

# Good Morning Kashmir

16th Year Of Publication

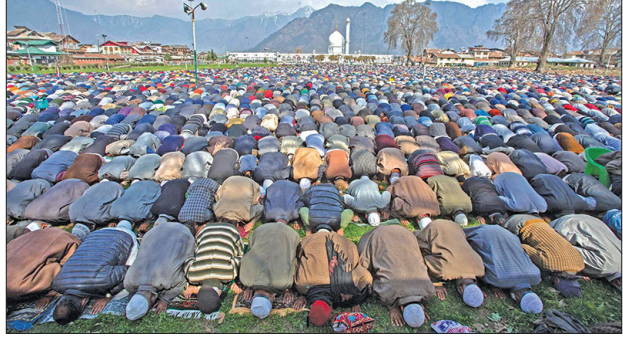
Narendra Modi @narendramodi



Deeply saddened by loss of lives in the tragic collision in Washington DC. Our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. We stand in solidarity with the people of the United States. @realDonaldTrump

Srinagar • Saturday 01, February 2025 • Vol: 16 • Issue No: 28 • Pages: 08 • Price: ₹ 2/- (Air Surcharge for Delhi, Jammu & Ladakh 50/- Paisa) RNI No. JKENG/2010/36998

## ...Friday Following Me'raj-ul-Aalam 1 Lakh Devotees Pray At Hazratbal Shrine



AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** Nearly one lakh devotees from different parts of the Valley converged at the Dargah Hazratbal shrine on Friday following Me'raj-ul-Aalam (SAW) to participate in the special prayers. The congregation reflected deep-rooted faith and devotion of the people, who thronged the shrine to seek blessings. Since early morning, men, women and elderly devotees in large numbers made their way to the shrine. As the holy relic, believed to be of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), was displayed after the Friday prayers, the atmosphere turned emotional, with people breaking into tears. "The air was filled with hues and cries, as many raised their hands in supplication, overwhelmed by the moment of divine connection."

Among the crowd was Ghulam Ahmad, an elderly devotee from Baramulla, who while wiping his tears, said this is a blessed occasion, and coming here fills my heart with immense peace. Seeing the holy relic is a spiritual experience that words cannot describe, he said. Similarly, the shrine echoed with the recitation of Quranic verses, Darood, and Naats, as thousands engaged in prayers, seeking mercy and guidance. Religious scholars and clerics also

**THE AIR WAS filled with hues and cries, as many raised their hands in supplication, overwhelmed by the moment of divine connection.**

● P-06

## Peaceful Polls Testament Of Progress In J&K: Prez Murmu

Says UT Has Shown Positive Shift Towards Development After Art 370 Abrogation

AGENCIES

**NEW DELHI:** Describing peaceful conduct of Parliamentary and Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir as a testament of progress, President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said that the Union Territory has seen a positive shift towards development after the scrapping of Article 370. Addressing a joint sitting of Parliament here, marking the beginning of this year's Budget Session, President Murmu said, "Since the abrogation of Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir has seen a positive shift towards development. The peaceful conduct of both the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections stands as a testament to this progress, and the people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve recognition for their contribution to this achievement."



Referring to Kashmir getting train connectivity, President Murmu said, "I am happy to inform you that the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project has been completed, and now the country will be connected by railway from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Under this project, the world's highest rail bridge has been constructed over the Chenab River." On national security, the President said, "The government has taken historic steps to protect the country's borders and ensure internal security." She also spoke about progress in the defence sector. "The government has moved from 'Make in India' to 'Make for the World' in the defence sector," President Murmu said. She said that in the last six months, the government has made record investments in future infrastructure—(KNO)

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## 2 Infiltrators Killed Along LoC In Poonch



AGENCIES

**JAMMU:** The Army foiled an infiltration bid on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district and killed two terrorists. Nagrota-headquartered White Knight Corps said that it detected a terrorist movement on the LoC on Thursday night and alert troops engaged the terrorists trying to infiltrate. Two terrorists were killed in the gunfight. The Army later conducted a search operation in the area and found weapons and war-like stores. The Army said that the operation was continuing. In an X post, the White Knight Corps said, "Terrorist movement was detected last night at the #LineofControl in #Poonch sector. Alert troops swiftly engaged the infiltrating #terrorists, triggering an intense & heavy firefight. The #operation continued through the night, leading to the neutralization of

## Kashmir's Higher Reaches Receive More Snow



AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** The higher reaches of Kashmir Valley once again received light snowfall while the rains lashed plains on Friday, bringing down the mercury in the Valley. According to reports, light snowfall was experienced in the higher reaches of Gurez valley, Sonamarg, Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort, Sinthan Top, Pir ki Gali and other areas. In Gurez, 4 inches of snowfall was recorded till this evening while 8 inches of snowfall was recorded in Sonamarg. 3 inches of snow-

fall accumulated in Sinthan Top and Pir ki Gali also, shared Aadil Maqbool, an Independent Weather Forecaster. Reports of light snow were also received from DK Marg, Noorabad Kulgam and Baltal Pahalgam. It was snowing at Gulmarg and other parts when the report was last filed. Moreover, the plains of Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, were lashed by the rains today, bringing down the mercury across Kashmir. Below normal temperature was recorded

● P-06

## Youth Our Hope For Better World, Brighter J&K: LG Sinha

'I Want Youth To Spearhead Transformational Journey Of J&K'

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Stressing upon the youth to spearhead the transformational journey of the Union Territory, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday said that the youth have a great responsibility to carry forward the ideals and values of our ancient civilization and build a stronger Jammu and Kashmir. "Youth are the future. They are our hope for a better world and a brighter tomorrow for J&K. Youth have a great responsibility to carry forward the ideals and values of our ancient civilization and build a stronger J&K UT," Sinha said while interacting here with the NCC cadets, who returned after attending Republic Day Camp at New Delhi.



The Cadets shared their experience at the Republic Day camp. The LG complimented the Cadets and NCC officers for their excellent performance on Kartavya Path and at various other competitions. He congratulated SUO Ekta Kumari for making J&K proud by leading All India NCC Girls Contingent.

● P-06

## ...Bar Council In J&K Supreme Court Issues Notice To Centre, BCI



AGENCIES

**JAMMU:** The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to the Centre, Bar Council of India (BCI) and others on a plea seeking the establishment of a bar council in Jammu and Kashmir. A bench comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta took note of the submissions made by Advocate Javid Shah, who appeared for the Kashmir Advocates Association, and issued a notice to the Centre, the BCI and the Registrar

General of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. A state bar council is a statutory body that regulates the enrolment of law graduates as lawyers and the practice of law in a state. Currently, there is no bar council in J&K and lawyers take membership in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association. The senior lawyer, assisted by advocate Adil Muneer Andrabi, stressed the need for a bar council in Jammu and Kashmir and

● P-06

## Jailed MP Er Rashid's Workers Detained

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** Activists of Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) were detained by police on Friday for trying to sit for a hunger strike demanding bail for the party's founder and Lok Sabha member Engineer Rashid. Many AIP activists gathered at the Sangarmal Shopping complex in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar, where

they had decided to hold a hunger strike after the district authorities rejected the party's application for a sit-in near Pratap Park in the Lal Chowk area of the city. Police were waiting at the new venue and as soon as the AIP activists, including Rashid's son, Abrar came, they were put in vehicles and detained at Kotvibagh Police Station. Before being taken

● P-06

## PoJK Resident Repatriated

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** A week after a 30-year-old man from PoJK, apparently mentally challenged, was apprehended along Line of Control in Poonch district was on Friday repatriated, officials said. They said that Mohammad Faiz Yasir, was handed over to the authorities at Chakan Da Bagh gate. Yasir had been apprehended by a joint team of Army and



Police from a house in Salhotri village of the mountainous district on January 25 night.

● P-06

## After Kashmir, Govt Shifts Focus Towards Ladakh Rail Link

Patna Based Company Initiates Railway Track Alignment, Conducts Surveys

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** After the completion of the Kashmir rail link, the government has shifted its focus about providing train connectivity to Ladakh. An exercise to construct a railway track from Beri of Bilaspur to Manali-Leh has already commenced, a local news agency KNO quoted sources as saying. "Patna based Skylark company has initiated railway track alignment and is conducting surveys. Using satellite-based mapping, the proposed track has been marked with cement towers in Baihna of Balh Valley," said a source. "The company officials conducting surveys have generated enthusiasm



among locals, who are eager to learn more about the ambitious railway project," he added. As per the officials, Bilaspur-Manali-Leh rail line will be constructed in three phases, covering a total distance of 465 km. "Alignment work began on January 20, with tower installations pro-

gressing from Bilaspur to Leh via Manali. Towers are being placed at designated locations based on previous satellite surveys," they added. "To ensure uninterrupted operations, even in extreme weather, the railway track will be equipped with snow cutters, similar to

● P-06

## Kashmir's Hydel Power Generation Falls By 76 %

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** Owing to the low water level, the Power Development Department (PDD) is currently able to produce only 24 Megawatts (MWs) of electricity against the total capacity of around 250 MWs from the power plants in Kashmir region. A top official from Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation (JKSPDC) told a local news agency KNO that "From Kashmir power



plants, we have a power generation capacity of around 250 MW out of which currently, we are producing only around 60 MW power."

Jhelum in the night hours and 5 MW during the other hours and 15 MW at Kangan," the official said. The official further said that from the power plants in Kangan, water was available for only one machine which has a power producing capacity of 150 MW. As of now we are able to produce only around 15 MW of power from Kangan. "As of now we are reserving the water to generate power during the peak hours."

● P-06

# 400-Year-Old Mughal Mosque in Pulwama Faces Collapse



**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

**PULWAMA:** A 400-year-old Mughal-era mosque in Shadimarg area of Pulwama district, is in urgent need of restoration after years of neglect have left it at risk of collapsing. The mosque, an iconic example of Mughal architecture, boasts intricate arches, detailed carvings, and a grand dome, all of which reflect the region's rich cultural and historical heritage.

However, decades of disrepair have taken a toll on the structure, leading local residents and historians to raise alarm. Fearing that the mosque could be lost to time, the community has begun constructing a new mosque nearby, hoping to preserve the old one while it waits for the government's intervention. Local resident Bashir

Ahmad, explained the importance of the mosque to the community. "This mosque is a living testament to our heritage. It's more than just a building—it holds stories of our ancestors and the region's past," he said. "We hope the authorities take action soon before it's too late."

Prominent political figure Waheed Para has also voiced concern over the mosque's deteriorating state. "The 400-year-old Mughal mosque in Shadimarg is on the verge of collapse. It is a vital part of our history that must be preserved," Para said in a recent statement. "The authorities must step in and ensure that this invaluable piece of our past is not lost."

One of the most unique aspects of this mosque is its location—next to the Gurdwara Chathi Padsha-

hi, a Sikh place of worship. The coexistence of these two religious sites, side by side, is seen as a powerful symbol of communal harmony in Kashmir.

