

# Good Morning Kashmir

15th Year Of Publication

Office of LG J&K @OfficeOfLGJandK

*On the holy occasion of Surya Saptami, I paid my respectful obeisance to Lord Shri Martand at Shri Martand Surya Temple, Paloura, Jammu. Prayed for the peace, progress and prosperity of the people.*

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## Pak Quadcopters Found Hovering Near LoC In Poonch



JAMMU- Army troops guarding the Line of Control (LoC) on Friday opened fire to bring down Pakistani quadcopters at two different places in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said.

However, the flying objects returned to the Pakistan side after briefly hovering over the

## Admin On Toes Weatherman Predicts Heavy Snowfall From Today



**OWAIS GUL**

SRINAGAR: Amid the rising day temperature, the Jammu and Kashmir would likely experience a fresh wet-spell as the weatherman here has forecasted light to moderate snowfall from February 17 to 20th.

In the meantime, the government has also started readying arrangements to avert disruption of utilities due to snow.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that there is a possibility of heavy to very heavy snowfall over middle and higher reaches of Kupwara, Baramulla, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Budgam and South Kashmir districts from February 19-20.

In Kashmir, Ahmad said on Feb 17, weather conditions are expected to remain partly to generally cloudy with possibility of light snow at isolated higher reaches towards late night.

On Feb 18, he said there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places with heavy snowfall over isolated higher reaches of North, Northwestern, Central and South Kashmir.

On February 19-20, Ahmad said there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow at most places of plains & lower reaches while the middle and higher reaches of Kupwara, Baramulla, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Budgam and South Kashmir districts would experience heavy to very heavy snowfall.

On Feb 21, he said there is a possibility of intermittent light to moderate snowfall at many places till afternoon, late afternoon and gradual improvement thereafter.

In Jammu region, he said there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow over higher reaches with

## PM Modi To Launch 209 Projects Worth Rs 3161 Cr For J&K



**AGENCIES**

JAMMU: Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi will inaugurate or lay the foundation of 209 projects worth over Rs 3,161 crore in Jammu and Kashmir on February 20, the Union territory administration said on Friday.

These projects will upgrade infrastructure, strengthen service delivery systems, general employment opportunities and spur progress and prosperity in the Union territory.

The prime minister will inaugurate 85 projects and lay the foundation of 124 projects at an event at the M A Stadium in Jammu at 11 am on February 20.

Modi is also scheduled to address a public rally, his second in the region after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. Earlier on April 24, 2022, he had addressed a rally in Palli Panchayat in Samba district.

The Union territory administration published a full-page advertisement in some leading newspapers on the event, carrying the pictures of both Modi and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha with a caption "Viksit Bharat Viksit Jammu Kashmir Aman aur Tarakki ki Nai Tasveer" (a new phase of peace and progress).

The prime minister will inaugurate seven grid stations, three receiving stations and three transmission line projects in Jammu, Pulwama, Baramulla, Srinagar, Budgam, Ramban and Samba districts, 12 road projects and three bridges completed at a cumulative cost of Rs 184.19 crore.

He will also inaugurate five common effluent treatment plants in Samba, an intelligent traffic management system in Srinagar city, modernisation of Narwal fruit mandi in Jammu, sewage treatment plants, transit accommodation 244 flats for Kashmiri migrants at two locations in Ganderbal and Kupwara in Kashmir Valley, drug testing laboratory in Kathua, and degree college buildings infrastructure at

## PM's Visit Will Give New Wings To J&K: Devender Singh Rana



JAMMU: Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana Friday exuded confidence that the ensuing visit of Prime Minister Yashasvi Narendra Modi would give new wings to J&K which is already on a path of peace, progress and prosperity with equitable

## Security Heightened In J&K

SRINAGAR- Security has been heightened in Kashmir valley ahead of Prime Minister Narendra

Modi's visit to Jammu next week. A top police official said that the security arrangements across Jammu and Kashmir have been tightened to ensure there is no untoward incident ahead of February 20 when the Prime Minister arrives.

"Besides upgradation of vigil on the borders, the security forces are patrolling the highways and other vulnerable spots, from the security point of view", the officer said, adding, "frisking has also been intensified in many south districts"

## Houseboat Owners Demand Rehabilitation To Safer Places



**REHAN QAYOOM MIR**

SRINAGAR: The Houseboat Association of Kashmir on Friday welcomed the revival of water transport but they are demanding the rehabilitation of already deployed houseboats in Jhelum river to other safer places.

Pakhtoon added that the houseboats in Jhelum from Rajbagh to Lal Mandi stretch are not in the condition to handle the high and continuous tide which will be generated by the motor-

## LG Sinha Pays Obeisance At Shri Martand Surya Temple Paloura

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: On the holy occasion of Surya Saptami, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Friday paid obeisance to Lord Shri Martand at Shri Martand Surya Temple, Paloura, Jammu.

He participated in the Mahayaga organised by Shri Martand Tirath Trust and prayed for the peace, progress and prosperity of one and all.

The Lt Governor interacted with the people and extended his hearty greetings on the auspicious occasion.

Since time immemorial Jammu Kashmir is known as the land of spirituality and one of



the main centres of learning and knowledge in the country. It has always promoted inclusive cultural ecosystem and kept alive time-tested traditional wisdom, the Lt Governor said.

## e-office SED Directs To Replace Physical Tasks In Workplaces

**AGENCIES**

SRINAGAR: School Education has ordered to replace physical tasks with electronic ones by switching over to e-office mode by March-31 at all levels to CEO level and April 30 at zonal and cluster head level respectively.

