call CT imaging, including head trauma and neurovascular CT, has increased by 500%.

However, in India, expertise in the field is largely concentrated in major cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and other tier-1 cities. In the smaller cities and towns, patients must rely on general radiologists who are often swamped with high and diverse workloads, particularly during the nighttime. Such radiologists report fatigue and burnout, leading to higher errors in interpretations for critical brain imaging cases.

Scaida BrainCT system was developed in response to this problem. It is a specialised AI decision-support module intended to assist radiologists with multi-pathology brain CT analysis. The system is based on a labelled dataset derived from about 2,000 studies and tens of thousands of annotated slices validated by radiologists.

Scaida BrainCT has been used for more than 15,000 brain CT studies across more than 30 healthcare facilities in Tier-2 and Tier-3 districts. It has helped radiologists speed up interpretations of the scans. People of all ages and both genders were assisted with this system. Since the system is assistive, a radiologist signs-off on the reports. The AI system is largely assistive and does not generate final diagnosis.

This initiative exemplifies the SAHI vision of using frontier technology to make high-quality specialised care accessible and affordable, regardless of geography.

### AI-Powered Voice-First Platform for

### Independent Education and Living

In India, blind and visually-impaired citizens face persistent barriers in reading PDFs, textbooks, tables, diagrams, notices, images and official documents without another person helping them. SMARTON – through its mobile application, glasses and web application – helps them through an AI-powered, voice-first accessibility ecosystem. Using AI, combining computer vision, natural language processing and speech technologies, SMARTON also enables conversational interaction too. It is also available in 50 languages including 10 Indian languages. It is empowering over 15,000 users in participating in society and accessing education.

### The Future: Software, AI, and Genomics

The importance of diversity in health data was emphasised during a discussion on the Role of AI in Drug Discovery, where assistant professor of genetics of Harvard Medical School Jonathan Picker said that genomics has yet to fully transform daily medicine due to biological complexity. Lack of diverse genomics data leads to the development of healthcare models which are only representative of certain populations, failing in other areas of the world. Thus, AI can greatly help in the diversification of genomics data.

The AI Timeline: Within two to five years, AI is expected to extract most useful information from existing medical research.

The 100 Million Goal: To move beyond diminishing returns, the field requires genomic data from at least 100 million people.

### Governance Gap and "Duty of Care"

During the discussion on Catalysing Global Investment for Equitable and Responsible AI in Health, experts noted that while innovative tools are proliferating, successful implementation requires a holistic approach that integrates government policy with global institutional norms, with trust being the most important factor. To promote investments into AI for healthcare purposes, the technology must be trustworthy and useful for healthcare professionals.

To enable this, panelists highlighted two core priorities:

Backbone Capacity: Strategic national investments to build institutional and regulatory capacity capable of overseeing AI systems for safety, bias mitigation, data protection, and cybersecurity, tailored to local health system contexts.

"A Duty of Care": A clear commitment by developers, deployers, and governments to safeguard public trust and human dignity, ensuring that AI systems minimise harm, prevent medical errors, and are not used in ways that compromise patient safety or equity.

### Conclusion

From SAHI, to the importance of diversity in health data and trust, to the need for supportive benchmarking tools such as BODH, the healthcare discussions during the India AI Impact Summit 2026 converged on a clear and urgent message: the transformative potential of AI in healthcare can only be realised if it is built on a foundation of trust, ethics, and inclusion. Closing the diagnostic gap, eliminating algorithmic bias, and ensuring equitable access require deliberate policy choices, diverse and high-quality data, and a healthcare workforce equipped to work alongside AI.

India, with its vast and diverse population, its growing digital public infrastructure, and its wealth of medical and engineering talent, is uniquely positioned to lead this charge – not merely by adopting solutions developed elsewhere, but by building its own. The vision of #AIforAll demands nothing less than an AI ecosystem that works for every patient, in every region, regardless of income, language, or geography.

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

## Pharmacists, Paramedics vital for strengthening healthcare in J&K: Sakeena Itoo

Advises students to uphold values of compassion, patient care after entering professional field

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 06: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Friday, Friday emphasized that pharmacists and paramedics play a crucial role in strengthening the healthcare delivery system across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister, as per an official statement, made these remarks while delivering the keynote address at the National Pharmacy Education Day celebrations held at Madr-e-Meharban Campus of Health Sciences (MMCHS), Chak Bhalwal, here Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister highlighted that pharmacists and paramedics constitute an indispensable pillar of the healthcare ecosystem, ensuring safe, effective and rational treatment of patients. She noted that with rapid advancements in medical science and pharmaceutical technologies, the role of paramedics has evolved far beyond dispensing medicines and now extends to patient counselling, clinical research, drug safety monitoring and promotion of public health.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated the Government's commitment to



strengthening educational infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, adding that skilled paramedic professionals are vital for achieving universal health coverage and improving healthcare accessibility, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

"Paramedics and pharmacists act as bridge between doctors and patients. Their expertise ensures that medicines are used safely and effectively, thereby safeguarding patient health," the Minister said. She added that the Government is regularly filling vacancies in the paramedical sector, recognizing their significant role in healthcare service delivery in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister also advised students to uphold the values of compassion and patient care after entering the professional field. She emphasized that

empathy and dedication remain the most essential traits of successful healthcare professionals.

While referring to the growing menace of drug abuse in Jammu and Kashmir, Sakeena Itoo called upon all stakeholders to join hands with the Government to eradicate this social evil.

She also stressed the need for greater public awareness regarding the proper use of medicines and the dangers of self-medication. "Pharmacists and paramedics have a key responsibility in guiding patients about correct medication practices and preventing misuse of drugs," she added.

The Minister lauded the Madr-e-Meharban institution for nurturing competent professionals who contribute significantly to the healthcare sector. She appreciated the efforts of the College

in training and upskilling the students of the College in terms of the New Education Policy to improve their employability potential.

The Minister encouraged students to pursue innovation, research and ethical practices in pharmaceutical sciences, stating that the future of healthcare largely depends on the dedication and professionalism of young pharmacists.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Director of the college, Dr. R.K. Raina, elaborated on the role of the institution in strengthening pharmacy education, promoting responsible healthcare practices and improving the overall quality of healthcare services in Jammu and Kashmir.

Later, the Minister distributed certificates and prizes to winners of Poster Making and Essay Writing competitions. She also felicitated meritorious students from the passed-out batch and students who had excelled in various sports competitions.

Principal of the college, Dr. Syed Assadullah; principals of other institutions; representatives of the Pharmacy Council; faculty members; and a large number of students were also present on the occasion.

## SCERT Jammu celebrates International Women's Day



KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 6: The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) J&K, Divisional Office Jammu, organised a one-day Interaction Conference at Kisan Kendra, Talab Tillo to celebrate International Women's Day.

The programme, as per an official statement, was held under the mentorship of Director School Education Jammu and Director SCERT J&K, Dr. Naseem Javaid Chowdhary and the guidance of Joint Director SCERT Jammu Division, Prof. (Dr.) Sindhu Kapoor.