"Having both religious sites in such close proximity is a beautiful reminder of the harmony we've shared in Kashmir for centuries," said Gurmeet Singh, a local Sikh community member. "This mosque is not just a place of worship for Muslims, but a representation of our shared history as people of this land."

Historians argue that restoring the mosque is not only about preserving a building, but also about protecting the cultural and historical identity of the region. "The mosque reflects the glorious Mughal heritage of Kashmir. If we allow it to fall into ruin, we lose a piece of

ourselves," said Dr. Tariq Ahmad, a local historian and cultural expert.

As the mosque continues to crumble, residents and experts are now urging the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department and the Department of Culture to intervene and fund its restoration. "We cannot afford to wait any longer. This is a rare piece of our history, and we must act swiftly to ensure it is preserved for future generations," said Amina Begum, a teacher from Pulwama.

For now, the community waits with hope, hoping that the authorities will heed their calls and protect this vital heritage site before it disappears into the past. The restoration of the mosque, they believe, will ensure that Kashmir's cultural and religious legacy is safeguarded for centuries to come.

## District admin G'bl bids affectionate farewell to outgoing DC

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

**GANDERBAL:** The District administration Ganderbal Friday organized a farewell to honor and bid adieu to the outgoing Deputy Commissioner (DC), Shyambir, for his dedicated and exemplary service to the district.

The event, held in the lawns of the DC Office, showcased deep respect and appreciation for DC's significant contributions during his tenure in the district.

On the occasion officers commended Shambir's tireless efforts in advancing the developmental agenda of Ganderbal and praised his unwavering commitment, dynamic leadership, and innovative approach that has left an indelible mark on the progress of the district.

His proactive approach to addressing public grievances and fostering teamwork among departments



earned him widespread respect and admiration.

In his farewell address, the DC expressed his gratitude to the district officers and the people of Ganderbal for their support and cooperation. "It has been a privilege to serve the people of Ganderbal.

I am deeply humbled by the affection and encouragement I have received during my time here," he said.

The event concluded with the presentation of mementos and a vote of thanks, wishing Shyambir success in his future

endeavors. Among others, the ceremony was attended by SSP Ganderbal, Ragav S, Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Gulzar Ahmad, SDM Kangan, CPO and other senior officers and officials from district administration.

As the DC, Shahid Saleem led district towards the path of development & prosperity while also achieving several administrative milestones.

During a farewell meet, officers highlighted his efforts which made a positive impact on the lives of the people in the

district and increased efficiency in district offices. Shahid Saleem has been instrumental in taking various initiatives and programs in Shopian during his short stint of

## District admin Shopian bids affectionate farewell to Shahid Saleem

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

**SHOPIAN:** The District administration, Shopian Friday accorded a warm and affectionate farewell to Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, the outgoing Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Shopian, upon his transfer.

SSP Anayat Ali; ADCC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz and other officers on the occasion expressed gratitude and appreciation to him for his leadership in ushering the positive change in district and extended best wishes to him for future.

As the DC, Shahid Saleem led district towards the path of development & prosperity while also achieving several administrative milestones.

During a farewell meet, officers highlighted his efforts which made a positive impact on the lives of the people in the



district and increased efficiency in district offices. Shahid Saleem has been instrumental in taking various initiatives and programs in Shopian during his short stint of

five months as DC Shopian, including promoting socio-economic development, addressing the issue of drug menace, Free Civil services & NEET coaching, engaging youth in sports and competitive

initiatives besides adopting innovative approach in the administration. The farewell ceremony also was attended by other Officers & officials of District administration and police.

## GMC Sgr accords sendoff to Dr. Tasneem Showkat

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

**SRINAGAR:** Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar bade farewell to Dr. Tasneem Showkat, Medical Superintendent SMHS Hospital Srinagar, on her superannuation.

The farewell was attended by Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan, Principal/Dean GMC Srinagar; Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, Administrator, Associated Hospitals, GMC, Prof. Sabiya Majeed Head Deptt of Biochemistry; Prof. Dr. Iqbal Saleem HOD, General Surgery; Prof. Dr. Manzoor Latoo, HOD, Department of ENT; Prof. Dr. Rakesh Kaul HOD Medicine; Prof. Afroz Khan, HOD, Department of Psychiatry; Prof. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Chalkoo, Dr. Muzafar Jan, Medical Superintendent, Lal Ded Hospital, Dr. Farah, Block Medical Officer, Hazratbal, casualty Medical Officers, Resident Medical



Officers, Staff of administrative office and paramedics.

Principal GMC Srinagar highlighted Dr. Tasneem's exceptional leadership and her contributions to the hospital's growth and development. "Dr. Tasneem has been a strict disciplinarian and her professional attitude in healthcare is a role model for others to adopt in healthcare settings", She said.

Mohammad Ashraf Hakak, highlighted Dr. Tasneem's tireless efforts to improve patient care

and services at the hospital. "Dr. Tasneem has been a true leader, and her dedication to her work has been exemplary", he said.

Other HoDs also spoke about Dr. Tasneem's administrative skills, her ability to manage complex situations, commitment to providing quality patient care and her efforts to improve the hospital's infrastructure.

The participants wished Dr. Tasneem a happy and fulfilling retirement, appreciating her overall remarkable services.

## CS reviews functioning of FCS&CA, Metrology Departments

Directs to ensure protection of consumer rights

**GMK NEWS NETWORK**

**JAMMU:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a high level meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, to review functioning of the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) and the Legal Metrology Department (LMD).

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA, Zubair Ahmed, Controller, Legal Metrology Department J&K, Anuradha Gupta and other senior officers.

Commending the efforts of both the departments, the Chief Secretary emphasised the need for stringent monitoring to prevent functioning of illegally operating dispensing units. He also directed for creation of a comprehensive database and implementation of capacity building programs for the officers and officials to further strengthen consumer protection measures



across the UT.

He emphasised on the concerned to carry out regular inspection of all the business establishments dispensing consumer goods. He directed for protecting the consumer interests in every circumstances so that quality goods and services are provided to them at reasonable rates.

Dulloo also asked for making their services more accessible and easily available to public. He enjoined upon the FCS&CA Department to provide timely food

grains to public residing in far off areas. He reviewed the ration distribution and availability during winter months and directed to ensure that each ration card holder in these villages get ration as per his/her entitlement.

Zubair Ahmed, apprised the Chief Secretary of the department's key activities including current coverage under the Public Distribution System (PDS), ongoing reforms and efforts to enhance system credibility. He provided an update on crucial focus areas such as

winter stocking of essential commodities, procurement of paddy during the Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) and other physical and financial achievements.

Controller, Legal Metrology Department, briefed the meeting on department's objectives and operations. She informed that all services of the department are now available online through the J&K Single Window System and are covered under the J&K Public Services Guarantee Act, 2011.

Notably, the department has introduced an auto-calculation feature for fee assessment on its portal, along with an auto-renewal facility for licenses, making the system more user-friendly.

Highlighting consumer outreach efforts, the Controller stated that the department has conducted 269 service camps in far-flung areas during the current financial year. The LMD ranks third in the number of online applications received and disposed of, with an average processing time of 11 days. In addition to service delivery, the department actively promotes consumer awareness through camps and social media initiatives.

To safeguard consumer interests, the department regularly conducts special enforcement drives. Recently, it launched campaigns against non-standard helmets and unauthorized petrol pumps in Kashmir Valley.

Police recovered arms and ammunition from the gangsters.

A First Information Report (FIR) under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Miran Sahib, and further investigation is underway, officer added.—(JKNS)

## Criminal injured, another gangster apprehended in Jammu: Police

**ZAHID SHAH**

**JAMMU:-** A gangster was injured while another was apprehended in Miran sahib area of Jammu on Friday evening.

A police officer said that one notorious criminal, gangster injured in retaliation and another wanted gang-

ster apprehended by Jammu Police in Miran Sahib. He said that arms were recovered while FIR was registered at PS Miran Sahib.

He added that Jammu Police received reliable information that hardcore criminal Paramjit Singh, also known as Jungi, son of Devi Dass from Draptye, R.S. Pura, along with

an unidentified associate, was present in the jurisdiction of Police Station Miran Sahib, armed and intending to commit a serious crime.

"Acting swiftly, a police team from Miran Sahib proceeded to the location. Upon arrival, Paramjit Singh fired at the police, prompting them to return fire in self-defense. During the

exchange, Paramjit Singh sustained a bullet injury to his leg and was subsequently transported to GMC Hospital Jammu for treatment." He said.

The unidentified associate was apprehended and later identified as a notorious wanted criminal Arjun Kumar, also known as Billu, son of Sham Lal, originally from Akhnoor

and currently residing in Salehar Kothey Arnia, Jammu.

Police recovered arms and ammunition from the gangsters.

A First Information Report (FIR) under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Miran Sahib, and further investigation is underway, officer added.—(JKNS)

# LG inaugurates 32nd International Conference of Indian Association of Palliative Care at AIIMS Jammu

Inaugurates Radiotherapy oncology and Operation Theatre Complex at AIIMS Jammu; launches AIIMS Pain Policy

**SAMBA:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha inaugurated the 32nd International Conference of Palliative Care (IAPC), at AIIMS Jammu.

More than 800 national and international delegates will join deliberations to foster advancements and innovations in palliative care for quality of life for patients diagnosed with terminal illness. The three-day conference is being organised by IAPC J&K Chapter and AIIMS, Jammu.

In his keynote address, the Lieutenant Governor exhorted the experts to keep Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) up to date and be more sensitive towards the needs of individuals diagnosed with life-threatening disease, well-being of families, alleviate pain and suffering and provide spiritual support.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the private sector to work with the administration to set up Palliative care centres in backward and remote areas.

"In J&K, the administration

in 2022 had set up 10-bed state-of-the-art Palliative and Geriatric Care Wards in all the districts. We have tried to bridge urban-rural divide to certain extent. Our aim is to deliver medical and psychological support at people's doorstep," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that all the experts and the Indian Association of Palliative Care should work together to promote multi-sectoral partnerships so that a human resource pool of trained care-givers is made available.

"In Palliative care, health ecosystem and healthcare professionals have a moral responsibility to reduce the pain and suffering of patients. Apart from adopting innovative approach to pain management, health care professionals at all levels should be given training for continuity in the care of such patients," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor made valuable suggestions for seamless integration of curative care and Palliative care in health ecosystem. He sug-



gested that uniform SoPs may be prepared for community awareness, palliative support and pain management at the district level.

Palliative Care system is constantly evolving and we need to work on strategic framework, SoPs and its effective implementation, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor further highlighted the need

to bridge the gap in healthcare facilities and special services for the ageing population.

"By 2050, 20.8% of India's total population will be above 60 years of age. This increase in the elderly population requires us to develop a strong care economy to ensure that our elders can live healthy, dignified and fulfilling lives," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also suggested developing a comprehensive healthcare package which includes regular check-ups, geriatric care, mental health support and palliative care.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor inaugurated Radiotherapy Oncology and Operation Theatre Complex at AIIMS Jammu. He launched AIIMS Pain Policy and lauded

the AIIMS Jammu's vision of pain-free patient care.