Administrative Secretary School Education Department Piyush Singla had ordered all the subordinate offices of the School Education Department to switch over to e-office mode with immediate effect.

Singla in a circular issued on Thursday directed that the process of switching over to e-office at directorate level to CEO level shall be completed before March 31 and upto zonal level, cluster head level by or before April-30 respectively.

"Accordingly, with a view to ensuring a complete switch over to e-office mode, from physical files and Daks, it is enjoined upon all the subordinate offices of School Education

## Major Changes 'Education Sector Sees Promising Developments Post 2019'



**RIYAZ BHAT**

SRINAGAR: Authorities have claimed that from the year 2010 to 2019 only 819 civil works in schools under the Capex budget were completed in the erstwhile state while after 2019 at least 2339 works under the UT Capex budget were completed.

The official documents accessed, wherein the authorities have made comparison of major works and initiatives taken before and after 2019 reveal that prior to 2019, at least 819 civil works in schools were completed. However, after 2019 at least 2339 civil works were completed.

The documents further reveal that under the erstwhile centrally sponsored schemes including SSA, RMSA and Samagra Shiksha, at least 9635 civil works in schools were completed from 2004-2019 and post 2019, at least 12,600 such works were completed. "342 Spill over works also got completed."

Earlier, this week KNO has reported a series of stories wherein the concerned authorities had compared the works and developments in Schools before and after 2019.

Earlier, we reported that the government had claimed that prior to 2019, schools in Jammu and Kashmir were witnessing a deficit of average number of working academic days due to 'unrest' here.

However, in the

## Sinthan Top Witnesses Surge In Tourist Footfall



**JAHANGEER GANAIE**

ANANTNAG: The scenic spots in the Kokernag area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district witnessed an increase in tourist arrivals during January and February this year, officials said.

According to reports obtained, the delayed snowfall in prominent tourist destinations like Sinthan Top in Kokernag attracted a considerable number of tourists.

In January 2022, only 440 visitors explored Sinthan Top and Daksum, whereas in January 2023, the number rose to 1,364. However, this year, the influx surged significantly to 14,877 tourists in January alone.

Of these visitors, 13,328 were domestic tourists, 1,519 were locals, and 30 were foreign tourists.

### MOVIES Watch-List

Saturday 17 Feb

**BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW**

Call 95416 13868 For assistance with tickets

### INOX CINEMA SHIVPORA SRINAGAR

**FIGHTER (HINDI)**  
11:45AM (U/A)

**TERI BAATON MEIN AISA ULJHA JIYA (HINDI)**  
11:20AM, 06:30PM (U/A)

**MADAME WEB**  
11:00AM, 04:00PM, 06:30PM (ENG)  
01:30PM (HINDI) (U/A)

**MOHABBATEIN (HINDI)**  
02:20PM (U)

**ANIMAL (HINDI)**  
05:40PM (A)





Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

## Young Population

**W**hat an amazing world we live in! The governments in countries like South Korea, Japan and Italy are giving monetary incentives to their population for having more than one child. Italy in particular is a case to ponder. The ageing population of the country is wreaking havoc with its demography and economy both. Same goes for a lot of first world countries - almost every one is headed that way.

The world is looking towards countries like Bangladesh, India, Nigeria and Indonesia which have youthful population and a great labour force. Our country in particular is a country with a huge army of English-knowing youth which gives us a due and definite edge. Our country is poised to become a ten trillion dollar economy by as early as 2034. Some estimates even suggest that this magical figure may be achieved even before 2034. The 20 something youth will have to chip in and play a pivotal part in this. By not focussing on demography the first world countries made a huge mistake. Ageing population is not a revenue generating population but instead a huge chunk of GDP has to be incurred on their welfare. There are lesser number of revenue generators and increasingly greater part of population seeking benefits and freebies. This can wreak havoc with any economy no matter how strong that economy is. All eyes are on Indian economy. Manufacturing sector is one sector which can shape the course of Indian economy. How this youthful population can be skilled and then employed at various stages of production is of great significance. Our country needs human resources and skill management institutions which can help channelised the energies of these millions and millions of youth in the right direction. We can hope and pray that the youth of the country should come forward to improve the standard of country's economy.

## Deep Dive

# Pakistan - An Ailing Democracy



DR. RIZWAN RUMI

**F**or decades, Pakistan has grappled with the elusive dream of stable democracy. Despite periodic transitions of power, the nation's democratic journey has been marred by corruption, mis-governance, and a pervasive sense of disillusionment among its populace. As we dissect the layers of Pakistan's democratic experiment, it becomes evident that the roots of failure run deep, intertwined with historical legacies, political dynamics, and societal challenges.

### Historical Context and Democratic Oscillation

Pakistan's political landscape has been marked by a seesaw between military rule and civilian democracy. The military, often viewed as a bastion of stability, has intermittently intervened in governance under the guise of restoring order and combating corruption. However, each military junta, despite promising reform, has perpetuated a cycle of authoritarianism, stifling dissent and curtailing civil liberties.

Conversely, civilian governments, heralded as beacons of hope for democratic consolidation, have repeatedly faltered under the weight of systemic corruption and patronage politics. The transition from military to civilian rule, while symbolically significant, has failed to translate into substantive change, leaving the electorate disillusioned and disenchanted.

### Dynastic Politics and Patronage Networks

A pervasive feature of Pakistani politics is dynasticism, where political power is inherited and perpetuated within elite families. Dynastic politicians, entrenched in patronage networks, wield disproportionate influence over electoral outcomes, perpetuating a cycle of nepotism and cronyism.