The event commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, followed by a welcome address by Associate Coordinator of the programme Monica Sharma. She highlighted the significance of celebrating women's achievements and their role in shaping society.

Addressing the gathering,

Prof. (Dr.) Sindhu Kapoor underscored the crucial role of women in educational transformation and nation-building, emphasizing that the true progress of society lies in ensuring dignity, opportunities and leadership for women.

A special highlight of the event was the presentation of the SHE Portal, reflecting SCERT's commitment towards gender equity and empowerment. The programme also featured a reflective poem by Dr. Jyoti Sudan, Academic Officer and a documentary showcasing inspiring journeys of women who have made significant contributions to society.

The conference was graced by several eminent personalities including Prof. Veena Gupta, Former Head, Department of Dogri, University of Jammu; Prof. Geetanjali Andotra Rana, young entrepreneur and others. The dignitaries were

felicitated for their exemplary contributions in their respective fields. An interactive activity titled "Heart of Emotion" encouraged participants to collectively reflect on women's empowerment and leadership.

A plenary session led by Arti Gupta, Paawan Vivek and Vivek Jandial highlighted issues of gender sensitization, inclusive growth and capacity building initiatives undertaken by SCERT J&K.

The programme also featured a cultural segment which added vibrancy to the celebration including a dance performance by Ruchi Mohan and a musical presentation by Principal Shamim Nazki.

The event was coordinated by Manu Vasudeva, Academic Officer. The technical arrangements were managed by Rakesh Chobber and Vivek Jandial. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Dr. Sanjeevani, Assistant Professor.

## Doda admin mulls formulation of Youth Engagement Plan



KT News Desk

DODA, MARCH 06: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Doda Krishan Lal Friday, chaired a meeting in the Conference Hall of DC Office Complex to discuss and formulate a Youth Engagement Plan for the district.

At the outset, the DDC, as per an official statement, reviewed the existing youth-oriented initiatives being implemented by different departments. He held a detailed discussion with the departments regarding their respective plans for organising youth engagement activities.

The concerned officers were asked to organise awareness camps and distribute pamphlets highlighting government

schemes for youth. The officers informed the chair about the youth engagement activities being conducted by their respective departments and assured that further efforts would be made to enhance youth participation across the district.

He called for organising sports activities, skill development training and career counselling sessions to actively involve young people in developmental activities.

The meeting was attended by the ADDC Roshan Lal, CPO Manesh Kumar, GM DIC Ashfaq Khanji, DSWO Zubair Ahmed, DAHO, DSHO and other concerned officers and officials. ADC Bhaderwah, CEO BDA, SDMs and other officers attended the meeting virtually.

## DC Kishtwar chairs District Telecom Committee meeting

KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, MARCH 06: A meeting of the District Telecom Committee (DTC) was held here on Friday. Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma (Chairman DTC) chaired the meeting and reviewed telecom infrastructure, associated issues in the district and action taken on directions issued in the previous meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner took a comprehensive review of the status of 4G saturation works in the district. He directed the concerned agencies to ensure timely completion of pending sites to meet connectivity standards in all uncovered areas.

While reviewing the progress on 5G street furniture mapping, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Chief Planning Officer (CPO) to clear log in issues of PM Gati Shakti portal, check the



targets assigned to the district and initiate the verification process at the earliest.

The meeting also discussed issues pertaining to State land transfer for installation of telecom towers. It was informed that a communication has been received from BSNL identifying new locations for installation of towers in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to expedite necessary formalities to facilitate the process.

While reviewing network-related grievances, the Deputy Commissioner took stock of complaints from AD Rural,

License and Service Area (LSA). He sought a detailed report on the issues raised along with recommendations/ action for early and prompt resolution of the same.

The Deputy Commissioner also reiterated the importance of strict usage of the "Call Before You Dig (CBuD)" App to prevent damage to underground telecom infrastructure. He directed the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) to follow up with Chief Engineer's office and ensure early functioning of district authority IDs, enabling use of the facility to protect the telecom infrastructure in the district.

## Livelihood, Entrepreneurship Promotion Day observed at Kathua

KT News Desk

KATHUA, MARCH 6: As part of the ongoing Women's Week campaign, the District Administration Kathua on Friday organised the Livelihood and Entrepreneurship promotion Day here at the office premises of the Chief Agriculture Officer to encourage women led enterprises.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 80 members of Self Help Groups (SHGs), besides potential agripreneurs from different parts of the district. Government departments, Self Help Groups and women entrepreneurs put up stalls showcasing their products and initiatives.

Additional District Development Commissioner Surinder Mohan Sharma

interacted with the participants. Certificates of registration under Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) were distributed among beneficiaries along with financial assistance of Rs 10,000 each to support their entrepreneurial initiatives.

Two women Krishi Udhayis were also provided Micro-ATM and biometric machines to facilitate financial transactions and strengthen their agri-business activities.

Earlier, CAO Jatinder Khajuria and experts from the Agriculture and allied departments convened interactive sessions with farmers and participants, apprising them of the government schemes being implemented by the department to promote agriculture-based livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

## 137 Battalion CRPF hosts Volleyball tournament in Udhampur

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, MARCH 06: A Volleyball Tournament under Civic Action Programme (CAP) was organised by 137 Bn, CRPF, Udhampur (J&K) with its inaugural match held on Friday, at SIKS Govt. Higher Secondary School.

Commandant M.K. Sicon; Dy. Comdts R.L. Meena and Suresh besides Resident District Volleyball Association cum

Executive Member-J&K Volleyball Association Ashok Padha; Jt. Secretary, VADU Ashok Kumar; PEM Naveen Kumar; Dy. SSO, Amit Sharma, CRPF Jawans & local people, as per an official statement, were present on this occasion.

CRPF personnel and local coaches conducted the first match between Tikri Volleyball Club and Jaganoo Volleyball Club, featuring high-energy plays, skill demonstrations and

team-building drills.

The coaches and officials provided guidance to the youth, especially on fitness, teamwork and sports discipline. They also motivated participants to adopt healthy habits, build physical strength and overcome limiting mindsets for overall well-being.

Prizes and sports equipment were distributed among Volleyball Players to promote sports and fitness.

## GMC Srinagar, Associated Hospitals mourns demise of Dr Riyaz Ahmad Magray

KT News Desk

Srinagar, MARCH 6: Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar and its associated hospitals on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the sudden and untimely demise of Dr Riyaz Ahmad Magray, describing him as a compassionate and dedicated member of the medical fraternity whose passing has left the

medical community in profound grief.

The Principal, Dean, Administrator, Heads of Departments, administrative staff, medical superintendents, and the entire medical and paramedical staff of GMC Srinagar and its associated hospitals, as per a statement expressed their profound grief and sorrow on the sad demise of Dr. Riyaz Ahmad

Magray.

"Dr. Riyaz Ahmad Magray was a compassionate and committed individual who dedicated his life to the medical fraternity. His passing is a great loss to the medical community, and he will be deeply missed," the statement read.