He also commended the Indian Association of Palliative Care for playing a significant role in the expansion of specialized care based on the principles of palliative care.

Meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor inspected various blocks at AIIMS, Jammu and interacted with the medical staff. Standard Operating Procedures of Department of Anaesthesiology and the Patient Information Booklet of Chemotherapy were also launched.

The establishment of Radiotherapy Oncology facility at AIIMS Jammu will reduce the need for patients to travel long distances for radiation therapy, ensuring timely diagnosis and treatment within the region. The service will cater to increasing number of cancer patients, offering advanced radiotherapy techniques, personalized treatment plans and multidisciplinary care. The Hospital-Based Cancer Registry, under ICMR's National

Cancer Data Project has also been commenced which will further aid in shaping effective cancer care operations and strategies.

The Operation Theatre Complex featuring 08 advanced operation theatres at AIIMS Jammu, includes Four Integrated OTs with live surgical broadcasting for real-time medical training, One Hybrid OT with rotatory MRI and CT scan technology for complex procedures like transplants and cochlear implants. The OT facility has High-definition audio-visual systems for precision and enhanced learning, modular design ensuring flexibility and efficiency in surgical procedures.

Dr. Shakti Kumar Gupta, Executive Director & CEO AIIMS, Jammu; Prof. Sushma Bhatnagar President, Indian Association of Palliative Care; Dr. Rohit Lahori, President, IAPC, J&K Chapter; Dr. Sunana Gupta, Organising Secretary; senior officials, experts, members of IAPC and medical fraternity were present.

OTM MUMBAI

## Tourism stakeholders express satisfaction to CM, Tourism Deptt.

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**MUMBAI:** Jammu and Kashmir's travel and tourism industry has expressed the hope that the successful participation of J&K Government in the OTM will herald more tourist footfall to the UT even as they have thanked the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah and the Department of Tourism for ensuring participation of the UT in the event.

Expressing optimism on the outcome of the ongoing OTM on tourism industry in J&K, the trade leaders hoped it to significantly boost tourist arrivals to the region.

The stakeholders also thanked Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, Director Tourism Kashmir, Raja Yaqoob for their support in facilitating this participation.

The trade leaders also welcomed Chief Minister's commitment to provide an annual calendar of all tourism events and participations for Jammu and Kashmir Tourism, ensuring better planning



and coordination besides constitution of a Tourism Advisory Board to enhance the industry's strategic direction.

The tourism industry leaders who met the Chief Minister and expressed their appreciation to him and the Department of Tourism for their continued efforts in promoting Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector were led by Nasir Shah, Chairman - IATO and comprised representatives of

Travel Agents Society of Kashmir (TASK),

Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Alliance (JKTA), Pilgrimage and Leisure Tour Operators Forum (PILTOF), Association of Kashmir Tour Operators (AKTO), Travel Agents Association of India - J&K Chapter (TAAI JKC), Indian Association of Tour Operators - J&K Chapter (IATO JKC), Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India - J&K Chapter (ADTOI JKC).

The tourism fraternity leaders said they look forward to strengthened

promotional efforts and enhanced tourism policies that will benefit the industry and contribute to the economic growth of Jammu and Kashmir.

On the sidelines of OTM, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism also organized a MICE Meet at Trident, BKC, Mumbai, to promote the region as a prime destination for business events. This initiative is expected to have a long-lasting impact on J&K's tourism growth by attracting corporate conferences and large-scale events.

## Schools have critical role in preventing drug abuse among youths: Sakeena Itoo

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, Friday addressed the annual function of SGSD International School at Baba Jitto Auditorium SKUAUST here.

The Minister, who was chief guest on the occasion, in her address reaffirmed government's special focus on health and education under the leadership of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, ensuring that necessary assistance will be provided to all institutions working for bringing vibrancy in these important areas.

She further highlighted the critical role of schools in preventing drug abuse among the younger generation. She urged the parents and teachers to extend cooperation to the government agencies in curbing this menace collectively.

Acknowledging the talent among the children of J&K, Sakeena appreciated outstanding cultural performances and the talent displayed at the event. She emphasized

the importance of schools in shaping the future of young minds, helping them realize their dreams of becoming doctors, administrators, engineers or social workers.

Minister for Agricultural Production, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election departments, Javed Ahmad Dar, also attended the program.

development of the children enrolled there.

Encouraging the students to keep learning and upgrading their skills in line with modern advancements, the Minister described SGSD International School as a model institution contributing significantly to the upbringing of responsible and capable citizens.

The Minister assured that the government will extend all possible support to help such schools grow and continue their mission of academic excellence and social development.

During the programme, the students presented various cultural programs showcasing multi cultural and traditional folk and local dance forms of various states.

The event also included a felicitation ceremony honouring young achievers in academics and sports on the occasion.

Among others, former Minister, Ajay Sadhotra; Principal Anil Pathanya, Administrator Manjit Singh; Chairman Sant Tejwant Singh and Trustee Baldev Singh were also present on the occasion.



"Constructing a building is not the big thing, what truly matters is how much we contribute to its functioning," she said, adding that the government is committed towards supporting schools like SGSD in their mission.

He lauded SGSD International School for its commitment towards providing quality education and empowering students to excel in academics and sports. He appreciated school's dedication towards ensuring holistic

## Dy CM lays foundation stone for Sports Block at Degree College Nowshera

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**NOWSHERA:** Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Friday laid the foundation stone for much anticipated Sports Block at Government Degree College, Nowshera.

The project, to be established with an estimated cost of ₹208.50 lakh, aims to enhance sports infrastructure and provide better facilities for students and aspiring athletes.

The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by Additional District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa; Additional Deputy Commissioner Nowshera, Babu Ram



Tandon; and other district and sectoral officers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister emphasised government's commitment towards promoting sports and physical fitness among the youth. He highlighted that the new Sports Block would provide modern training facilities and encourage students to actively participate in various sports disciplines.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members, students, and local residents, who welcomed the government's focus on strengthening sports facilities in educational institutions.

Surinder Choudhary exhorted upon the executing agencies to ensure timely completion of the project while maintaining high standards of construction. He reiterated administration's resolve to develop robust sports infrastructure in the region, fostering a culture of health, fitness and excellence in sports.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted the importance of such infrastructure in nurturing talent at the grassroots level. He expressed optimism that the project would significantly contribute towards the overall development of students in the region.

## 3 drug peddlers arrested in Kashmir: Police

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police on Friday said to have arrested three drug peddlers in Budgam & Handwara and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

Police Post Mochwa received information from reliable sources that a person Saqlain Mushtaq son of Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat resident of Batpora Chadoora has concealed contraband substance at his residential house. Following the information, a search warrant was obtained from Hon'ble Court. Subsequently, a police team of Police Post Mochwa raided the house and conducted the search in the presence of the concerned Executive Magistrate, a police spokesman said in a statement issued.

During search, 545 grams of charas like substance, 230 grams of grinded charas like substance and 33.10 Kg of semi grinded cannabis leaves were recovered from the said location. He was accordingly arrested and a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and investigation has been initiated, police said.

In Handwara, during

naka checking at Baghatpora Crossing, a police team from Police Station Handwara intercepted a suspicious individual carrying a bag. During the search, 8.93 grams of heroin-like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Ashiq Ahmad Shah son of Mohd Subhan Shah resident of Kachwari Handwara. In another operation at Badkote Handwara, a police team intercepted a person identified as Bilal Ahmad Najar son of Gh Nabi Najar resident of Badrehar Handwara. During the search, 63 grams of charas-like substance was recovered from his possession, police said.

Regarding the incidents, police said that cases under relevant sections of law have been registered in Police Station Handwara. Investigations are underway to trace further links in the drug trade.

J&K Police remains resolute in its mission to eliminate drug-related activities in the area and safeguard the community. The general public is requested to remain vigilant and report drug peddling activities to the nearest police station, ensuring collective action against the menace of drug addiction and trafficking, the statement reads—(KNO)

## IICT offers unique packaging designs to boost sale of handmade products

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Stressing upon customized packaging as a major prerequisite to boost overseas exports of exquisite hand-made Kashmir products, the Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), Friday urged the business stakeholders to adopt unique packaging designs created in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Srinagar, to boost sales.

Keeping in view the niche markets Kashmir crafts cater to, IICT & NIFT together have developed innovative packaging in GI

registered crafts of papier mache, shawl, tweed, khat-amband and carpet.

In a statement issued here today, Director IICT, Zubair Ahmad, described packaging as an inseparable part of the famed Kashmir handicrafts, which facilitates its foray into international markets in a big way. "Time has come for artistic packaging to create a unique unboxing experience of the famed arts of Kashmir and boost its market value," he stated.

Director IICT called upon business stakeholders associated with Kashmir Arts to carry out first-

hand appraisal at its Nowshera campus and adopt various packaging prototypes developed, catering to the market needs. "Kani shawl costing upwards of ₹ 2.00 lakh deserves aesthetic packaging which works like an icing on the cake," he added, while stressing upon innovative and affordable packaging to compete in international markets.

He further stated that IICT has so far developed 36 box prototypes in 05 crafts with focus on different types of packaging material, list of vendors prototype dimensions and costing details.

## No presence of white deer in Gulmarg: Wildlife Deptt

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** A viral video on social media claiming to have spotted a rare white deer in north Kashmir's Gulmarg has been debunked as fake by the wildlife officials, saying that the video has not been captured in the region.

Wildlife Warden North Kashmir, Intisar Suhail, stated that the species shown in the video is not found anywhere in Jammu and Kashmir—or even in the Indian subcontinent. "This is a fake video. It has been

taken from the internet and is originally from a foreign country," Sohail clarified. "I traced the original source, and it was first posted on Instagram from outside India. People are spreading misinformation by falsely attributing it to Kashmir."

The viral clip, which has garnered widespread attention, was initially shared with claims that a rare albino deer had been sighted in the snow-clad forests of Gulmarg. However, experts have dismissed this, explaining that while albinism can occur in various species, no such deer exists in Kashmir.

"We do have native deer species like Hangul (Kashmir stag) and Musk deer, but none in white coloration. Albinism is a genetic condition that can affect animals, but this particular video does not depict any species found in our region," the wildlife warden said.

He said the individual, who originally shared the misleading post, has 'apologized', but that the video continues to circulate online, urging people to verify information before spreading unverified claims on social media—(KNO)

Good Morning **Kashmir**

EDITORIAL

### The Struggling Newspaper Industry In Jammu And Kashmir: A Cry For Support

**T**he newspaper industry in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is teetering on the brink of extinction. Once a thriving sector vital for public information and democratic discourse, it now faces an uncertain future, as almost every major newspaper house grapples with the looming threat of closure. The main lifeline that once sustained these institutions—government advertisements—has gradually dried up, pushing the print media into an existential crisis.

Over the years, the role of government advertisements has grown central to the survival of newspapers in Jammu and Kashmir, where private industry is limited. In the absence of significant private sector growth or commercial advertisements, government-sponsored ads were the primary source of revenue for most publications. Unfortunately, this financial lifeline has been weakening for some time. The reduction in the volume of government ads has forced many newspapers to cut back on operations, resulting in layoffs and reduced content.