The nexus between dynastic politics and patronage extends beyond rural constituencies, infiltrating urban cen-



ters and perpetuating a culture of clientelism. While the specter of dynasticism looms large, recent shifts in urban demographics and redistricting efforts offer a glimmer of hope for diminishing its stranglehold on Pakistan's political landscape.

### Erosion of Democratic Institutions

The failure of democracy in Pakistan is compounded by the erosion of key democratic institutions, including the judiciary and electoral bodies. The judiciary, entrusted with upholding the rule of law and ensuring accountability, has often succumbed to external pressures, compromising its independence and integrity. Similarly, electoral bodies, tasked with overseeing free and fair elections, have been marred by allegations of rigging and manipulation, undermining the legitimacy of electoral outcomes and eroding public trust in the democratic process.

### Societal Challenges and Democratic Deficits

Beyond institutional malaise, Paki-

stan grapples with deep-seated societal challenges that undermine democratic norms and values. A burgeoning middle class, often hailed as a bulwark against democratic backsliding, remains fragmented and politically disengaged, failing to mobilize effectively against entrenched power structures.

Moreover, the proliferation of social media platforms has exacerbated divisions within society, perpetuating echo chambers and echo chambers and facilitating the spread of misinformation. The youth, disillusioned by the failures of governance and disilluminated by the failures of governance and marginalized by traditional power structures, are susceptible to radicalization and extremism.

### Toward a Path Forward

The failure of democracy in Pakistan is not a foregone conclusion but rather a call to action for meaningful reform and renewal. A robust and independent judiciary, bolstered by constitutional safeguards, is essential for upholding the rule of law and ensuring accountability. Similarly,

electoral reforms aimed at enhancing transparency and inclusivity are paramount for restoring public trust in the democratic process. Civil society, buoyed by grassroots activism and civic engagement, must serve as a watchdog against abuse of power and advocate for the rights of marginalized communities.

Above all, the success of democracy in Pakistan hinges on a collective commitment to democratic values and principles, transcending narrow political interests and personal agendas. Only through inclusive dialogue and genuine consensus-building can Pakistan chart a course toward democratic renewal and national reconciliation. The failure of democracy in Pakistan is a multifaceted challenge that demands collective action and unwavering resolve. As the nation grapples with its democratic deficits, the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable future remains within reach, anchored in the resilience and determination of its people.

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## Ahlan Modi - A Message Of Friendship And Mutual Respect



PROF. JASIM MOHAMMAD

**P**rime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at the 'Ahlan Modi' conclave in Abu Dhabi was a masterpiece of diplomacy and outreach to the Indian diaspora and the UAE leadership. Modi, who is on a two-day visit to the UAE, addressed a crowd of over 50,000 people at the Zayed City sports stadium, where he received a rousing welcome and chants of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Ahlan Modi'.

The entire speech was a blend of emotion, gratitude, pride, vision and a powerful message of unity and harmony. In an era where global dynamics are increasingly influenced by economic partnerships, technological advancements, and cultural exchanges, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent address in Abu Dhabi emerges as a seminal moment, which elucidates the multifaceted nature of India's foreign policy under his leadership.

The ties between India and the UAE can be traced back to the ancient times, when the Indus Valley Civilization had trade and cultural links with the Mesopotamian and Arabian civilizations. The trade and cultural exchange continued through the medieval and early modern periods, when the Arab traders, merchants, and sailors visited the Indian ports and cities, and the Indian traders, merchants, and sailors visited the Arabian ports and cities. The trade and cultural exchange also involved the exchange of goods, ideas, religions, languages, and people. The trade and cultural exchange also led to the establishment of Indian communities in the Ara-



bian Peninsula, especially in the coastal areas of the present-day UAE. The Indian communities played an important role in the economic and social development of the region, and also contributed to the cultural diversity and harmony of the region.

The India-UAE relationship is one of the most important and multifaceted bilateral relationships in the region and the world. The two countries share historical, cultural, and civilizational ties that date back to centuries. Both countries also have strong economic, energy, security, and people-to-people linkages that have grown exponentially in the last decade. Both countries have elevated their bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership, and have signed several agreements and MoUs in various sectors, including energy, defence, trade, investment, space, and culture. The two countries have also enhanced their cooperation on various regional and global issues, such as counter-terrorism, maritime security, climate change, and renewable energy.

However, During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure, the relationship between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and India has witnessed significant growth and strengthening across various domains. Prime Minister Modi's proactive diplomatic outreach and emphasis on economic diplomacy have played a pivotal role in fostering closer ties between the two nations. The UAE has emerged as a key strategic part-

ner for India, particularly in the realms of trade, investment, and security cooperation. High-level visits and exchanges between leadership from both countries have served to deepen mutual trust and understanding.

The burgeoning relationship between India and the UAE, as depicted in Modi's speech, holds significant implications for the geopolitical landscape of the Global South. It exemplifies a model of south-south cooperation that is based on mutual respect, shared cultural values, and a joint commitment to economic growth and technological advancement. Under Modi's leadership, India is increasingly seen as a pivotal player in the Global South, forging partnerships that challenge the traditional hegemony of the Global North and advocating for a more equitable global order. This approach not only elevates India's status on the world stage but also offers a blueprint for other nations in the Global South seeking to navigate the complexities of 21st-century diplomacy.