GMC Srinagar extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, especially to his wife, Dr Shagufta, and other

family members. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.

"The Government Medical College Srinagar and its associated hospitals mourn the loss of Dr. Riyaz Ahmad Magray, a dedicated medical professional and a kind-hearted individual. Our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones. May his soul rest in peace," the statement added.

## NABARD organises 'Grameen Bharat Mahotsav' in Jammu

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 06: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), J&K Regional Office organised "Grameen Bharat Mahotsav - A Rural Fest for Agriculture, Looms & Crafts" at Bahu Plaza, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

The 3 day Mela, which commenced Friday and will continue up to 8 March 2026.

The Mahotsav, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Finance, Shailendra Kumar, in presence of Chandrashekhar Azad, Regional Director, RBI; Dr. Shubhra Sharma, MD,

JKRLM, Vikas Mittal, General Manager/Officer In charge, NABARD J&K RO and Sanjay Gupta, Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Gramin Bank.

Shailendra Kumar visited the stalls set up by FPOs, OFPOs, SHGs and artisans. He interacted with the primary producers, artisans and farmers and appreciated their diverse range of rural products. He offered valuable suggestions to the participating FPOs, OFPOs and SHGs.

The key attraction of the Mahotsav was the wide range of stalls set up by FPOs, OFPOs, SHGs and artisans promoted and supported by NABARD and JKRLM. FPOs from Punjab, Uttar



Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh highlighted value added millets and rice products aligned with the modern nutrition trends. The exhibitors from Gujarat showcased GI tagged handicrafts with strong export potential while Himachal

Pradesh brought its signature handloom products including the renowned Kullu woollens.

Adding a strong local flavour, the artisans from Jammu & Kashmir displayed Kani and Sozini Pashmina shawls, Basohli Pashmina, Chikri

craft, saffron, walnut, almond, honey, lemongrass products and the celebrated GI tagged Mushkudji rice, offering the visitors a glimpse into the region's vibrant rural economy.

Speaking at the inaugural event, Vikas Mittal, GM/OIC, NABARD J&K, highlighted NABARD's initiatives to strengthen FPOs. He encouraged the participants to utilise the Mahotsav as a learning opportunity to understand the consumer preferences and market dynamics. He emphasized that such events enable the farmers to connect directly with retail buyers and bulk purchasers, ensuring better price realization and quality assurance

A Nukkad Natak was presented by Sargam Club Samba to promote awareness about financial literacy. The performers highlighted common types of online frauds occurring through various suspicious links. The act educated the viewers on recognizing such risks and staying cautious while using digital platforms. It effectively conveyed the importance of safe financial practices in daily life.

Dr. Shubhra Sharma, MD, JKRLM, appreciated NABARD's efforts in bringing diverse rural primary producers/artisans/farmers onto a common platform, allowing the visitors to explore and purchase authentic products from farmers and

artisans from across India. She also acknowledged NABARD's contributions towards livelihood promotion and skill development.

Chandrashekhar Azad, Regional Director, RBI, commended NABARD for promoting rural entrepreneurship through the Mahotsav. He highlighted the importance of digital financial inclusion, noting how UPI and Priority Sector are lending support to empower the FPOs, OFPOs and SHGs. He also spoke about the RBI's newly introduced Grameen Credit Score, emphasizing that it will significantly benefit the rural borrowers by improving their access to formal credit channels.

## In one year, Jammu woman IAF officer runs 7 marathons

### Emerges as inspiration for young females; balances roles of officer, athlete & mother

Yogesh

Jammu, Mar 06: Squadron Leader Neha Devi, a Jammu Indian Air Force officer, has emerged as an inspiration for young women by completing seven marathons in just one year, balancing the roles of an officer, athlete, and mother.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Neha Devi joined the Air Force Academy in July 2013 while being nearly 10 kilograms overweight.

"Within a year, through sustained effort and training, she transformed herself and was commissioned into the Indian Air Force in June 2014," defence spokesperson Lt Col Suneel Bartwal said.

By 2017, structured running and strength training had become an integral part of her routine. "Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, when organised training was disrupted, she continued to maintain fitness through home workouts," he said.

In 2021, Neha Devi participated in the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon (virtual edition) and secured the third position in her age category. She continued to feature among the top finishers in subsequent events, he said.

In 2023, she finished sixth overall in the Station Cross Country (10 km) and secured the third position overall in



the Station Unity Run (21 km), where she was the only female participant, he said.

In January 2024, while pregnant, she decided to continue exercising under medical supervision, motivated by the need to challenge the social stigma surrounding physical activity during pregnancy. "At four months pregnant, she secured second position in the TCS 10K (virtual)," he said.

Neha Devi delivered a healthy baby girl through a C-section in September 2024. "Despite the slow and painful recovery, she resumed training while balancing official duties and caring for her newborn."

Within 15 months postpartum

and without professional coaching, she completed the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon 2025 in 1 hour 35 minutes and the Kashmir Marathon 2025 in 1 hour 40 minutes, securing eighth position overall in the female category, including international athletes, he said.

Neha Devi secured third position in the Defence category at the Adani Marathon 2025 with a timing of 3 hours 42 minutes and completed a 100-km ultramarathon in 9 hours and 52 minutes, he added.

On January 24, during the 24-Hour Stadium Run in Delhi, she completed her first 100 km in 9 hours 52 minutes, narrowly missing the national

qualification mark by 22 minutes, Lt Col Bartwal said.

Within days, she competed in the Indian Navy Half Marathon on February 2, 2026, where she secured the first position among the three services and finished fourth overall in the women's open category with a time of 1 hour 32 minutes and 50 seconds.

Neha Devi now serves as an ambassador for youth and women in Jammu, motivating young girls to train, believe in themselves and break stereotypes, Lt Col Bartwal said.

"Motherhood does not limit potential, it multiplies it," she said, emphasising her message of belief and consistency. (KNO)

## Matter of great pride to serve nation: Gupta after appointment as Himachal Governor

PTI

Jammu, Mar 06: Senior BJP leader Kavinder Gupta on Friday expressed his gratitude to the President, prime minister and home minister after his appointment as the governor of Himachal Pradesh, calling the responsibility to serve the nation a matter of great pride.

Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary said, "Congratulations to Kavinder Gupta. Ladakh was a small area, and he is a capable person. From now on, people will also recognise his capabilities."

Gupta said, as the governor of Himachal Pradesh, he will uphold the dignity of the

Constitution and perform his duties with dedication, impartiality and commitment.

"It is a matter of great pride and responsibility for me to serve the nation in this important role," he said.

Gupta also expressed special thanks to President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for their continuous guidance and full support during his tenure as the lieutenant governor (LG) of Ladakh. After serving the Union territory (UT) for over eight months, he resigned from the post of the LG on Thursday.

The 66-year-old Gupta was appointed as the Ladakh LG on

July 18, 2025. He was the third LG since the UT was carved out of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019.