To make matters worse, the advertisement rates themselves have remained stagnant for the last fourteen years. Despite the rising costs of production, printing, and distribution, the rates for government advertisements were fixed in a different economic landscape. This disparity has left the industry in a tight spot, unable to adjust to the increasing operational costs. The much-anticipated promise from Honorable Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who had pledged a fifty percent increase in these rates, has yet to materialize, further exacerbating the financial strain on the newspapers.

In an era of digital media dominance, print newspapers already face the challenge of a shrinking readership. This, compounded by the financial drought created by the government's failure to revise advertisement rates, has pushed the industry into an existential crisis. Without timely intervention, we could see the end of a media ecosystem that has long been an important source of local news, commentary, and public engagement. It is imperative for the administration to recognize the invaluable role of print

# Will Integrated Pension Scheme Guarantee Financial Security?



DR. SATYAWAN SAURABH

**R**ecently, the Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) to replace the National Pension System (NPS). This is based on the suggestions of the. The recommendations will be effective from April 1, 2025. According to the UPS proposal, the benefits of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and the New Pension Scheme (NPS) will be combined together. The goal of this visionary approach to retirement planning in India is a secure and long-term pension system for all eligible employees. It seeks to preserve the freedom and choice of government employees as well as provide them with long-term financial security. Central government employees who opt for this option are covered under the National Pension System (NPS) and UPS. Current and future central government employees who are covered under NPS have the option to remain with the current NPS scheme or switch to UPS.

Switching to UPS is considered final and binding once it is decided. UPS can be governed through regulations issued by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). April 1, 2025, is the date on which the Integrated Pension Scheme will come into effect. Employees eligible under UPS are guaranteed a pension that is equal to 50% of their average basic pay for the 12 months preceding retirement. Pension will be proportionate for service periods ranging from 10 to 25 years. Employees will be eligible for a fully assured pension after completing at least 25 years of qualifying service. On the death of an employee, his family will be guaranteed a pension equal to 60% of the employee's pre-death pension. Employees who have worked for at least ten years will be



guaranteed a minimum pension of Rs 10,000 per month on retirement. For retirees, this guarantees a safety net.

Central government employees who have worked for at least 25 years are guaranteed a pension. This is determined by taking half of their average base salary for the 12 months before retirement. UPS offers an assured minimum pension, an assured family pension, and an assured pension indexed to inflation. As well as dearness relief, which is based on the All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW) and is equal to that for support workers. One-tenth of the monthly salary and dearness allowance is added to the gratuity for every full six-month service period. Ten percent of their salary will still be contributed by employees who choose UPS. The government will contribute 18.5 percent instead of the current 14 percent. This guarantees that no additional financial pressure will be put on workers. When employees reach retirement, UPS provides guaranteed payouts.

In the 12 months before retirement, the UPS will pay a central government employee 50% of their average basic pay as long as they have completed 25 years of service. Workers who have worked for more than ten years but less than twenty-five years will be eligible for a proportionate pension. After ten years or more of qualifying service, employees are assured a minimum payment of Rs 10,000 every month. This payment will begin on the day they would have reached the retirement age if they had continued to work for those who voluntarily retire after 25 years of service. A legally married spouse will receive a family payment of 60% of the pay admissible to the holder in the event of the payment holder's death after retirement. The guaranteed payment and the family payment will also be eligible for dearness relief, which will be determined in the same way.

For serving employees, dearness relief will be calculated in the same way as dearness allowance. UPS or guaranteed payout will not be available in case an employee resigns or is removed from

service. Unlike the previous pension scheme, UPS is a contributory scheme, which means employees will have to contribute 10% of their basic pay and dearness allowance, while the central government, which is the employer, will contribute 18%. The corpus, which is primarily invested in government debt, will ultimately determine the payout based on market returns. UPS and National Pension Scheme (NPS) are the two options available to central government employees. Unlike UPS, NPS is market-linked. There are similarities between UPS and the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) in terms of the benefits offered. However, the way it is funded is very different.

UPS receives all its funding from the budget each year, unlike OPS, which was a pay-as-you-go program. Employees can build a retirement fund through NPS, a defined contribution scheme first introduced in 2004. For those looking for a more guaranteed pension, UPS offers an option.

Author is a TV panelist

# Nuclear Families Eroding Social Morality

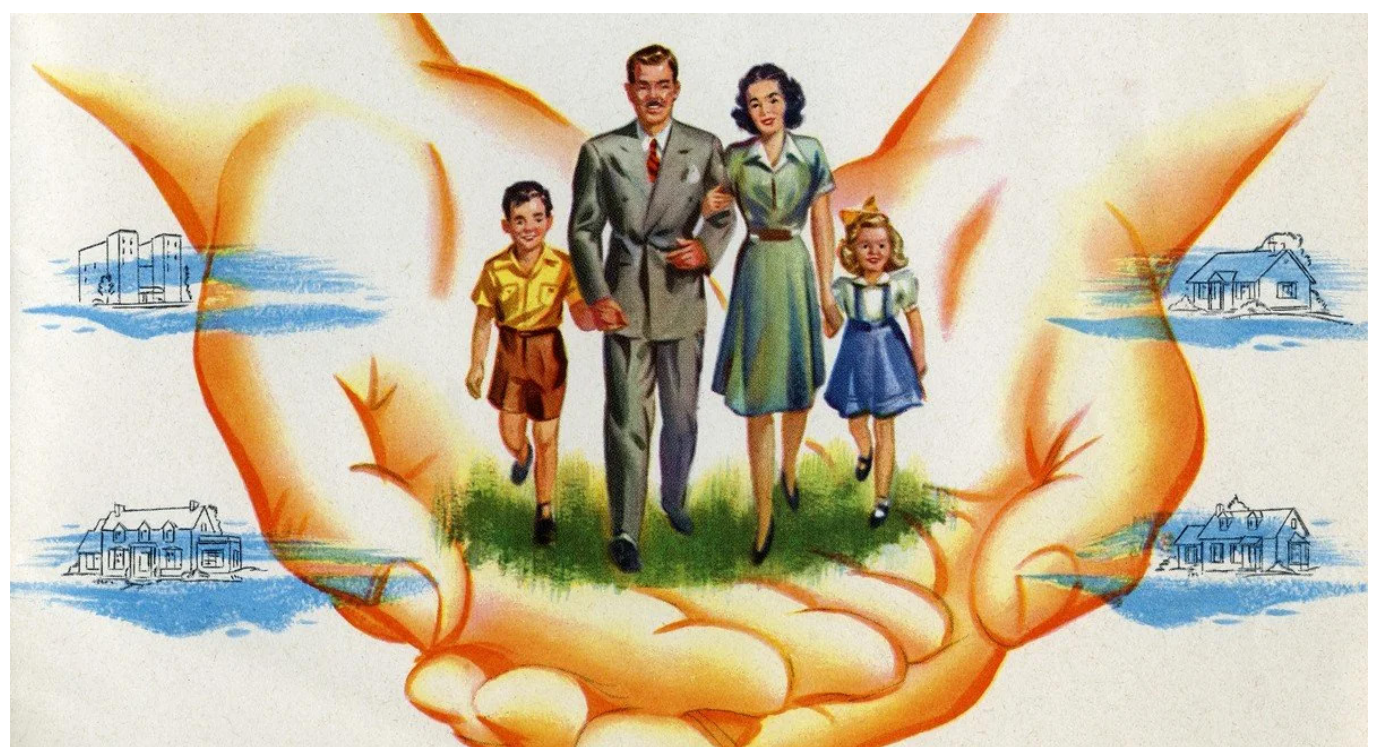


PRIYANKA SAURABH

**T**he growing influence of nuclear families, consisting of small families of parents and children, has significantly eroded the own family group, especially its traditional function in inculcating values. This shift, driven by urbanization, financial pressures, and individualistic lifestyles, has altered the way values are transmitted. While nuclear families allow for independence and personal growth, they also face challenges in transmitting cultural, moral, and ethical values that were previously reinforced through the extended family structure. Impact on the family as an institution for inculcating values. The role of the extended family in value transmission has diminished.

In traditional joint families, grandparents, uncles, and aunts played an important role in storytelling, advising, and reinforcing collective values such as identity and a sense of network for elders. With nuclear families, this intergenerational connection is weakened, restricting children's exposure to different viewpoints. Confucius emphasized one's family members as the first capacity for virtue. The decline of multi-generational living may also weaken this moral education. In nuclear families, parents bear the entire burden of supplying values, regularly combining this with professional commitments. This may lead to a shortage due to time constraints or stress. Urban nuclear families may prioritize educational fulfillment over coaching of empathy or patience, creating individualistic attitudes in children.

Nuclear families promote



values such as autonomy, decision-making, and personal responsibility, which align with current societal demands. John Stuart Mill valued individual freedom and self-reliance as qualities essential to individual and social progress, which nuclear families effectively sell. Nuclear families often prioritize the needs of their own family, which undoubtedly diminishes the awareness of collective values such as sharing, sacrifice, and mutual aid, which were essential to the joint family system. Festivals, which once strengthened networks and cultural bonds in joint families, are now celebrated in solitude. While traditional systems are weakening, nuclear families are becoming more and more dependent on schools, peer groups, and virtual systems for education.

However, a lack of personal mentoring can also impair moral development. In nuclear families, the absence of models from multiple positions can also limit children's ability to observe and study multiple vir-

ties. The growing emphasis on nuclear families has reshaped the family's position in developing values. While promoting independence and self-reliance, it often diminishes awareness of collective knowledge and cultural traditions provided by extended families. To bridge this gap, nuclear families must consciously adapt by emphasizing pleasant parenting, fostering network connections, and responsibly taking advantage of modern tools. As Confucius said, "The energy of the state is derived from the integrity of the home," highlighting that families, regardless of structure, remain valuable for shaping moral citizens.

The nuclear family is an "organic" phenomenon of primate human society. It is not an adaptive form in the evolutionary archive of human development nor a useful addition to economic society. Rather, it is almost customary in human time and social space. Its nucleus is a unit of husband-wife and parents-children. Its normal form often errs because of death, abandonment, or loss of offspring, but

its model form is maximally stable. Under all circumstances, there tend to be elderly parents of the spouses within the family and sometimes additional distant family, although those semi-external factors are due more to necessity and filial piety than to any other cause. Under different social circumstances, the nuclear family is united to the external society using various means, including "clans," castes, villages, and public regulation.

The nuclear unit in Western society has become more and more difficult for spiritual bureaucracy for moral management and for civil regulation for governance purposes. Relatives, in addition to loved ones, have lost power. This has made one's own family more "factual" than in its former state of extreme morality. As a result, the nuclear family has weakened because it is largely an organization of religion and is no longer very much controllable with the aid of litigation and public regulation. This is therefore not going well in Western countries, leading to a general loss of fundamental

primate values. This leads to the reform of family corporations, which bring "spontaneous" moral pressures back into the picture. The fate of the nuclear family, here called a "counter-revolution," will probably be one of increasing assistance from relatives in the next generation.