The speech of Narendra Modi at the 'Ahlan Modi' event was a remarkable example of how a leader can use rhetoric and diplomacy to inspire and influence the audience, and to project India's image as a rising and responsible power in the region and the world. His visionary leadership has not only strengthened India-UAE relations but also redefined India's role in the global arena, particularly within the Global South. As India continues to

ascend as a global power, Modi's strategic foresight and emphasis on soft power, technological innovation, and cultural exchange will undoubtedly continue to shape its trajectory on the world stage. In this era of geopolitical shifts and evolving international relations, Modi's approach offers valuable lessons in the art of diplomacy, underscoring the importance of building relationships that are rooted in mutual respect, understanding, and shared aspirations for a prosperous future.

A notable aspect of Modi's leadership, as highlighted in his speech, is his recognition of the Indian diaspora as an integral part of India's global narrative. By acknowledging their contributions and celebrating their successes, Modi demonstrates a profound understanding of the diaspora's potential in strengthening India's ties with the world. This approach not only enhances India's soft power but also instils a sense of pride and belonging among Indians worldwide, further solidifying his reputation as a leader who values and uplifts his citizens, irrespective of where they reside.

Moreover, Modi's adept utilization of cultural diplomacy during his address is a strategic manoeuvre that underscores the essential role of cultural ties in cementing diplomatic relationships. The strategic partnership between India and the UAE, enriched by Modi's visit, is a clear indication of India's emerging role as a key player in the global arena. The comprehensive strategic partnership, covering a wide array of sectors including energy, defence, trade, and culture, not only amplifies the bilateral relationship but also sets a precedent for India's future diplomatic endeavours. This partnership is a reflection of Modi's broader vision for India - a vision of a nation that is not just a regional power but a global influencer, capable of shaping international policies and contributing to global peace

and stability.

Prime Minister Modi's focus on economic, energy, and technological collaboration with the UAE further highlights his pragmatic approach to harnessing the benefits of international cooperation for national development. By aligning with the UAE, a pivotal energy partner, and engaging in technological collaborations, Modi is steering India towards becoming a hub of innovation and sustainable growth. This strategic alignment with the UAE's advanced technological and energy sectors is indicative of Modi's foresight in leveraging international partnerships to fuel India's growth trajectory and to ensure its energy security.

Moreover, Modi's emphasis on counter-terrorism and maritime security cooperation with the UAE resonates with his commitment to ensuring regional and global peace. This aspect of the bilateral relationship is crucial, considering the strategic geopolitical location of both nations. By strengthening ties in these critical areas, Modi is not only safeguarding national interests but also contributing to the stability of the region.

In essence, the entire address was a holistic showcase of his diplomatic acumen, visionary leadership, and the strategic depth of India's foreign policy. His ability to intertwine the threads of cultural diplomacy, economic cooperation, and shared security concerns into the fabric of India-UAE relations exemplifies a nuanced understanding of international relations. As India positions itself more assertively on the global stage, Modi's approach to diplomacy—rooted in mutual respect, cultural appreciation, and strategic collaboration—offers invaluable insights into the evolving dynamics of global leadership and international cooperation.

*Author is Professor in Comparative Literature and the Chairman of Centre for Narendra Modi Studies (CNMS), New Delhi. He can be mailed at modistudies@gmail.com*

# 149 Experts Call To Find All TB To Stop TB



**SHOBHA SHUKLA  
BOBBY RAMAKANT**

**O**ne hundred and forty nine delegates of 78th National Conference of Tuberculosis and Chest Diseases (NATCON) have endorsed a global call to find all TB to stop TB, which has 1 key ask: Stop missing TB cases, by taking 2 actions:

Replace smear microscopy 100% with WHO recommended molecular tests as soon as possible, along with a paradigm shift from a lab-centric to a fundamentally people-centric model to find TB, leaving no one behind.

Find the missing millions! Screen everyone (and not just those with TB symptoms) in high burden settings with WHO recommended screening tools and confirm those with presumptive TB using molecular tests.