A senior BJP leader from Jammu, Gupta has previously served as deputy chief minister of what was formerly the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and as the speaker of the legislative assembly. He has also been the mayor of Jammu.

Vinai Kumar Saxena, the former LG of Delhi, has been appointed Ladakh's next lieutenant Governor.

Choudhary, meanwhile, said Gupta's appointment as the governor of Himachal Pradesh is a matter of pride for Jammu and Kashmir, as he is a "son of the soil".

## Future will be much more multipolar: EAM Jaishankar

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 06: The future will be much more multipolar and the era of big countries creating spheres of influence and reaching huge compacts of a sweeping nature has effectively ended, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Friday.

In an interactive session at the Raisina Dialogue, Jaishankar argued that multipolarity is here to stay.

"My sense is you're going to have a future which will be much more multipolar because no country today has hegemony over so many domains that it

is an overall hegemon," he said.

It is not just about the distribution of GDP and capabilities, and various regions of the world will be "more contributive" in different domains, he noted.

The external affairs minister made the remarks during a discussion on Finnish President Alexander Stubb's book, "The Triangle of Power".

"Multipolarity is here to stay. What we will have... is to some extent, some of the bigger countries will make temporary compacts on limited issues," he said.

"Structurally, there is not going to be some big deal between powers and the rest of

the world has to put up with it. That era is over," he noted.

Jaishankar said multipolarity is not against multilateralism.

"You can have multipolarity with multilateralism and multipolarity without multilateralism," he said.

"The success of multilateralism should not depend on the weakening of multipolarity because the weakening of multipolarity is not going to happen," he added.

Jaishankar said India has hosted the Voice of Global South meetings for the past three years as there is a new basis for a Global South platform.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Make life easy

required to start and run a business.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah conducted an in-depth review of each intervention area, seeking specific timelines from the departments concerned. He underscored that the purpose of regulations is to organise systems efficiently, not to create unnecessary procedural hurdles for the public. The Chief Minister emphasised the need for simpler, more direct processes across sectors and called for a visible reduction in red tape in the government's dealings with citizens and businesses.

The meeting took stock of a broad range of priority interventions under discussion, spanning land use, industry, education, healthcare and digital governance. The issues that came up for discussion included land use framework to ease building permissions and industrial land utilisation in rural and urban areas, removing dual licensing requirements for businesses and strengthening the role of a nodal agency for industrial development to deal with industrial approvals. The meeting also deliberated on simplifying minimum requirement norms for private educational institutions and streamlining medical practitioner registration through a unified licensing mechanism for the healthcare sector.

At the systemic level, the meeting discussed measures to strengthen digital governance infrastructure. These included establishing an auto-appeal mechanism under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA) to ensure time-bound delivery of citizen services and creating a centralised digital repository of all state acts, rules, regulations and Government Orders, along with a concurrent review to assess the relevance of various regulations from time to time. Reducing end-to-end turnaround times on the Single Window System was also highlighted as a priority area.

Concluding the meeting, the Chief Minister directed all departments to furnish measurable timelines for each reform intervention under discussion. He reiterated that easing the regulatory environment remains central to J&K's objective of attracting investment and ensuring that the progress under Phase 2 delivers tangible benefit to citizens, entrepreneurs and investors. (KNO)

### LG Sinha, CM Omar

lauded the hard work, perseverance and dedication of the successful candidates, saying that their accomplishment reflects the determination and potential of the youth of Jammu & Kashmir. He said the success of these young aspirants would inspire many more students across the Jammu and Kashmir to set high goals and pursue their dreams with commitment and sincerity.

The Chief Minister wished all the successful candidates a bright, fulfilling and distinguished career in public service, expressing hope that they would contribute meaningfully to the nation's development and governance.

### Veterinary surgeon

I mainly focused on revision, which made things comparatively easier than starting preparation from scratch," he said.

He emphasized that determination and consistency are key factors for success in competitive examinations.

"I want to tell aspiring candidates that no examination is impossible to crack. If you genuinely want to succeed and are ready to put in consistent efforts, then success will eventually come. Hard work, patience and continuity are the most important factors," Tawseef said.

Encouraging young people from Kashmir to aim high, he said the youth in the region possess immense potential but often hesitate due to the perceived difficulty of competitive examinations.

"Kashmiri youth are very talented, but sometimes they feel intimidated just by hearing the name of such examinations. That mindset needs to change. With dedication, perseverance and consistency, anyone can achieve their goals," he said, adding that if he could manage to succeed despite professional responsibilities, others could also do the same.

Meanwhile, Tawseef's father, Mohammad Ishaq Ganaie, expressed immense pride and happiness over his son's achievement.

He said Tawseef began his education at Hajad Public School Awantipora and later continued his studies at Government Higher Secondary School Noorpora Awantipora.

"He initially appeared for the NEET examination but could not qualify. Later, he pursued Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVS) and gradually started preparing for prestigious competitive examinations like UPSC," his father said.

He added that Tawseef's success has brought immense joy not only to the family but also to the entire locality.

"There is a festive atmosphere at our home today. Relatives, friends and neighbors are visiting us to congratulate Tawseef. The entire area is extremely happy and proud of his achievement," he said. (KNO)

### J&K's gubernatorial

Om Prakash Malhotra

General Om Prakash Malhotra, former Army Chief, was born in Srinagar and received his early education in the summer capital. He served as Governor of Punjab for 232 days (December 18, 1990 – August 7, 1991) and simultaneously held the charge of Administrator of Chandigarh for the same period.

Kavinder Gupta, former Deputy Chief Minister, is the latest addition to the list of Governors from J&K. During the PDP-BJP rule, Gupta also served as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. (KNO)

### Precautionary restrictions

lift curbs was taken after a review of the situation following congregation prayers.

A senior official said, "The restrictions were preventive in nature and imposed to ensure that the situation remained under control. After reviewing the ground situation following Friday prayers, it has been decided that the curbs will not continue from Saturday."

He said the situation across Kashmir remained largely peaceful and no incident was reported from any district.

Pertinently, the precautionary restrictions were imposed across Kashmir earlier this week in wake of processions and rallies that were taken out in different parts of Kashmir after the killing of Iran Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, in US-Israel strikes.

In the days that followed, security forces

maintained heightened vigil in downtown and other sensitive locations across the Valley to prevent any untoward incident.

As part of the precautionary measures, authorities had slowed down mobile internet services to 2G speed and suspended prepaid mobile calling services across Kashmir.

Officials said these steps were taken to check the spread of misinformation and prevent mobilisation that could disturb public order.

Authorities this evening restored high-speed internet services and prepaid mobile calling across the Valley after assessing the overall situation.

"With the restoration of high-speed internet and prepaid calling, normal communication services have resumed across the Valley," an official said.

Authorities said the situation is being monitored and security forces will continue to remain on alert in sensitive areas as a precautionary measure.