There has been so much change in the social structure that now there is very little difference between live-in relationships and marital affairs, as a result of which women and men have started preferring to remain single rather than getting interested in marital relationships. The fault here is not of any family but of giving preference to Western values. We Indians have now started considering it better to separate from our responsibilities rather than fulfilling them.

Now in the West, people within their own families tend to move cyclically at short intervals of several generations. A study of 55,000 families shows this suggested reversal.

Author is a Research Scholar in Political Science

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Good Morning **Kashmir**

Printer, Publisher, Owner, Editor in Chief:  
**Javed Ashraf Shah**

Bureau Chief Jammu:  
**Harbans Nagokay**

Manager:  
**Peer Sajad**

R.N.I No: JKENG/2010/36998  
Regd No: 109555

Office No: 0194-3593724

Email:  
goodmorningkashmir@gmail.com

Office Address:  
B-11, Budshah Flats, Jehangir Chowk, Srinagar-190001

Printed at:  
Khidmat Offset Printing Press, The Bund, Srinagar

Published From:  
Main Bus Stand, Near Masjid Rehmat, Lal Bazar, Srinagar - 190023

Layout Designer  
Aijaz Ahmad Dar

# That Very Important Person!



SANJAY SAXENA

**T**he stampede on the day of Mauni Amavasya at the Maha Kumbh, which resulted in the death of thirty people, has raised questions about the VIP treatment given to certain individuals during such events. The question being asked is why there is discrimination among devotees at Hindu religious sites and events. The tragic incident that occurred on January 29, during the ritual bath on Mauni Amavasya, has reignited the debate over the VIP culture. The question being raised is why, when there are no VIP privileges for devotees at Gurudwaras, mosques, or churches, there is a need for VIP darshan (viewing) only at temples. Shouldn't this system be abolished, as it creates divisions among Hindus? Anyway, the Yogi government, learning from the Mauni Amavasya tragedy, has now imposed a ban on the VIP system. All VIP passes for the Maha Kumbh have also been canceled. It would have been better if this system had been abolished earlier. This was also necessary because India's Vice President, Jagdeep Dhankhar, had already raised questions on the VIP system at religious places on January 7. At that time, he might not have expected such a tragedy. He said that the VIP system is against the principle of equality and should be completely abolished at religious sites. He emphasized that religious places are symbols of equality, where everyone stands equal before God. He also said that the concept of VIP darshan is against devotion. It is an example of inequality that must be immediately eradicated. Furthermore, he spoke about establishing equality at religious places.

During his address, Dhankhar mentioned that religious places should be seen as symbols of equality. When someone is granted special privileges, or given the status of VIP



or VVIP, it is an insult to the idea of equality. He also referred to a religious site in Karnataka that sends a message of equality.

He further noted that in recent years, there has been a positive change in the infrastructure development of religious places. These developments, he added, are not merely physical improvements but are also crucial steps to strengthen our civilization and cultural values. The reality, however, is that in many temples, the staff and priests themselves engage in money collection and provide VIP services to devotees. These devotees are allowed direct access to the sanctum sanctorum, bypassing queues and temple protocol. Meanwhile, ordinary devotees are made to wait in long lines, while VIPs are granted immediate access to the sanctum. In large temples, there are systems where VIP passes or donations ensure special darshan, while ordinary devotees have to endure pushing and shoving. VIP devotees receive special prasads, seating, and blessings from priests, while regular devotees are told to move on after a quick glance at the deity.

When it comes to pilgrimage sites

and Ganga baths, such as at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, Haridwar, or Varanasi, ordinary devotees have to wait their turn, while VIPs are given special arrangements. While common people struggle in the crowd, special bathing arrangements, security, and facilities are provided for VIPs. Sometimes, ordinary devotees are even stopped for hours so that VIPs can bathe, causing chaos in the crowds. The real cause of the Maha Kumbh tragedy will only be known after a judicial inquiry, but the question remains: why is there a VIP bathing system at a place where millions of people gather? Why are the inconveniences of common devotees increased by such VIP arrangements? The agony of VIP bathing was also evident in the words of Maharaj Premchand Giri, who said that the administration was entirely focused on VIPs, leaving ordinary devotees to fend for themselves. He accused the entire administration of serving the VIPs, engaging in appeasement.

VIPs also have their devotion, and no one can deny that, but why should they receive special treatment at the cost of common people? If thousands of crores of rupees are spent, why not

ensure that arrangements for VIPs do not cause inconvenience to ordinary devotees? Ordinary devotees walk 15-20 kilometers to bathe, while so-called VIPs arrive directly at the banks with a convoy of vehicles. This is bound to create resentment and frustration among common devotees. Just a day or two before the stampede, there were reports that many of the bamboo bridges were closed to ordinary devotees to allow so-called VIPs to display their status.

In fact, the scope of VIP culture is much broader. It is not limited to religious sites. From democracy to faith, certain individuals are granted special privileges on many occasions. The core principle of democracy states that all citizens are equal, yet in practice, some people become 'special,' whether they are on the road, in government offices, in hospitals, or in temples!

Similarly, for the security of high-ranking leaders and officials, traffic is often stopped, leaving the general public stuck in traffic for hours. Hospitals have VIP wards, while common patients cannot even get a bed. At airports and railway stations, VIP passengers enjoy spe-

cial facilities, while ordinary people stand in long queues. VIP culture is a festering wound. This is why every government promises to end VIP culture, but in reality, new ways are found to maintain it. Discrimination at temples and pilgrimage sites should also come to an end because there can be no justification for VIP and ordinary person differentiation in the presence of God.

The most important thing is that as long as the public continues to accept this culture, VIP culture will never end. The change will come only when people understand their rights and demand equality, from devotion to democracy. Many religious places charge an additional fee of 400-500 rupees to allow quicker access to the deity, bringing devotees closer to the idol. This system is insensitive to ordinary devotees who cannot afford to pay the fee due to physical and financial barriers. It creates discrimination against devotees who are unable to pay, particularly those among marginalized groups, such as women and the elderly, who face more difficulties.

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## Book Review: 'Seher Surag' By Altaf Kishtwari



RAYEES AHMAD KUMAR

**C**henab valley of Jammu Kashmir is nestled amidst towering mountains, pristine vast meadows, and crystal clear water bodies. Its beauty is resplendent, enticing both local and nonlocal populace.

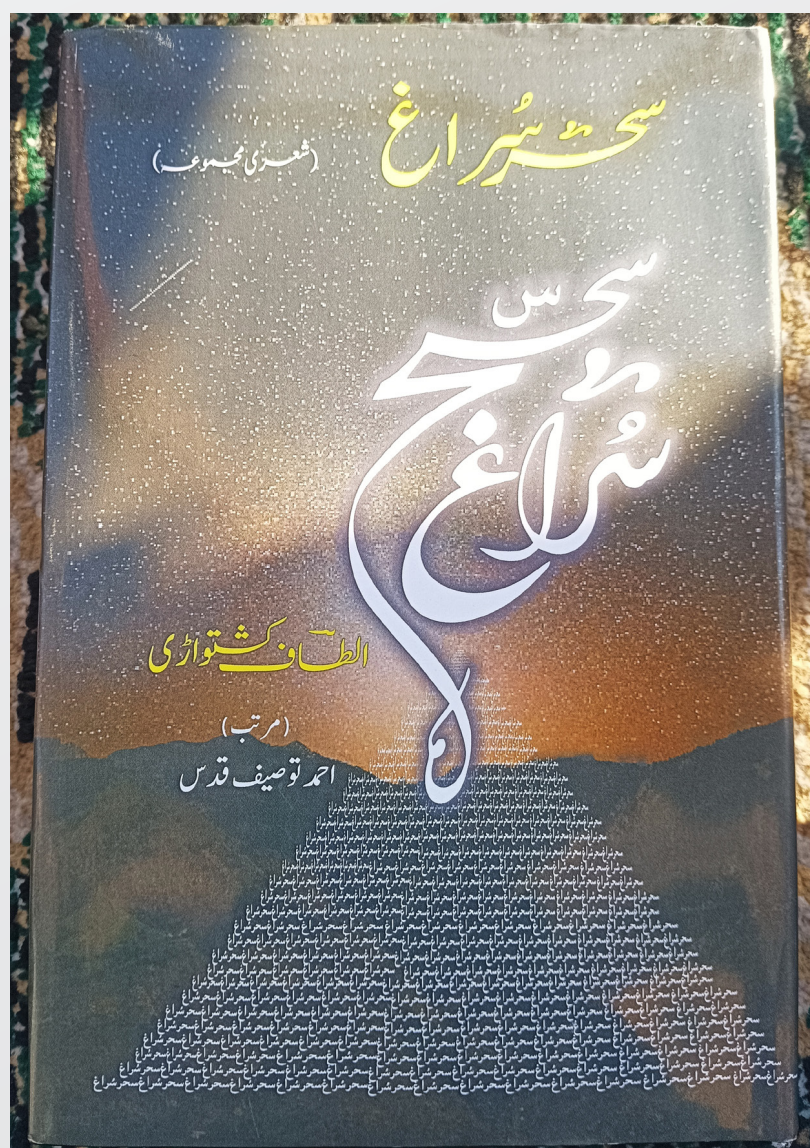
The literary brilliance of this region has been radiating since ages. Having produced legendary poets, litterateurs, artists, vocalists, and intellectuals, it is indubitably evident that this fertile land has been divinely blessed.

Rasa Jawdani, GhulamNabiDolwal, Bashir Bhadarwahi, Raashid Jahangir and Wali Mohammad AseerKishtwari are some of its literary giants, whose pen has been painting emotional and cultural themes for decades. In contemporary times also, we see newer faces depicting literary prowess through their poetry and prose writings.

Among such decent literary figures stands one AltafKishtwari. Born in 1963 to an illiterate but humble father who had been an ironsmith by profession, AltafKishtwari has served as a police cop and during his service tenure, he has composed hundreds of poems, Ghazalsetc which came to limelight in the form of the collection "SeherSurag" only after his superannuation in 2023.

This poetry collection spanning 364 pages is published by Tafheem Publications Rajouri. Its cover is adorably designed and dedicated by the author to his mother, spouse, three sons and the lone daughter. While writing a detailed note on the Ghazals of AltafKishtwari, Prof KawsarMazhari of JamiaMilliaIslamiauniversity, commends the literary adeptness of poet.

According to him, AltafKishtwari uses beautiful imagery to uncover



what he has felt and endured in life through his poetry. Ahmad Tawseef, the beloved son of Altaf has written an insightful essay about the literary brilliance of his father. He has enumerated the virtues of a litterateur, from being a farsighted human to the one influencing reader's mind and heart.

According to Tawseef, a writer's focal point never remains an indi-

vidual rather he always intends to address the society. He further reiterates that a litterateur unlike other people, feels societal ills and evils intensely and he aspires to revolutionize the downtrodden society through his writings. He proclaims that his father isn't lacking any skill or virtue, which a seasoned or well versed poet owns.