### Break the chain of TB transmission

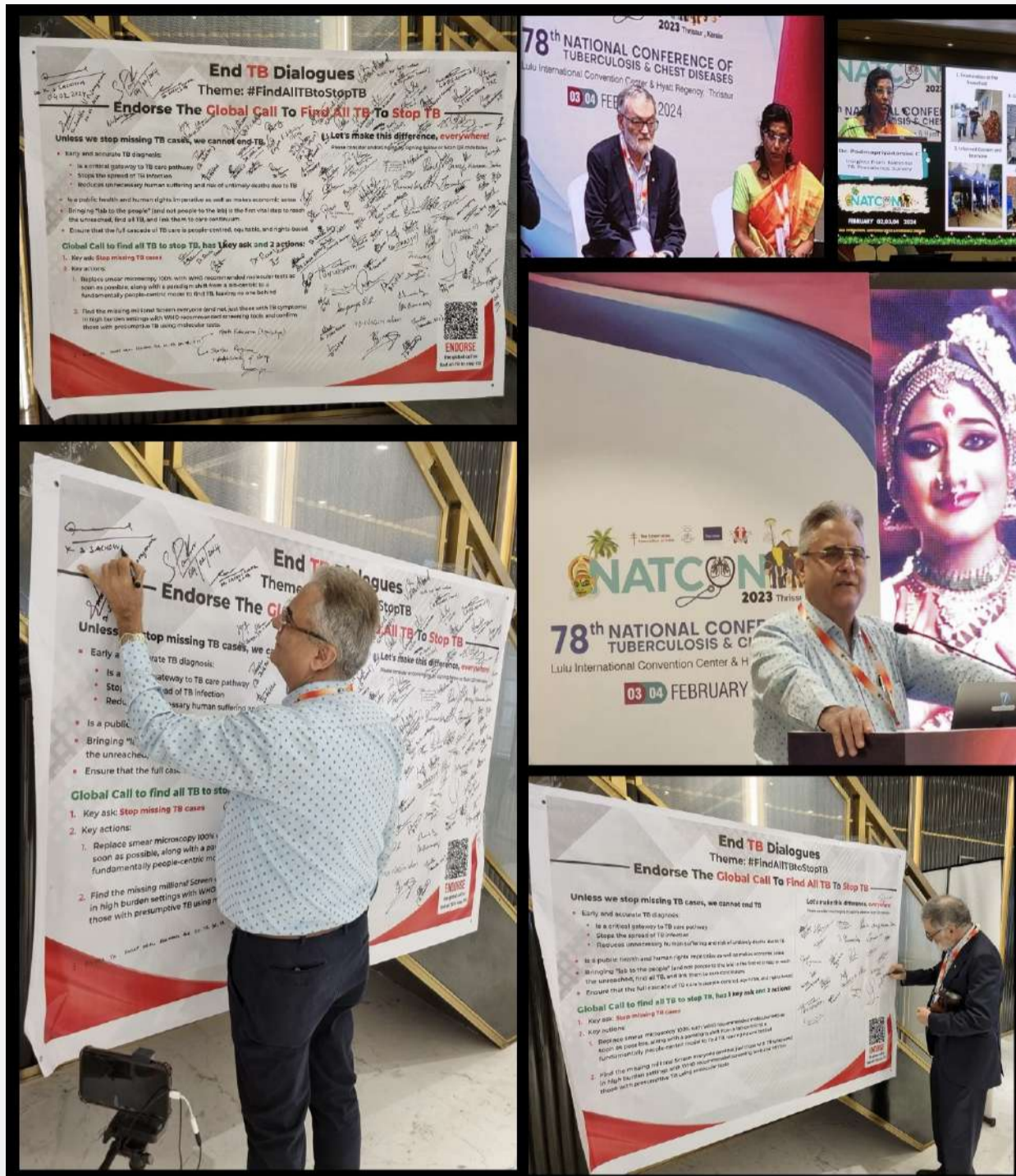
Injustice and inequality mars global health too. On one hand we have few countries that have broken the chain of TB infection transmission but on the other hand we have many high TB burden countries which have failed to stop the spread of TB infection, said Professor (Dr) Guy Marks, noted respiratory medicine expert

**Dr Guy Marks had visited NIRT-ICMR and posted on X: "As prevalence survey shows 55% of prevalent, microbiologically confirmed TB do not report symptoms, this will require annual mass screening, regardless of symptoms, with aim of finding at least 80% of prevalent infectious cases."**

and scientist from Australia, and President and interim Executive Director of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union).

He added: "TB is a communicable disease. There are 7 ways we can interrupt the cycle of being reinfected, out of which most effective way is to find all and treat all TB."

Dr Guy Marks shared an important study done in Ca Mau, Viet Nam where they screened everyone for TB (not just those with symptoms), and followed up with linkage to TB treatment and care for those who were found with the disease. TB rates declined by 72% in a four-years period. In communities where the TB rates declined in the adult population, TB rates halved among children too. "We need to break the chain of transmission," stressed Prof Guy Marks. "Find all (or nearly all) the TB cases. Most people with TB are not in high risk groups," he said.



"Ensure all the TB cases found are linked to TB care. Sustain this [Find all TB, treat all TB] for ten years until TB rates drop below 50 per 100,000 population."

Dr Guy Marks added that "main beneficiaries are not the people with TB who are found [by active screening and upfront molecular testing], but those who are protected from getting TB infection and TB disease."

**TB diagnosis is a critical**

Disease (The Union) and currently leads Molbio Diagnostics as President - Chief Medical Officer.

### Change paradigm of cascade of care

Dr Sachdeva rightly pointed out that cascade of TB care begins not from diagnosis but much earlier when active case finding is happening - it begins from willingness of healthcare workers to go closer to the communities or at

findings show that 42.6% TB patients would have been missed if they were not screened by an x-ray (and followed up with a confirmatory molecular test). "Use of ultraportable x-ray [as a screening tool] should be thought of at the community level," she said.

More importantly she said that "number of cases notified was way less than the number of TB cases shown by the prevalence survey."

Dr Padmapriyadarsini recommended that to make TB case

new TB cases were diagnosed in 2022 worldwide - highest ever in the age-old fight against TB (as per the WHO Global TB Report 2023). But, not able to find all TB cases continues to be worrisome.

In India, states like Uttar Pradesh have reported highest ever notification of new cases (around 625,000 as reported in news) in 2023 as more WHO recommended ultraportable x-ray screening and point-of-care and decentralised molecular test Truenat is being appropriately deployed at the block level across the state.

Of the 7.5 million new people who were diagnosed with TB in 2022 worldwide, only 47% were diagnosed using a WHO recommended molecular test. In India, as per the India TB Report 2023, only 23% of all TB testing was done on a molecular test. This is so unacceptable as we cannot afford to miss TB.

The WHO's highest level initiative - Find.Treat.All (first launched in 2018) - had called upon all governments to replace the old and poorly performing microscopy TB test with WHO recommended rapid molecular tests by 2027. World leaders at the 2023 UN High Level Meeting on TB had also re-echoed this call to completely phase out microscopy with upfront molecular test diagnosis for TB by 2027.

### Upfront molecular testing for TB in India doubled in 2022

Despite glaring gaps, there is historic progress made in India too in fight against TB. India saw the largest-ever rollout of WHO recommended molecular tests across the nation. Molecular testing grew by 82% in India in 2022 as compared to the levels in 2021 - this is the largest jump in molecular testing figures so far (as per the data in India TB Reports of 2022 and 2023).