DGP PRABHAT, IGP BIRDI VISITS DOWNTOWN, REVIEWS SECURITY SITUATION

Earlier in the day, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat accompanied by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir V K Birdi, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Central Kashmir and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar and other officers visited downtown in Srinagar and reviewed the security situation.

DGP Prabhat, IGP Birdi and other officers assessed the security arrangements in several sensitive areas of the old city. They visited Jamia Masjid, Nowhatta, Hazratbal shrine and other pockets to take stock of the deployment of police and security personnel, an official said.

During the visit, the DGP, IGP and other senior officers interacted with officials on the ground and asked them to remain alert while ensuring smooth public movement and the peaceful conduct of religious activities, the official added.

ACT RESPONSIBLY WHILE SHARING OR PUBLISHING INFORMATION

Meanwhile, Srinagar Police issued an advisory urging media organisations, social media users and the public to act responsibly while sharing or publishing information related to the prevailing situation.

In a statement, a police spokesman asked people to avoid circulating unverified reports, speculation or rumours and ensure that information is confirmed through credible sources before dissemination.

Authorities warned that the spread of misinformation or rumours could create panic, disturb public order and affect communal harmony.

Police said legal action would be taken against individuals or groups found involved in spreading false or misleading information under relevant provisions of law. (KNO)

### Infiltration threat

(BSF) and Police have intensified surveillance and patrolling along the borders, particularly in the Samba, Jammu, Rajouri and Kupwara sectors.

"Inputs suggest that around seven launching pads across the border have been activated and a number of terrorists are believed to be present there," an official source said.

The sources said around 50 terrorists were

recently moved to some of the newly activated launching pads, while nearly 150 others are believed to be present at camps located about 10 to 20 kilometres from the LoC and the International Border.

Security agencies believe that terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed may attempt to increase infiltration in the coming weeks, the sources said.

In view of the inputs, security forces have stepped up anti-terror operations in vulnerable areas and enhanced monitoring along infiltration routes, they added.

Authorities said the situation is being closely monitored and security agencies have been directed to maintain a high level of vigilance to foil any infiltration attempts. (KNO)

### Omar interacts

tourism, public works and power in the Paddar region. A delegation of Kashmiri Migrants also met the Chief Minister and presented a memorandum of demands.

Former DDC Members Pooja Thakur and Shameem Begum also called on the Chief Minister and apprised him of various issues concerning their respective areas.

A delegation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), led by Abdul Ghani Teli, called on the Chief Minister and raised issues pertaining to the welfare and development of OBC communities.

A delegation from the Ambedkar Education Society, Jammu also met the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister heard the delegations patiently and took note of the issues raised. He assured them of his administration's commitment to public welfare and said that genuine concerns and individual grievances would be addressed on merit.

### This year's Union

the budget proposal of promotion of Agarwood in the North East, and Temperate Nut crops in the Himalayan states. The Prime Minister noted that export oriented production would lead to rural employment through processing and value addition. "If we scale high-value agriculture together, it will transform agriculture into a globally competitive sector," Shri Modi asserted.

The Prime Minister called for a unified approach involving experts, industry, and farmers to meet global branding and quality standards. He stressed the importance of setting clear goals to connect local farmers with global markets. "Discussions on all these topics will further enhance the importance of this webinar," Shri Modi remarked.

Turning to the fisheries sector, the Prime Minister stated that India is the world's second-largest fish producer. Shri Modi further highlighted that while approximately 4.5 lakh tonnes of fish are currently produced in our various reservoirs and ponds, there exists a potential for an additional 20 lakh tonnes of production. "Fisheries can become a major platform for export growth," Shri Modi remarked.

The Prime Minister emphasized the need for new business models in hatcheries, feed, and logistics to realize the potential of the Blue Economy. He encouraged strong coordination between the fisheries department and local communities. "This can become a high-value, high-impact sector for rural prosperity, and you must deliberate on this together," Shri

Modi emphasised.

The Prime Minister stated that India is the world's largest milk producer today and ranks second in egg production. He highlighted that to take this further, the focus must be on breeding quality, disease prevention, and scientific management. Shri Modi further emphasized that the health of livestock is a crucial subject, noting, "When I speak of 'One Earth, One Health,' it includes the health of livestock."

Highlighting India's self-reliance in vaccine production, the Prime Minister noted the expansion of technology under the National Gokul Mission and the availability of Kisan Credit Cards for animal husbandry farmers. The Prime Minister stated that more than 125 crore doses have already been administered to protect animals from Foot and Mouth Disease. "To encourage private investment, the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund has also been started," the Prime Minister added.

To mitigate risks, the Prime Minister advocated for crop diversification over single-crop dependency. He cited missions for edible oils, pulses, and natural farming as tools to boost the sector's strength. Shri Modi emphasized, "Therefore, we are focusing on crop diversification."

The Prime Minister reminded participants that since agriculture is a state subject, states must be inspired to fulfill their budgetary responsibilities. He called for strengthening budget provisions at the district level for maximum impact.

The Prime Minister spoke extensively on the "technology culture" in agriculture, referencing e-NAM and the development of digital public infrastructure. He noted the creation of Kisan IDs and digital land surveys as transformative steps. Shri Modi asserted, "The government places great emphasis on bringing a 'technology culture' to agriculture."

Highlighting the role of AI-based platforms and digital surveys, the Prime Minister stated that technology only yields results when it is integrated by institutions and entrepreneurs. He called for suggestions on how to effectively merge technology with traditional systems. The Prime Minister remarked, "The suggestions emerging from this webinar will play a major role in how we correctly integrate technology."

The Prime Minister reiterated the government's commitment to rural prosperity through schemes like PM Awas Yojana and PM Gram Sadak Yojana. He specifically noted the impact of Self-Help Groups on the rural economy. Shri Modi affirmed, "Our government is committed to building rural prosperity."

Discussing the 'Lakshmi Didi' campaign, the Prime Minister set a target of creating 3 crore more such successful women entrepreneurs by 2029. He sought suggestions on how to achieve this goal with greater speed. The PM stressed, "Your suggestions on how to achieve this goal even faster will be significant."

Closing his address, the Prime Minister pointed to the massive storage campaign and the need for innovation in agri-fintech and supply chains. He urged entrepreneurs to increase investment in these critical areas to energize the rural landscape. The Prime Minister concluded, "I am confident that the nectar emerging from your deliberations today will provide new energy to the rural economy."

## Focus on making Indian agri products export-oriented, globally competitive: Modi

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 06: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asked farmers to leverage India's diverse climate to increase productivity and export strength, and stressed on scaling up high-value crop produce to make the country's agri products globally competitive.

Addressing a post-budget webinar on 'Agriculture and Rural Transformation', Modi called for a "unified approach involving experts, industry, and farmers to meet global quality and branding standards", and highlighted the importance of setting clear goals to connect local farmers with global markets.

"Today the world markets are opening, and global demand is shifting... It is necessary to have more discussion on making our agriculture export-oriented. We have a diverse climate, and we must take full advantage of it. We are rich in agro-climatic zones," he said.