Despite frail and infirm family

background, he hasn't let his literary works to get spoiled. AltafKishtwari while deliberating upon his literary journey, reveals his initial interests towards drawings and paintings followed by writing poetry to give vent to his thoughts and emotions. Initially he would receive mandatory and requisite tips about poetry from accomplished and adept poets of Pirpanchal region while being posted there.

In his note, he has expressed his gratitude to all who assisted him in one or the other way to compile this collection. As a devoted Muslim, AltafKishtwari has firstly written the two poems praising God (Hamud) and Prophet-SAW(Naat) in this book followed by a manqabat about Baba Fariddudinra. It reflects his faith and devotion towards Allah, Prophet saw and sufi saints like Baba Faridra. AltafKishtwari's style of composing poetic items is unique and his word usage is a testament to his memory power and poetic prowess. It seems that he thinks multiple times before incorporating a word or phrase in couplets.

Lafzoonkotalneketuawzanhai-alag, Naswarkaisetulainwosamaanhai-alag. Through this handsome couplet, he tries to make a reader understand that words which a speaker speaks during interaction aren't like things which we utilize in daily lives. In fact their weighting and measures too are different. Dour huyehu jab se tum is duniya se, Har pal bas mere hi sayelagtehu.

This one of a prettiest ghazal has been meticulously and ardously crafted to eulogize poet's beloved. According to poet his beloved, who no more now is accompanying him seems to entice his flower garden, acting like a shadow to relieve him from scorching heat, garnishing the flower vases of his room and even gossiping with him as he always stays closer to his heart.

Dilidharhaimagarudhartuhai, Aankmerihainazartuhai. This couplet of a seductively composed and bewitchingly crafted ghazal reflects the pain of poet as he is vehemently missing his beloved. Gaza main aaj bi safakamunkadushman, Diyehay-

atkeharroz hi bujatahai. From last many months we have been witnessing the devastation of Gaza at the hands of Israel and no one caring about the agony of these depressed people, acting merely as mute spectators.

The poet has deeply felt the pain and painted on paper. Aag main phir se utarkaryakaron, Shahar se tereguzarkaryakaron. Using simplest words, the poet has prioritised his message and thought to be easily comprehended by a reader. Ye koyalkaisanagmagarahihai, Mere dilkobuhuttadparahihai.

Through the imageries of dove, birds, roofs etc poet has skillfully composed the verses of ghazal. Patharzarame bar keyahansehrahaahoon main, Iksach hi haikijiskoabikehrahahoon main. In this egocentric world, finding an altruistic person is quite arduous. One who always speaks truth and is candour, often endures the pain and sufferings caused by the society. Same has been elegantly pictured in this couplet. Haiazil se hi yahanlikihui-hijratapni, Iknagar se hameabaur-nagarjanahai.

Death is an ultimate reality and no one even atheist can't deny this universal truth. This world is mortal and we are dwelling temporarily here but our everlasting abode lies somewhere else. Tirmaragalatnishane par, Woshikarishikar hi kabtha. This couplet reflects the poetic adroitness and deftness of poet to weave adorable compositions.

While going through the poetry of AltafKishtwari, it is evident that he has exhibited agony, melancholy, sadness, loneliness, pain and helplessness in his poetry. This collection of a Hamud, Naat, Manqabat and 200 Ghazals is full of imageries.

Kashmir's culture and unique ways of living too have been mentioned through the poetry. I congratulate the author for this splendid collection and suggest Urduenthusiasts to go through the pages of this book as it will enhance their poetic prowess and knowledge.

(The author is a columnist hailing from Qazigund Kashmir)

# 10 Superfoods That Can Boost Your Energy Like Caffeine

**S**uperfoods can help boost energy by providing the body with essential nutrients, antioxidants, and slow-releasing carbohydrates that maintain energy levels without causing the spikes and crashes often associated with caffeine. Unlike caffeine, which primarily stimulates the central nervous system for a temporary boost, many superfoods work by nourishing the body at a cellular level, improving metabolism, reducing inflammation, and enhancing overall vitality. These foods provide a natural and sustained energy boost, making them excellent alternatives to caffeine. Read on as we share a list of superfoods you can add to your diet to boost energy.

10 Superfoods that can boost your energy similar to caffeine

1. Chia seeds  
Packed with omega-3 fatty acids, fibre, and protein, chia seeds provide a sustained energy release. They help stabilise blood sugar levels and improve hydration, as they absorb water and form a gel-like consistency. Add them to smoothies, yogurt, or water for a quick energy boost.

2. Quinoa  
Known as a complete protein, quinoa contains all



nine essential amino acids, along with complex carbohydrates and magnesium. These nutrients fuel your muscles and prevent fatigue. Quinoa's low glycemic index ensures a steady release of energy, making it ideal for meals or snacks.

3. Bananas  
Rich in natural sugars, potassium, and vitamin B6,

bananas provide a quick and sustained energy boost. They also help replenish electrolytes lost during exercise, making them a perfect pre- or post-workout snack.

4. Sweet potatoes  
Sweet potatoes are high in complex carbohydrates, fibre, and vitamins like B6 and C. These nutrients improve energy metabolism

and provide a steady supply of glucose to the body, keeping you energised throughout the day.

5. Nuts and seeds  
Almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds are rich in healthy fats, protein, and magnesium. These nutrients support energy production at a cellular level by improving mito-

chondrial function. Keep a handful of mixed nuts and seeds as a convenient snack.

6. Goji berries  
These bright red berries are packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and amino acids. Goji berries help improve oxygen utilisation and reduce fatigue, making them a great addition to smoothies, cereals, or trail

mix.

7. Spinach  
Spinach is loaded with iron, which supports red blood cell production and oxygen transport, essential for sustained energy. It's also rich in magnesium and B vitamins, which play a vital role in energy metabolism. Add spinach to salads, soups, or smoothies for an energy-

boosting meal.

8. Oats  
Oats are a powerhouse of complex carbohydrates and fibre, providing a slow and steady release of energy. They also contain iron and magnesium, essential for oxygen transport and muscle function. Start your day with a bowl of oatmeal topped with nuts and fruits for a long-lasting energy boost.

9. Avocados  
Avocados are high in monounsaturated fats, which provide a sustained energy source. They also contain potassium and B vitamins, which support energy production and prevent fatigue. Use avocados in salads, spreads, or smoothies for a nutrient-rich boost.

10. Dark chocolate  
Dark chocolate with at least 70% cocoa contains natural stimulants like theobromine and flavonoids that improve blood flow to the brain and muscles, enhancing energy and focus. Opt for a small piece of dark chocolate as a midday pick-me-up.

These superfoods not only provide energy but also nourish the body holistically, improving overall health and vitality. Incorporating them into your diet can help you maintain consistent energy levels without the need for caffeine.

## FROM THE FRONT PAGE .....

### 1 Lakh Devotees

delivered sermons, noting the significance of Me'raj-ul-Aalam and reminding the faithful of the Prophet's (PBUH) journey and its lessons for humanity.

Wahid Bhat, a devotee from Tral, said that every year, he makes it a point to visit Hazratbal on this occasion. "It is a day of blessings, and witnessing the holy relic strengthens our faith," said Wahid.

Meanwhile, authorities also made arrangements to facilitate the smooth conduct of prayers. "Security personnel were deployed in and around the shrine, while traffic management plans ensured a hassle-free experience for the devotees," said an official—(KNO)

### Youth Our Hope

He said the historic participation in the Republic Day celebrations, securing several prestigious awards and accolades has reinforced the NCC's vital role in nurturing future leaders of the nation.

"NCC Cadets have always shown exceptional skills, discipline and discharged their duties with dedication and commitment. I must applaud the idea and energy of our young cadets to develop and improve the society and address the challenges through innovative solutions and selfless service," Sinha said.

"Spirit of NCC will help them to power the mission of peace and progress and to achieve the goal of constructive social changes. NCC cadets should motivate and encourage youngsters to contribute in nation building activities," he added.

The LG further asked the NCC cadets to work on five resolutions- rapid development of Jammu Kashmir, quality of life to the citizens, creation of social units dedicated to nation building, inspire constructive social change through the ideals and values of NCC and ensure the participation of every section of the society in nation's development journey.

He felicitated the Cadets with the Certificates of Excellence for their significant contributions to the success of the contingent.

To mark the occasion, Maj Gen A. Bevli, VSM, Additional Director General of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Directorate, presented a memento to LG as a token of gratitude for his continuous support to the NCC's initiatives.

The vibrant cultural performances by the NCC Cadets symbolising India's unity in diversity received special appreciation from the LG.

A total of 127 cadets of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh NCC Directorate had participated in this year's Republic Day celebration. 17 NCC cadets were selected to march on the Kartavya path and 05 cadets were selected for Guard of Honour.

SUO Ekta Kumari led the All India NCC Girls Contingent during the Republic Day Parade 2025 on Kartavya Path, earning appreciation from the President of India and the DG NCC Commendation Card.

JUO Abida Afreen, recognized for her outstanding performance, has been honoured with the Raksha Mantri Commendation Card. She has also been selected to scale Mt. Everest later this year, serving as a role model and an inspiration for aspiring youth. SUO Ekta, Cadet Alankrita Sharma, ANO Dr. Lt Nitika Kundan and Second Officer Ashaq Hussain were honoured with DG NCC Commendation Cards for their exceptional contributions during the camp.

The Contingent Commander, Col Amit Bhardwaj, and Nb Sub Yashbir Singh were also honoured with DG NCC Medalion. Furthermore, 8 cadets from the contingent were awarded the prestigious DG NCC Medallions for their exceptional performance.

Senior Officers and Instructors of J&K and Ladakh NCC Directorate, officials of School education department and Raj Bhawan were also present on the occasion.

### Supreme Court Issues

sought an interim relief underlining the necessity of government-issued welfare stamps used on pleadings, typically published at the request of a bar council.

He pointed out that in the absence of a bar council, the high court was perform-

ing the relevant functions.

He further argued that he is pressing for an interim relief. "Your lordships are aware of the welfare tickets. The welfare tickets are to be published by the government at the request of the bar council. The functions of the bar council are right now being performed by the high court. So, small indulgence. The Registrar may ask the government to print it..."

However, before he could complete it, Justice Nath interjected and stated that the Court couldn't grant an interim order. "Whatever system is there so far will continue... Is the High Court a party? Let the notice go and let them come," the court said.

The bench posted the case for the next hearing after four weeks.

### After Kashmir, Govt

those successfully used on the Jammu-Kashmir rail line," said an official.

"The project is not new, as efforts to install railway track towers in Baihna of Balh Valley were initiated five years ago but were subsequently halted. With renewed focus and momentum, authorities are now determined to complete the long-pending infrastructure project," the official added.

Pertinently, the railway line holds immense strategic importance, as it will facilitate troop movement and supplies to the China border throughout the year.

In December 2024, Member of Parliament from Mandi, Kangana Ranaut while supporting the Railways Amendment Bill 2024 in Parliament raised the issue of railway expansion in Himachal Pradesh.

She emphasized the need for a railway survey in Mandi and highlighted the benefits of connecting the region to major cities like Delhi, Chandigarh, and Ambala.