Point-of-care, decentralised, battery operated and laboratory independent Truenat is the most used molecular test in India. As compared to 2021, in 2022 India increased the rollout of Truenat by 90% (made by Molbio Diagnostics), and Gene Xpert by 67% (made by Cepheid). Microscopy increased during the same period by 68.1%. But when we look at absolute numbers, the rise in microscopy dwarfs the historic scale up of molecular testing in India in 2022.

Two Indian states (Goa and Lakshadweep) have completely phased out microscopy and transitioned to 100% use of molecular tests while one Indian state (Andhra Pradesh) is majorly using molecular tests (~70%) and has reduced microscopy. Most of the other Indian states have also increased the use of molecular tests manifold and are at different levels of scaling it up.

Before coming to 78th NATCON, Scientia Professor (Dr) Guy Marks, met the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). "Excellent meeting today with the ICMR regarding evidence/ data-based interventions to end TB in India by breaking the chain of transmission. Need to find all, or nearly all, people with infectious TB (most of whom do not have symptoms)" he said on X.

**Endorse the global call to find all TB: [www.bit.ly/findalltb](http://www.bit.ly/findalltb)**

The global call to find all TB to stop TB demands a paradigm shift from a lab-centric to a fundamentally people-centric model to find TB, leaving no one behind. It also reinforces the science-based call to "reach the unreachable" by using WHO recommended point of care tools to screen and diagnose TB. If we act upon this key ask, imagine the difference it will make when no TB case is missed, and all people with TB are brought in the care fold in a rights-based manner. A people-centric approach to find all TB, treat all TB, and prevent TB is critical to end TB. Endorse the global call here: [www.bit.ly/findalltb](http://www.bit.ly/findalltb).

*Shobha Shukla and Bobby Ramakant co-lead the editorial of Citizen News Service and on the governing board of Global Antimicrobial Resistance Media Alliance (GAMA) and Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media). Follow them on Twitter @shobha1shukla and @bobbyramakant*



### entry-point to TB care continuum

"Early and accurate TB diagnosis is an important and critical entry-gate to the TB care pathway. It not only helps in reducing TB-related human suffering but also helps in stopping the spread of infection. To end TB, we need to find all TB cases, diagnose all of them by using WHO approved molecular tests upfront and link them to the full cascade of effective treatment, care, and support services," said Dr Kuldeep Singh Sachdeva, former head of India's TB elimination programme (former deputy director general of TB at Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, government of India). Dr Sachdeva was also the Director for Southeast Asia region of International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung

the doorstep of people to find all TB. Cascade of care does not end with cure, instead it ends after a couple of years of a person being cured of TB. "If we do passive case finding [for new TB cases], we will never find all the TB cases," said Dr Sachdeva.

### Verbal screening for TB is not enough

Dr Padmapriyadarsini Chandrasekaran, Director of National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), stressed upon the importance of screening everyone (not just those with symptoms) with WHO recommended and evidence-based tools and offering WHO recommended molecular testing to those with presumptive TB. India's National TB Prevalence Survey 2019-2021

finding more efficient, we need to scale up x-ray screening and offer upfront molecular testing to all those with presumptive TB. She also underlined the importance of screening all those with TB risk factors, such as those with diabetes, malnourishment, tobacco or alcohol use, HIV, among others.

Dr Guy Marks had visited NIRT-ICMR and posted on X: "As prevalence survey shows 55% of prevalent, microbiologically confirmed TB do not report symptoms, this will require annual mass screening, regardless of symptoms, with aim of finding at least 80% of prevalent infectious cases."

### Progress happened but is it enough?

Globally, we could find a record number of new TB cases in a single year - historically. Over 7.5 million

# DC Bandipora Reviews Functioning Of Revenue Deptt

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**BANDIPORA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel Ul Rehman Rather Friday chaired a meeting of revenue officers at mini Secretariat to review the status of various revenue matters. The DC took a review of digitization of Jamabandis, encroachment, PSGA services, e-Office in revenue offices, pending Mutations, allotment of land to landless, encroachment and other related issues. He said that revenue officers/officials are custodian of government land, and we must take care of it with added responsibility. While reviewing the status of encroachment, the DC asked the concerned revenue officers to take strict action in cases of encroachment of Government Land(s) and ensure that no government land is encroached. Rather stressed upon revenue officials to meet the timeline of online services as per the Public Service Guarantee Act and ensure that no service is provided in offline mode, which is available on the online portal. He also warned that strict action shall be taken against officers and officials not adhering to the PSGA timelines. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Umar Shafi Pandit, ACR Bandipora Shabir Ahmad Wani, Sub Divisional Magistrates in virtual mode, Tehsildars and other concerned.

## Launches Mobile Milk ATM Initiative

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**  
**BANDIPORA:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Shakeel Ul Rehman Friday launched the Mobile Milk Dispenser Van initiative at Animal Husbandry Complex, here. This innovative project aims to bring locally sourced, farm-fresh milk directly to the doorsteps of residents in the surrounding areas. Milk dispensers commonly known as milk ATM, equipped with refrigeration and storage facilities, will traverse neighborhoods and communities, offering residents convenient access to high-quality milk. Speaking on the occasion, the DC stressed upon concerned officers from the Animal Husbandry Department to identify more youth

to be engaged under Govt sponsored schemes of the Department. He said the schemes provided by the Government are meant for sustainable business and profitable enterprise and emphasized on more awareness in the upper reaches of the district. The DC said schemes under the Animal Husbandry Department have the potential to provide self-employment in addition to providing direct or indirect sources of income to others. Earlier, the DC inspected various units of animal husbandry, including Mobile Veterinary Unit, Pet care unit, stray animal shed, laboratory, milk analyzer, hematology analyzer and other blocks. He also handed over keys of milk distributing vans among beneficiaries under IDDS Scheme. Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Bandipora, Gh. Ahmad Lone informed the DC that Bandipora is self-sufficient in milk production with per capita availability of 1000ml, which is double the National Average. He informed that in value addition, the department has sponsored milk processing units involving local youth at Paphan Bandipora besides engaging around 2000 youth under different schemes. Dr. Lone informed the department also succeeded in establishing a first of its kind broiler farm and started artificial insemination in remote areas of Gurez. He said the department also achieved a 100 percent target of establishing dairy and poultry units in the district.