The prime minister noted that the export-oriented production would lead to rural employment through processing and value addition.

The Budget for 2026-27 has also focussed on high-value agriculture, including cashew, cocoa, sandalwood, Modi said, adding that the National Mission on Edible Oil and Pulses and the National Mission on Natural Farming are all



strengthening the agriculture sector.

He also highlighted the budget proposal of promotion of Agarwood in the North East, and temperate nut crops in the Himalayan states.

"If we scale high-value agriculture together, it will transform agriculture into a globally competitive sector," Modi added.

The prime minister said that today the world is becoming more conscious about health, with a strong focus on holistic healthcare and organic food.

"We must place greater emphasis on chemical-free and natural farming. Natural farming creates a

highway to reach markets across the world," he said.

Stressing that agriculture is also a strategic pillar of India's long-term development journey, he said that the government has continuously strengthened the agriculture sector.

"Nearly 10 crore farmers have received more than Rs 4 lakh crore through the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. This year's Union Budget gives a strong push to agriculture and rural transformation," Modi added.

On the fisheries sector, Modi said India is the world's second-largest fish producer with about 4.5 lakh

tonnes of fish being produced in our various reservoirs and ponds. There is a potential for an additional 20 lakh tonnes of production, he said, adding, "Fisheries can become a major platform for export growth."

The prime minister emphasised the need for new business models in hatcheries, feed, and logistics to realise the potential of the 'Blue Economy'. "This can become a high-value, high-impact sector for rural prosperity," Modi said.

To mitigate risks, the prime minister advocated for crop diversification and said that states must be inspired to fulfil their budgetary responsibilities.

Modi asserted that the government places great emphasis on bringing a 'technology culture' to agriculture, and said that technology only yields results when it is integrated by institutions and entrepreneurs. He called for suggestions on how to effectively merge technology with traditional systems.

Discussing the 'Lakhpati Didi' campaign, Modi set a target of creating 3 crore more such successful women entrepreneurs by 2029 and sought suggestions on how to achieve this goal with greater speed.

He urged entrepreneurs to increase investment in areas of storage and innovation in agri-fintech and supply chains to energise the rural landscape.

## India on verge of eliminating Maoists: Amit Shah

PTI

Mundali (Odisha), Mar 06: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asserted that the country is on the verge of eliminating Maoists by the end of this month, and said security forces will defeat those who dream of building a red corridor from Andhra Pradesh's Tirupati to Pashupati in Nepal.

Addressing a function marking the 57th Raising Day of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at Mundali in Cuttack district, he said the force acts as a catalyst for the country's economic growth by providing security to major establishments.

"Today, I want to assure the nation that the country will be Maoist-free by March 31. Our forces will defeat those who dream of building a red corridor from Tirupati to Pashupati," he said.

It will be a big achievement for the country's security forces under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to uproot Maoists from the country, Shah said.



"Our security forces have reached the expectations, and the country is now on the verge of eliminating red rebels," he said.

In order to achieve the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, as aimed by the Prime Minister, the forces have ensured internal security, the most important ingredient for the growth of a nation, the home minister said.

Noting that the CISF has been providing security to major installations, ranging from reservoirs and industries to Parliament, Shah said the force "played the role of a catalyst for the economic growth of the

country". The Union home minister emphasised that higher economic growth is achieved when "there is peace", and said, "Our security personnel have effectively implemented their resolutions to maintain industrial peace".

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Deputy Chief Ministers KV Singh Deo and Pravati Parida and Cuttack MP Bhartruhari Mahab were present at the programme.

## 'Success of PM's strategic oil diplomacy', BJP hails 30-day waiver to purchase Russian oil



PTI

New Delhi, Mar 06: After the US announced that it is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil, the BJP on Friday termed the development a success of the "strategic oil diplomacy" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and said it's a "big egg on the face of anti-India Rahul Gandhi and the Congress".

The BJP also accused the Congress and Gandhi of creating panic by spreading "fake news on oil shortage".

"Rahul Gandhi and Congress hate seeing India act with strategic restraint and strategic clarity under Prime Minister Narendra Modi," BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said in

a post on X.

Amid the escalating conflict with Iran, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Thursday, "President (Donald) Trump's energy agenda has resulted in oil and gas production reaching the highest levels ever recorded. To enable oil to keep flowing into the global market, the Treasury Department is issuing a temporary 30-day waiver to allow Indian refiners to purchase Russian oil."

"India is an essential partner of the United States, and we fully anticipate that New Delhi will ramp up purchases of US oil. This stop-gap measure will alleviate the pressure caused by Iran's attempt to take global energy hostage," Bessent said in a post on X.

This "deliberately short-term measure" will not provide significant financial benefit to the Russian government, as it only authorises transactions involving oil already stranded at sea, Bessent said.

Reacting to the development, Bhandari said, "A big egg on the face of anti-India Rahul Gandhi and Congress, which wanted to create panic by spreading fake news on 'oil shortage!'"

"Yet again India's strategic oil diplomacy under PM Narendra Modi succeeds!" the BJP spokesperson added.

## India, Finland renew MoU on environmental cooperation

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 06: India and Finland have renewed their MoU on environmental cooperation to deepen collaboration on pollution prevention and control, waste management, climate change, forests and natural resource management, Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav has said.

The renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) comes during the four-day visit of Finnish President Alexander Stubb.

"Happy to note that India has renewed the Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Cooperation signed in 2020, deepening cooperation on pollution prevention and control, waste management, climate change, forests and natural resource management through knowledge and technology cooperation," Prashan said in a post on X.

According to officials, the



renewed MoU will continue to provide a structured framework for collaboration and exchange of best practices between the two countries on, inter alia, prevention and control of air and water pollution (including remediation of contaminated soil); waste management (including hazardous waste, waste-to-energy and recycling). It will also

cover circular economy and low-carbon solutions in the use of natural resources and forests; climate change mitigation and adaptation; environmental and forest monitoring (including data management), and conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources and integrated water resources management.

## Baramati plane crash: Work on final report has started, says Union min



"As per the provisions, the preliminary report in any plane crash should be submitted within a month of the incident. In the present plane crash, the preliminary report has been submitted. With many other agencies carrying out probes, the work on the final report has now begun," he said.

PTI

Pune, Mar 06: Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said on Friday that work has begun on the final report into the Baramati plane crash that killed Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and four others.

Speaking to reporters in Pune, Mohol said that it would not be appropriate to comment on the probe until the final report is received.

"As per the provisions, the preliminary report in any plane crash should be submitted within a month of the incident. In the present plane crash, the preliminary report has been submitted. With many other agencies carrying out probes, the work on the final report has now begun," he said.

A Learjet 45 aircraft, operated by aviation company VSR Ventures, crashed near the Baramati airstrip on the morning of January 28, killing Ajit Pawar and four others.

In its 22-page preliminary report on the air tragedy, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has said that the visibility at the time of the crash was below the required level. It also flagged fading marks on the runway and the presence of loose gravel on the runway surface.