According to her, enhanced rail connectivity will significantly boost the development and economic progress of Himachal Pradesh.

### Kashmir's Hydel

This is the routine power generation but in the upcoming month, we are expecting an increase in power generation," he said.

The official further said, "We are in the middle of the lean season and this year it started earlier in comparison to previous years."

There is a total power generation capacity of around 1200 MW from the power projects of Jammu and Kashmir and 2250 MW from NHPC.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir was facing a power generation shortage of nearly 80 % in November and December months.

From across the regions, PDD was generating only 200-260 MW of power from all power projects in Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

### Jailed MP Er Rashid's

away, Abrar told reporters that not allowing his father to attend the Parliament session was a murder of democracy.

"He has been jailed for five and a half years and is not allowed to attend Parliament. This is a murder of democracy," he said.

The AIP said that the party cadres had planned to sit on a day-long hunger strike in solidarity with Rashid, who is starting an indefinite hunger strike in Tihar Jail.

Rashid was elected to Lok Sabha from

the Baramulla constituency last year defeating Omar Abdullah, now the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir with a margin of more than two lakh votes.

He also defeated Sajad Lone of the Peoples Conference (PC) in the same election.

Engineer Rashid was in Tihar Jail when he fought and won the Lok Sabha elections. He has moved an interim bail application in the Delhi High Court so that he can attend the budget session of the Parliament.

He has also pleaded for custody parole if his interim bail application is rejected by the Delhi High Court. The high court has asked the NIA to file a response to the MP's bail application. Engineer Rashid was arrested by NIA in 2019 in a terror funding case.

### PoJK Resident

Actually, they said, the man was locked in the house by a particular family before informing the army and Police in this regard.

Initially, they said, the man was questioned by the army in the camp and later shifted to Police Station Poonch. Officials' privity to it also disclosed to a local news agency GNS that a hotline message had been received by army from Pakistan counterparts in this regard.

# RAHI

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# No foreign spark ahead of this session: PM Modi takes dig at Oppn

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that for the first time in 10 years, there has been no attempt from abroad to stoke any trouble ahead of the Parliament session.

He said, "For the first time, no spark has been ignited abroad... nor is there anyone to fan the flames... This is the first session where neither external influences nor internal forces have set events into motion..."

He said since he became the Prime Minister in 2014 it had become routine for a spark to be set in a foreign country and this time, as must have been noticed by the media also, nothing like that has happened.

"I have been observing for the last 10 years, before every season, people get ready to do mischief and here, we know that there is no shortage of people to escalate it," PM Modi added.

In his customary address to the media before the beginning of a new session, PM Modi said, "Ahead of the Budget Session, I bow down to Maa Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and



prosperity." Reminiscing the Maha Lakshmi mantra, PM Modi said that he prays to the Goddess to have special blessings on the poor and the middle class. "I pray that Maa Lakshmi continues to bless the poor and middle class of our country."

He said that it is a matter of great pride for the country and the whole world that India completed 75 years as a democratic nation. "India has established itself well on the global pedestal..." the PM said, adding, "This is the first complete budget of my third term. I can con-

fidently say that in 2027, when India will complete 100 years of Independence, India will fulfil its aim of Viksit Bharat and this budget will give new energy and hope to the nation... and the 140 crore people will fulfil this vow."

"In our third term, we are committed to all-round development... we are in mission mode. Innovation, inclusion and investment -- this is the roadmap of our economic development. In this session, several historic bills will be discussed, and a lot of discussion will happen... Reform, perform and transform. The Centre

and state will work together and bring transformation. Ours is a youth-full nation, and those who are 25-26 years old today, will be the beneficiaries of Viksit Bharat and when they are 45-46 years old they will see the benefits..."

The Prime Minister said, "In this budget session, all MPs will contribute to strengthening Viksit Bharat, especially the young MPs since it is a golden opportunity for them. They will be witness to the Viksit Bharat... I hope that we will stand up to the hopes and expectations of people..."

# India set to become the world's third largest economy soon: President Murmu



**NEW DELHI:** India is set to become the world's third-largest economy, President Droupadi Murmu declared while addressing the joint sitting of Parliament on Friday.

She emphasized that the government is implementing key decisions at an accelerated pace to drive economic growth and development.

Highlighting the government's commitment to supporting farmers, President Murmu stated that Rs 41,000 crore has been distributed to millions of farmers under the PM-Kisan Samman

Nidhi scheme. This initiative continues to provide direct financial assistance to farmers, ensuring agricultural stability and rural economic growth.

She also underlined major policy reforms, including the proposal for 'One Nation, One Election', which aims to synchronize elections across the country, and the Waqf Bill, which seeks to introduce transparency in the management of Waqf properties.

Her address was also dedicated to youth empowerment and employment generation. She stressed the government's continued efforts to expand

educational opportunities and create new jobs to harness India's demographic dividend.

The President also reaffirmed the government's commitment to homeownership for the middle class, ensuring that housing schemes enable families to achieve their dream of owning a home.

She pointed out that government initiatives have successfully lifted 25 crore people out of extreme poverty, reinforcing the administration's focus on economic inclusion and social upliftment.

In a significant move towards women's financial and technical empow-

erment, President Murmu highlighted the 'Drone Didi' scheme, which provides women with training in drone technology, offering them new employment avenues in the agricultural and logistics sectors.

President Murmu expressed deep condolences for the tragic loss of lives in the Maha Kumbh Mela stampede in which at least 30 people died. She extended her sympathies to the affected families and wished a speedy recovery for the injured.

She also expressed deep sorrow over the demise of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

# Nadda strongly condemns Sonia Gandhi's 'poor thing' remark for President Murmu

**NEW DELHI:** BJP President and Union Minister J.P. Nadda has strongly condemned senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's reference to President Droupadi Murmu as a 'poor thing' while commenting on her address to Parliament.

Expressing outrage over the remark, Nadda took to social media platform X to issue a scathing response.

"I and every BJP Karyakarta STRONGLY CONDEMN the usage of the phrase 'poor thing' by Smt. Sonia Gandhi for the Honourable President of India, Droupadi Murmu Ji. The deliberate usage of such words exposes the elitist, anti-poor, and anti-tribal mindset of the Congress Party," Nadda stated.

He further demanded an unconditional apology from the Congress party, saying, "I demand that the Congress Party unreservedly apologise to the Honourable President and the tribal communities of India."

The controversy erupted earlier in the day when Sonia Gandhi, a veteran Congress leader and former party president, made the remark while



speaking to reporters outside Parliament.

Asked for her reaction to President Murmu's address, Sonia Gandhi responded, "The President was getting very tired by the end. She could hardly speak, poor thing."

She was accompanied by her children, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, both Members of Parliament.

Rahul Gandhi, too, dismissed the President's speech, saying, "Boring. No comments. Repeating the same thing again and again." The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) launched a sharp attack on the Gandhis, calling their remarks an insult to the dignity of the President and a reflection of Con-

gress' 'feudal mindset'. President Murmu, during her address earlier in the day, said the government has worked towards lifting the economy out of "policy paralysis" despite challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic and global conflicts.

She also said that the third term of the Modi government is seeing work being done at thrice the pace of previous regimes.

The President praised the government's efforts in the aviation and railway sectors and said it is working towards modernisation in the agriculture sector and aims to make it self-reliant. She also shared concerns over digital fraud and cybercrime that pose challenges to national security.

# Union Budget: Fiscal consolidation, infra spending, sector-specific incentives in focus

**NEW DELHI:** As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman prepares to present the Union Budget 2025-26 on Saturday, the government's focus is expected to be on fiscal consolidation, infrastructure spending, and sector-specific incentives, according to top global brokerages and global financial institutions.

According to Jefferies, consumer discretionary spending could be boosted by income tax cuts, and rural recovery may see positive sentiment from welfare scheme expansions.

Expansion of electronics production-linked incentives or semiconductor manufacturing schemes are positive for electronics manufacturing services stocks while an increase in renewable energy (RE) scheme allocations and tweaks in solar cell or module duties are awaited, said Jefferies in its note.

Boost to welfare schemes can be sentimentally positive for further rural recovery. The brokerage also expects a potential hike in foreign portfolio investment limit in banks



and insurance companies to 100 per cent, up from the current 74 per cent.

Expansion of the interest subsidy scheme for urban housing is expected, which can be a positive for affordable housing lenders, according to the brokerage, which added that tobacco taxation changes are unlikely in this Union Budget.

According to CLSA, any hike in excise duty on auto fuels may hit the margins of Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum, while LPG subsidy in the budget may prove to be a relief.

Increased allocations for infrastructure projects, any hike in import duty on steel, and a cut in duty on coking coal could benefit steel producers, it said.

A Bank of America note said that revenue growth may maintain a steady pace.

"Debt, not deficits, could be the 'mantra' going forward. Fiscal policy easing is likely to be in flow. GDP growth partly hinges on a revival of capex spending," it noted.

Macquarie said the government may impose import or safeguard duties to counteract the dumping of commodities from China.

According to Morgan Stanley, key things to watch are the extent of fiscal consolidation, physical and social infrastructure and sector-level incentives or spends.

The Union Budget will be presented by Finance Minister Sitharaman on February 1.

# Politics over Yamuna is disgraceful, EC must seek answer from UP govt too: Priyanka Chaturvedi

**NEW DELHI:** The political debate surrounding AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal's claim about the Yamuna river being poisoned, continues to stir controversy in the run up to the Delhi Assembly elections. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi has weighed in, stressing that cleaning the sacred Yamuna River should not be reduced to a political game.

Speaking to IANS, Priyanka Chaturvedi said, "It's disgraceful how politics has sunk to such depths. We witnessed this in Maharashtra, and now we're seeing the same with the Yamuna in Delhi. The river also flows through Uttar Pradesh, where there are serious concerns about its cleanliness."

Reflecting on her recent visit to Mathura, Chaturvedi added, "When I went to Mathura, the locals themselves said how dirty the Yamuna has become. The river holds deep spiritual significance for us, yet it remains neglected. The BJP government, which had promised to clean it, hasn't delivered. The Mathura MP is also from the BJP. To politicise the cleanup of Yamuna is cheap, and it's

the BJP that has initiated this. It would've been better if the Election Commission of India (ECI) had demanded answers from the Uttar Pradesh government too."

She concluded, "Cleaning the Yamuna is not just a government responsibility but a collective one, tied to our faith. There should be no politics over it — just action."

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had alleged that the Haryana government was intentionally poisoning the river by increasing ammonia levels.

After his complaint to the ECI, the poll panel has sought a clarification from him. The Commission had asked for evidence to back up his statement, but the response was deemed unclear.

Ahead of the Assembly elections, the battle for Delhi is intensifying, with the AAP, BJP, and Congress pulling out all stops to win over voters ahead of the February 5 polls. While the outcome of this high-stakes contest won't be known until February 8, all three parties have unveiled their manifestos, detailing their promises in exchange for control of the national Capital.