# Paytm QR, Soundbox, Card Machine To Work Beyond March 15

SIANS

**NEW DELHI:** Leading payments and financial services company Paytm on Friday reassured its users that its mobile app, including the widely-used Made in India QR code, Soundbox, and Card Machine will remain operational without interruption even after March 15. This comes after a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday, which confirmed that its merchant payment devices will remain unaffected and work normally. The company also announced that it has transitioned its nodal account to Axis Bank by opening an Escrow Account to ensure uninterrupted merchant settlements. This arrangement is expected to seamlessly replace the nodal account previously used with the



Paytm Payments Bank. Following the FAQs, the company ensures continuing payment services for its millions of users and focuses on business growth with strict compliance of the regulatory guidelines. "We are committed to providing seamless service to our merchant partners, with focus on compliance and regulatory guidelines. We assure our users that the Paytm app, and our pioneering devices like Paytm QR, Soundbox, and Card Machine will continue to work as always," said a Paytm spokesperson in a stock exchange filing. "The shift of the nodal account to Axis Bank (by opening an Escrow Account) will ensure seamless merchant settlements as before. We strive to continue to empower Indians, contributing significantly to the country's financial inclusion journey," the spokesperson added. Paytm's Founder and CEO, Vijay Shekhar Sharma, took to X to reassure its vast user base. "Paytm QR, Soundbox, and EDC (Card Machine) will operate as usual, even after March 15," he said. He urged also the users not to be swayed by rumours and to continue supporting Digital India.

### FROM THE FRONT PAGE .....

## Weatherman Predicts

thunder, lightning at many places on February 18. On February 19 and 20, Director MeT said that there is a possibility of intermittent light to moderate rain with thunder, lightning in plains of Jammu with light to moderate snowfall over higher reaches with heavy snowfall over isolated higher reaches of Ramban, Poonch, Doda and Kishtwar. "Intermittent light to moderate snow and rain is expected over many places till late afternoon, evening and gradual improvement thereafter on February 21," he said. The weatherman has, however, issued an advisory, saying that the system may lead to temporary closure of roads of higher reaches and important passes like Sinthan pass, Mughal Road, Sadhna & Razdan pass, Zojila and others. He advised the travellers to plan accordingly.

including Kulgam." He said that naka checking has been increased in Kulgam and vehicles and bikes without number plates are being seized. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Jammu on February 20 and will inaugurate various projects including AIIMS Jammu, world's highest railway bridge over Chenab, and north India's first river rejuvenation project — Devika river project — in Udhampur.

## Pak Quadcopters

Indian territory in Balnoi-Mendhar and Gulpur sectors, they said. They said a search operation was launched in both the sectors to ensure there was no dropping of weapons or narcotics by the quadcopters. Officials said troops noticed two quadcopters entering the Balnoi area of Mendhar around 6.30 am and opened fire but the remotely controlled machines returned. Similarly, a couple of quadcopters hovering over Gulpur sector around the same time returned in the face of firing by Indian troops, they said. Army Opens Fire After Suspicious Movement Near LoC In J&K's Poonch Earlier on February 12, Army troops had fired on an enemy drone after picking up its movement in Mankote area of Mendhar sector. Pakistan is using drones to drop narcotics and weapons in Jammu and Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir Police recently announced a cash reward of Rs three lakh to anyone providing information about drones flown from across the border with a purpose to drop weapons and narcotics. (Agencies)

their collective and community issues, ranging from power and water supply to various utility services. Rana said that all the issues raised will be taken up at appropriate levels for earnest redressal. He also referred to the initiatives taken by the BJP in getting the public issues resolved, which were projected during the public hearings and public outreach programmes from time to time.

## Houseboat Owners

operated boats, which is going to ply on Jhelum. Pakhtoon said they have requested the officials many times to relocate their houseboats in Jhelum to safer places. In this regard, an order was also issued but the file is pending with Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) since March, they said, adding that they are requesting the government to relocate their houseboats in Jhelum before the inauguration of water transport, and clear the file. After a gap of over three decades, Jammu & Kashmir's summer capital, Srinagar, is all set to witness a revival of water transport within the next month. Meanwhile, a houseboat owner said, "We're hopeful that the revival of water transport in Jhelum will bring new opportunities, but it's crucial that the safety of our houseboats is ensured." "Relocating us to safer places is necessary to protect our livelihoods and preserve the beauty of our heritage, as our Houseboats are not in the condition to handle such high tide and disturbance in the water," he added—(KNO)

decreased to 6,514. Overall, in 2022, 150,713 tourists explored Kokernag, compared to 146,830 visitors in 2023. Approximately 800,000 tourists visited Daksum and Sinthan Top in 2023 alone. As of this month, around 3,000 tourists have visited Kokernag, with approximately 1,000 visitors exploring Daksum and Sinthan Top.