The Maharashtra Crime Investigation Department, which is also probing the matter, has said that its focus is to ascertain if sabotage or criminal negligence led to the tragedy.

On the crisis in West Asia and Indian citizens stranded in Middle East countries, Mohol said the External Affairs, Civil Aviation and Home ministries are working in coordination to bring back the stranded Indians.

"Our citizens are gradually returning to the country. Those who are still stuck, the Indian embassy authorities are working towards their stay and food," he added.

## Karnataka CM announces series of edu, welfare, infra steps for minorities

### BJP flays appeasement politics

PTI

Bengaluru, Mar 06: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday announced a series of education, welfare and infrastructure initiatives for minority communities in the state, including the establishment of new residential schools, hostels, training centres and economic empowerment programmes.

Presenting the state budget in the Assembly, he said the government would expand educational infrastructure and social support systems for minority students and communities while promoting entrepreneurship and skill development.

The chief minister said the government would increase hostel facilities for students and strengthen existing residential institutions to meet growing demand.

"Twenty-five new post-metric hostels with a strength of 150 each will be started in districts with high demand. The student



strength in existing 25 hostels will be increased by 50," he said.

Siddaramaiah announced setting up 10 Saint Shishunala Shariff Residential Schools "with CBSE curriculum" to meet the high demand for Minority Residential Schools. Rs 10 crore is provided for this purpose in the current financial year.

He added 25 new Saint Shishunala Shariff Residential Schools will be started in 2026-27.

Action is being taken to upgrade 117 Maulana Azad Model Schools and Urdu Schools as Karnataka Public Schools at a cost of Rs 600 crore. In the current year, an additional 100 schools will be upgraded under the same model at a cost of Rs 400 crore, he said.

Siddaramaiah said PUC Science and Commerce streams will be started in 25 Morarji Desai Residential Schools.

Commerce stream will

be started in 18 APJ Abdul Kalam Residential Schools.

Further, four Residential Schools will be established as Centres of Excellence to provide quality coaching for K-CET, JEE and NEET examinations to selected meritorious PUC students of Minority Residential Schools, Siddaramaiah said.

The chief minister said learning centres and citizen service centres would also be set up to promote continuous learning among communities.

## Mamata holding sit-in in Kolkata to shield infiltrators: Union min Giriraj Singh



PTI

Kolkata, Mar 06: Union Minister Giriraj Singh on Friday accused West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of holding a sit-in in the heart of the city to protect infiltrators belonging to the minority community.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme, Singh alleged that the Trinamool Congress government would soon be voted out of power and warned "partisan state government officials and lumpens sheltered by the TMC" to mend

their ways or face consequences.

"Banerjee is only interested in saving the infiltrators belonging to the Muslim community, which constitutes the bulk of her vote bank. She should be ashamed that she is holding a sit-in protest in Esplanade area to save infiltrators, with whose help she managed to win the previous elections. But not any more," the senior BJP leader said.

He claimed that the Rs 15 lakh-crore central grant given to the state had been gobbled up by TMC functionaries, "who have built palatial homes and

changed from cycle to luxury four wheelers in 15 years."

"From 25 per cent earlier, the industrial growth has come down to three per cent as the children born in the state over the past 15 years have a burden of Rs 80,000 crore on their heads," he alleged.

Singh, the Union Textiles Minister, said both the CPI(M) and the TMC had encouraged "goon-daism" in the state.

"Muscle flexing and intimidation by the TMC will not succeed anymore as the BJP will counter such strong-arm tactics," he said.

## Trump urges Iranian Kurds to attack Iran as war widens

REUTERS

Dubai/Washington, Mar 06: US President Donald Trump encouraged Iranian Kurdish forces in Iraq to launch attacks against Iran as the Middle East conflict widened, with Azerbaijan warning it would retaliate for being targeted by Iranian missiles.

Israel on Friday said it had started a "broad-scale" wave of attacks against infrastructure targets in Tehran, as Gulf cities came under renewed bombardment by Iran.

The seven-day war has now seen Iran target Israel, the Gulf states, Cyprus, Turkiye and Azerbaijan, and spread to the Indian Ocean off Sri Lanka where a US submarine sank an Iranian naval ship.

On the possibility of the Iranian Kurdish forces entering Iran, Trump told Reuters on Thursday: "I think it's wonderful that they want to do that, I'd be all for it."

Two Iranian drone attacks targeted an Iranian opposition camp in Iraqi Kurdistan on Thursday, security sources said.

Iranian Kurdish militias have consulted with the United States in recent days about whether, and how, to attack Iran's security forces in the western part of the country, according to three sources with knowledge of the matter.

The Iranian Kurdish coalition of groups based on the Iran-Iraq border in the semi-autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan has been training to mount such an attack in hopes of weakening the country's military,



as the United States and Israel pound Iranian targets with bombs and missiles. Trump, speaking with Reuters in a telephone interview, also said the United States must have a role in deciding who will be the next leader of Iran after airstrikes killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last week.

"We're going to have to choose that person along with Iran. We're going to have to choose that person," he said. US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Thursday that the US was not expanding its military objectives in Iran, despite what Trump said about choosing the country's next leader.

"There's no expansion in our objectives. We know exactly what we're trying to achieve," he said. The attack on Iran is a major political gamble for the Republican president, with opinion polls showing little support and Americans concerned about the rise in gasoline prices caused by

disruption to energy supplies. Trump dismissed that concern. Shares on Wall Street fell on Thursday, weighed by surging oil prices, as the economic impact of the campaign intensified, with countries around the world cut off from a fifth of global supplies of oil and liquefied natural gas and air transport still facing chaos and global logistics increasingly snarled.

Azerbaijan prepares to retaliate. Azerbaijan was preparing unspecified retaliatory measures on Thursday after it said four Iranian drones crossed its border and injured four people in the Nakhchivan exclave.

"We will not tolerate this unprovoked act of terror and aggression against Azerbaijan," President Ilham Aliyev told a meeting of his Security Council.

Iran, which has a significant Azeri minority, denied it targeted its neighbor. Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah militia warned Israeli residents to

evacuate towns within 5 km (3 miles) of the border between the countries in a message posted on its Telegram channel in Hebrew early on Friday.

"Your military's aggression against Lebanese sovereignty and safe citizens, the destruction of civilian infrastructure and the expulsion campaign it is carrying out will not go unchallenged," Hezbollah said.

UU munitions full. Hegseth and Admiral Brad Cooper, who leads US forces in the Middle East, said during a briefing about operations that the US has enough munitions to continue its bombardment indefinitely.

"Iran is hoping that we cannot sustain this, which is a really bad miscalculation," Hegseth told reporters at Central Command headquarters in Florida. "Our munitions are full up and our will is ironclad."

The Pentagon earlier this week said the military campaign, known as Operation Epic Fury, is focused on destroying Iran's offensive missiles, missile production and navy, while not allowing Tehran to have a nuclear weapon.

Cooper said the US had now hit at least 30 Iranian ships, including a large drone carrier that he said was the size of a World War Two aircraft carrier.