While tourist footfall at Daksum and Sinthan Top has begun to decline with the waning of snowfall, residents said the area has untapped tourism potential. They mentioned Breng hamlet, which they said could contribute to revenue generation and employment opportunities if developed properly. Although the government has initiated some measures for the development of tourist spots in the area, locals say more efforts are needed. Officials said all tourist destinations are undergoing development, with necessary arrangements in place to facilitate tourists. They said they are anticipating a further increase in tourism flow in the region—(KNO)

## PM's Visit Will Give

empowerment of all due to landmark decisions taken in last four years. Interacting with deputations and delegations during weekly public hearing at the BJP headquarters here, here along with Mrs Veena Khanna BJP State Secretary Rana referred to the enthusiasm among the people about the visit, saying this reflects their confidence about things moving in right direction, given the track record of the BJP led government at the Centre in steering India to new heights on the global landscape, be it serving the humanity with much needed assistance during pandemic and crisis like situations or bringing about economic stability on the face of slow down across the world. "India graduated to fifth slot as economic prowess and Modiji's guarantee to make the nation third economic power in the world during his third successive term is for real and not just a slogan", he said, adding that the Prime Minister has fulfilled all the promises of immense national importance during his two consecutive terms and the third term will be a game changer. Rana said peoples' trust in the leadership of Prime Minister Modi is a driving force for the BJP to devote and dedicate itself for realizing his vision of making India Vishwaguru. Not only Indians but the people in other countries are also looking towards him during contingencies and crises, making him the world leader. The brass tacks in Bharat becoming the world leader are already in place, which is discernible by the warmth he is getting the world over, he said and referred to Yashasvi Modi ji's recent visit to Abu Dhabi and Qatar. He said Indians across the globe are now feeling a sense of pride and are energized to contribute towards global progress as per the spirit of Sanatan Dharma's Vasudeva Kutumbkam. The continents across the world are keenly watching India's journey towards progress and development with rapt attention. This has become possible due to strong leadership, active support of the people in consonance with Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas, he added. During the public hearing the delegations and deputations besides individuals flagged

## LG Sinha Pays

He said, under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the vision of 'Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi' has been transformed into a peoples' movement. He called upon the people to rededicate themselves to promote social harmony and collectively work for the upliftment of the weaker sections of the society. Sh AK Sidha, President, Shri Martand Tirath Trust; Sh Avtar Krishan, Chairman; Sh TK Tickoo, General Secretary, other members of Shri Martand Tirath Trust and people from different walks of life were present. Dr. Arvind Karwani, Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) J&K and senior officials of UT Administration were also present.

## SED Directs To Replace

Department to switch over to e-office mode with immediate effect and complete the whole process as per the directives," it reads. Singla further said that wherever necessary, Directors shall also identify the areas and assignments where the record needs to be routed through both physical and online modes. The circular said that the government and General Administration Department previously had directed all the department to switch over to e-office mode of working with the assistance and handholding from the IT department by way of facilitating them with VPN connections, creation of jk.gov.in email IDs and training of the local admins etc—(KNO)

Moreover, the Director MeT advised the farmers to withheld irrigation and fertilizer application & drain out excess water from Orchards and fields during the above period. Significant drop in day temperature during the above period is expected, he said. Meanwhile, the Mechanical Engineering Department (MED) Kashmir has urged people not to park their vehicles on the roadside. Kaplesh Pandita, a senior officer at MED Kashmir told KNO that the department is all geared up and has made all arrangements to ensure smooth snow clearance from the roads. "A mock drill has already been done, all men and machinery are ready. We urge people not to park their vehicles on the road sides during the snowfall," he said. Another senior official looking into the functioning of the provincial control room said that they have activated 22 control and sub control rooms across the valley and that all men and machinery are on standby mode. "There are around 300 machines available with the mechanical and hospital engineering department and they are already stationed in all districts," officials said. He said that in district Srinagar alone, they have stationed over 40 machines to address any issues arising from the forecast weather conditions. The official also said that in order to ensure no or least damage chances to the roads during snow clearance they have procured high tech snow clearance machines with plastic cartilage snow blades. Moreover, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri convened a meeting of Deputy Commissioners & Head of Civil Departments wherein he directed all the departments to keep men, material and machinery ready to tackle any exigency that may emerge from the expected snowfall. He also directed officers to mobilize their field staff for effective & timely response to any emergency—(KNO)

## PM Modi To Launch

Mahanpur (Kathua), Neeli Nallah (Udhampur), Sunderbani (Rajouri) and Kokernag (Anantnag), among others. The prime minister will lay the foundation of 124 projects, including development of nine new industrial estates spread over 2210 kanals with large investment and employment opportunities, and 2,816 flats for Kashmiri migrants at nine locations in Anantnag, Kulgam, Kupwara, Shopian and Pulwama districts, according to the advertisement. The prime minister will lay the foundation stone of data centre, disaster recovery centre for integrated command and control centre for Jammu smart city, upgradation/revamping of transport nagar at Parimpora in Srinagar, and construction and upgradation of 62 road projects and 42 bridges at a cost of Rs 891.53 crore.

## Security Heightened

## 'Education Sector

past five years, the academic days in schools of Jammu and Kashmir have increased by over 30 percent. "Prior to 2019, due to unrest, the average number of working days for which Schools remain functional was 128-150." "After 2019, the schools remain functional for more than 210 days, which has improved the school education system to a large extent," it reads. The School Education Department had further claimed that in the past five year's student enrolment in government-run-schools have increased by over 17 percent. It said that till the academic year 2023-24, the enrolment increased by 17.7 percent—(KNO)

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