He added that B-2 bombers had in the past few hours dropped dozens of 2,000 penetrator bombs targeting deeply buried ballistic missile launchers, and that bombings were also targeting Iran's missile production facilities.

## Samson among eight nominees for T20WC Player of the Tournament announced by ICC



PTI

Dubai, Mar 06: In-form India opener Sanju Samson figured in the eight-man shortlist for the T20 World Cup Player of the Tournament announced by the ICC on Friday. The other nominees are England all-rounder Will Jacks, Pakistan opener Sahibzada Farhan, South Africa's pacer Lungi Ngidi and captain Aiden Markram, New Zealand's all-rounder Rachin Ravindra and batter Tim Seifert, and American bowler Shadley van Schalkwyk.

Samson, who did not play in the early part of the tournament, lit up the T20 World Cup with consecutive player-of-the-match performances.

The opener smacked a 42-ball 89 against England in the semifinals to be the hero of India's seven-run win on Thursday. Before that, his 50-ball 97 laid the foundation of the defending champions' five-wicket win over the West Indies

in a virtual quarterfinal.

The wicketkeeper-batter has so far amassed 232 runs at an average of 77.33 and a strike rate of 201.73 in four matches that he had played in the tournament.

Jacks has been instrumental in his team winning six of their eight matches at the T20 World Cup. He won four player-of-the-match honours, and has scored 226 runs and picked up nine wickets from eight matches.

Farhan made 383 runs in six innings to record the most runs scored in a single edition of a T20 World Cup. He also became the first player to score two centuries at a single edition of the tournament as he scored a hundred each against Sri Lanka and Namibia.

With 12 wickets from seven matches at an economy rate of 7.19, Ngidi proved to be the vital cog in South Africa's pace battery and was their most consistent fast bowler.

## Axar going to be one of India's greatest players: Gavaskar

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 06: Former captain Sunil Gavaskar foresees Axar Patel becoming one of India's greatest players thanks to his all-round skills and "cricketing intelligence", which was on display during two "unbelievable" fielding efforts in the T20 World Cup semifinal win over England.



Axar got rid of the dangerous Harry Brook and Will Jacks in two different yet important phases of the game, which India won by seven runs in Mumbai on Thursday night.

The India vice-captain ran 24m backwards from the cover position to pull off a stunning catch off a slow-cutter from Jasprit Bumrah to dismiss Brook inside powerplay.

His second act of brilliance came in the 14th over when Jacob Bethell got out. It was a wide full toss from Arshdeep Singh that Jacks sliced towards deep point and Axar scampered to his left to catch the ball before relaying it to Shivam Dube as he crossed the ropes.

"Axar's catch to dismiss Brook was unbelievable.

Brook can take the game away and you have to grab every chance to get his wicket. Axar did that. He ran 24m away from his fielding spot, kept his eyes on the ball, balanced himself, and took the catch. Unbelievable stuff," Gavaskar said on Star Sports.

"He also played a key role in Will Jacks' dismissal. The Bethell-Jacks partnership was taking the game away. But Axar ran to his left, grabbed the ball, and smartly passed it to Shivam Dube. That shows great cricketing intelligence.

"At the highest level, temperament separates the greats from the good. With his batting and bowling, Axar is going to be one of India's great players," the

former batting great added.

Gavaskar said Axar is doing well to fill the void left by the T20 International retirement of Ravindra Jadeja. "We had Ravindra Jadeja before him and Axar is filling that void well. His bowling needs a little more polish. That will come with experience. His line, length, and speed are improving every year.

"The vice-captaincy means he is thinking about everyone's game, not just his own. That is great for his growth," said the former India captain, he said.

Peerless Bumrah Gavaskar was also effusive in his praise for "once in a century bowler" Jasprit Bumrah who stifled England towards the fag end of the run chase.

## Indonesia to ban social media for children under 16



AP

Jakarta, Mar 06: Indonesia will ban social media for children under 16, Communication and Digital Affairs Minister Meutya Hafid said Friday.

Hafid in a statement to media said that she just signed a government regulation that will mean children under the age of 16 can no longer have accounts on high-risk digital platforms, including YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Threads, X, Bigo Live and Roblox.

## Japan confirms new highly pathogenic bird flu outbreak

IANIS

Tokyo, Mar 06: Japan's agriculture ministry has confirmed an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza at a poultry farm in Hokkaido, marking the northern prefecture's fourth case and the country's 21st outbreak this season.

The affected farm, located in the town of Abira, keeps about 190,000 chickens, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said in a statement on Thursday.

Local authorities were notified by the farm on Wednesday. A rapid avian influenza test conducted the same day returned a positive result, which was confirmed by genetic testing the following day.

All chickens at the farm will be culled, incinerated,

and buried to prevent further spread of the virus.

Japan's avian influenza season typically runs from autumn until the following spring, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to the World Health Organization, Avian influenza A(H5N1) is a subtype of influenza virus that infects birds and mammals, including humans in rare instances. The goose/Guangdong-lineage of H5N1 avian influenza viruses first emerged in 1996 and have been causing outbreaks in birds since then. Since 2020, a variant of these viruses belonging to the H5 clade 2.3.4.4b has led to an unprecedented number of deaths in wild birds and poultry in many countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. In 2021, the virus spread to North America, and in

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# رمضان المبارك

1447 H / 2026 CE

وقت افطار	اعتتام سحری	رمضان المبارک	تاریخ
06:34 PM	05:31 AM	16	06
06:34 PM	05:30 AM	17	07
06:35 PM	05:28 AM	18	08
06:36 PM	05:27 AM	19	09
06:37 PM	05:26 AM	20	10
06:38 PM	05:25 AM	21	11
06:38 PM	05:24 AM	22	12
06:39 PM	05:23 AM	23	13
06:40 PM	05:20 AM	24	14
06:41 PM	05:19 AM	25	15
06:42 PM	05:18 AM	26	16
06:42 PM	05:16 AM	27	17
06:43 PM	05:15 AM	28	18
06:44 PM	05:14 AM	29	19
06:45 PM	05:12 AM	30	20

وقت افطار	اعتتام سحری	رمضان المبارک	تاریخ
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06:22 PM	05:48 AM	2	20
06:23 PM	05:47 AM	3	21
06:24 PM	05:46 AM	4	22
06:24 PM	05:45 AM	5	23
06:25 PM	05:44 AM	6	24
06:26 PM	05:42 AM	7	25
06:27 PM	05:41 AM	8	26
06:28 PM	05:40 AM	9	27
06:29 PM	05:39 AM	10	28
06:30 PM	05:38 AM	11	01 MAR
06:31 PM	05:37 AM	12	02
06:32 PM	05:36 AM	13	03
06:33 PM	05:34 AM	14	04
06:33 PM	05:33 AM	15	05

**DUA FOR SEHRI**  
وَيَصُومُ عِدَّ تَوَيْتٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ  
I intend to keep the fast for tomorrow in the month of Ramadan

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

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