# Unfortunate, unacceptable: Rashtrapati Bhavan reacts to Sonia Gandhi's 'poor thing' remark

**NEW DELHI:** Rashtrapati Bhavan has strongly responded to Congress MP Sonia Gandhi's remark referring to President Droupadi Murmu as a "poor thing".

In a statement, Rashtrapati Bhavan clarified that the President was not fatigued at any point during her address to the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on Friday.

"Nothing could be farther from the truth. The President was not tired at any point. Indeed, she believes that speaking up for marginalized communities, women, and farmers, as she was doing in



her address, can never be tiring," the statement read.

The President's office also suggested that some political leaders might have misunderstood the nuances of Indian languages like Hindi, leading to an incorrect impression. "In any case, such comments

are in poor taste, unfortunate, and entirely avoidable," the statement added.

Furthermore, Rashtrapati Bhavan condemned statements from prominent Congress leaders that allegedly demeaned the dignity of the President's office. These leaders had

claimed that President Murmu appeared exhausted by the end of her speech and could hardly speak.

The controversy erupted when Sonia Gandhi, a veteran Congress leader and former party president, made the remark while speaking to reporters outside Parliament. Asked for her reaction to the President's address, she responded, "The President was getting very tired by the end. She could hardly speak, poor thing."

She was accompanied by Congress MPs Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Rahul Gandhi dismissed the President's speech as "boring," adding, "No comments. Repeating the same thing

again and again."

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) launched a sharp attack on the Gandhis, calling their remarks an insult to the dignity of the President and reflective of Congress' "feudal mindset".

BJP President and Union Minister J.P. Nadda condemned Sonia Gandhi's comment, stating, "I and every BJP Karyakarta STRONGLY CONDEMN the usage of the phrase 'poor thing' by Smt. Sonia Gandhi for the Honourable President of India, Droupadi Murmu Ji. The deliberate usage of such words exposes the elitist, anti-poor, and anti-tribal mindset of the Congress Party."

# Sponsored conspiracy to tarnish Hindutva's image: Bageshwar Baba on Maha Kumbh stampede

**NEW DELHI:** Bageshwar Dham head priest Dharendra Shastri said on Friday that the Maha Kumbh tragedy was a "planned and sponsored" conspiracy to dent Hindutva's image.

Talking to IANS in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, he said that the incident was tragic, heart-wrenching and unimaginable.

While saying that overcrowding was one of the reasons for the stampede in which 30 people were killed and over 60 were injured, he claimed that there was a larger conspiracy aimed at distorting Hindutva's image.

Soon after the stampede

the Opposition slammed the Uttar Pradesh government for the mismanagement of the crowd and the VIP culture.

After the stampede that took place in the wee hours of Wednesday, the Uttar Pradesh government introduced fresh measures for better crowd management.

The government has restricted vehicular movement, cancelled VIP passes, increased security deployment, and ended needless restrictions on the pontoon bridges that connect the Mela City.

The entry of four-wheelers and buses from outside Prayagraj has been banned till February 4.

After the incident, a

three-member judicial panel was formed to probe the reason behind the stampede. Members of the Judicial Enquiry Commission will reach Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj at around 1 pm on Friday.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also announced a compensation of Rs 25 lakh for the families of those who died in the stampede.

Incidentally, following the tragic stampede at the Maha Kumbh a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed before the Supreme Court on Thursday seeking legal action against authorities and officials for their "negligent conduct".

# Ranji Trophy: Ardent Delhi fans' hopes dashed as Kohli is bowled for six on homecoming

IANIS

**NEW DELHI :** In Hollywood movie The Shawshank Redemption, Morgan Freeman playing Red says, "Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane." In reply, Andy Dufresne, played by Tim Robbins, said, "Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies."

It was this theme that brought scores of fans to day two of play in the Ranji Trophy match between Delhi and Railways at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. They took their seats early in anticipation of a big knock from their hometown lad Virat Kohli.

But that promising hope didn't translate into desired reality as Kohli's off-stump was sent for a ride by Railways pacer Himanshu Sangwan, who till last domestic season was in Delhi's set-up, ending his stay of 23 minutes at the crease.

As the batting stalwart walked back to the pavilion named on him after making six off 15 balls, spectators who had lined up outside the venue from as early as 6 am, started to leave the stands quickly, with their hope of something big coming from Kohli's willow crushed and not getting what they wanted.

If day one's play was all about



an overwhelming number of people creating the 'mahaul' of Kohli's homecoming, day two's morning was all about the hope of spectators seeing him hit the ground running and put up a big score, just like how Cheteshwar Pujara (99) and Ajinkya Rahane (96) did in their respec-

tive Ranji Trophy games.

From the time Delhi's innings began, cheers grew loud from the Bishan Singh Bedi stand whenever Yash Dhull or Sanat Sangwan were in a tangle or involved in an lbw shout. With a padded-up Kohli sitting next to head coach

Sarandeep Singh near boundary ropes, people were eager to see a wicket to fall quickly and even shouted 'out hai, out hai' whenever Dhull defended well.

But on the second-last ball of the 24th over, Dhull was trapped lbw for 22 by Rahul Sharma and the cheer from the crowd made

it sound like it was the most celebrated dismissal in a Ranji Trophy game in ages. Once Dhull's lbw was confirmed, Kohli walked into the rapturous atmosphere and thunderous applause from his home crowd chanting his name in unison, making the air around

the venue electric.

Kohli had a conversation with Sangwan before proceeding to take his guard. The first ball he faced from Rahul, it was a yorker coming in from around the wicket which Kohli looked to flick, but missed it. On the very next ball, Kohli went for a drive on a full delivery angled across him, with his bottom hand coming off the bat giving very nervy vibes, as compared to the positivity he generated in his prime.

While Kohli practised an imaginary square cut at the non-striker's end, it never made it to the picture as Railways' bowlers never allowed Kohli to go beyond the defence and dabs while being beaten twice by Kunal's pace outside the off-stump, something which triggered his downfall all times in the Test tour of Australia.

Kohli broke the shackles prepared by Railways' bowlers on his 14th delivery when he walked down the pitch to unfurl a powerful and ferocious straight drive against Sangwan, which was greeted with a round of applause from the partisan crowd.

But on the very next ball, the applause made way for pin-drop silence as Kohli danced too far down the pitch towards an incoming delivery from Sangwan. In his attempt to drive expansively, Kohli didn't

account for the inward movement which jagged in from outside the off-stump and low bounce as the ball went past his bat to send the off-stump on a cartwheel ride.

People in the stands were worried if the outside off-stump deliveries would get Kohli out again, but it was the inward movement which consumed him. As Sangwan, a resident of Najafgarh and product of Sporting Club in the national capital, celebrated the dismissal by yelling loudly, Kohli played back dejected and played an imaginary drive while wondering if he had tried playing at the ball with a straighter bat.

With Kohli walking back, fans made a beeline to exit the stadium hurriedly. Some faithful fans, though, still stayed back in the Bishan Singh Bedi stand and cheered for Kohli four times by inching closer to the fence near the dressing room balcony.

It was the hope of having Kohli's glimpse even after he fell which kept those bunch of fans back and would propel them to be back to the stadium if Kohli gets a chance to bat again. Maybe hope is indeed the good thing which never dies, though it may not give the desired result, as the fans in the Arun Jaitley Stadium experienced on Friday morning.

## Ranji Trophy: Badoni and Mathur fifties carry Delhi to 93-run lead against Railways

IANIS

**NEW DELHI :** The crowd at Arun Jaitley Stadium on the second day was awaiting a Virat Kohli special, but they were treated to fantastic fifties by Delhi captain Ayush Badoni and all-rounder Sumit Mathur as the hosts took a 93-run lead after reaching 334/7 in 96 overs at stumps on Saturday.

On a day Kohli made just six in his return to the first-class competition after more than 12 years, Badoni treated the crowd to a superb show of batsmanship by making 99, laced with 12 fours and three towering sixes off coming just 77 balls. He also became the fourth batter of the ongoing round to be out in the 90s after Upendra Yadav, Cheteshwar Pujara, and Ajinkya Rahane. On the other hand, Mathur was solid in staying at the crease for long while hitting seven fours to be unbeaten on 78 off 189 balls. The duo was also involved in a 133-run stand for the fifth wicket to bail Delhi out of trouble on a pitch that had started to show signs of variable bounce.

Day Two's play began with Delhi surging ahead quickly, as Railways bowl-



ers were not at their consistent best in their lines and lengths in the first 50 minutes. Though the bowlers drew some edges and were involved in some lbw shots, there were no rewards for them as Yash Dhull got three fours off Himanshu Sangwan. On the other hand, Sanat Sangwan, despite being edgy, got a couple of boundaries under his kitty, as he raised the fifty of his partnership with Dhull. But in the 24th over, was trapped lbw on 32 by Rahul Sharma, and it brought Kohli to the crease, with the crowd giving him a rousing reception.

Coming at four, Kohli was nervy and looked rusty before unfurling a powerful straight drive off Sangwan. But on the very next ball, Himanshu had the last laugh as his inswinger sent Kohli's off-stump on a cartwheel ride, as he fell for six off 15 balls, with fans making a beeline to exit the stadium. Himanshu again sent an off-stump flying, this time of his surname namesake Sanat, and dismissed him for 30 off 81 balls. From there, Badoni and Mathur joined forces to share a counter-attacking fifth-wicket partnership worth 133 runs.

Captain Badoni was proactive at the crease - playing his square-of-the-wicket shots with soft hands while dancing down the pitch on certain occasions to hit T20-style lofts on both sides of the wicket. At times, he rocked back to pull and heave to get his fifty in just 34 balls till the time lunch arrived.

Post lunch, Badoni and Mathur brought up the century of their partnership, with the highlight being the former smacking spinner Ayan Chaudhari for two sixes and a four to take him to 99. But he couldn't get his century as

his attempt to slog-sweep off Karn Sharma resulted in him being caught by short fine leg. Even as 200 fans placed themselves near the right side of the Bishan Singh Bedi stand to cheer and have a glimpse of Kohli, who was sitting in the Delhi team's balcony, Mathur marched forward to bring up his fifty and got support from wicketkeeper-batter Pranav Rajvanshi in stitching a 63-run partnership for the sixth wicket.

Shortly after Delhi got into the lead against Railways, Rajvanshi went for a cut-off Chaudhari, but the ball kept low and took out his off-stump. Shivam Sharma, though, hit a brace of boundaries off Chaudhari to bring up Delhi's 300. But after being dropped on 10, Shivam was dismissed for 14 when wicketkeeper Upendra Yadav leapt to his right to take a catch off Kunal's bowling. From there, Mathur and Siddhant Sharma (15 not out) hung around to ensure Delhi didn't suffer any more damage till stumps were called.

Brief scores: Railways 241 trail Delhi 334/7 in 96 overs (Ayush Badoni 99, Sumit Mathur 78 not out; Himanshu Sangwan 2-46, Kunal Yadav 2-82) by 93 runs.

## 38th National Games: Maharashtra's endurance champions excel with 6 medals in Triathlon



IANIS

**DEHRADUN :** Maharashtra delivered an outstanding performance in the triathlon events - Individual Triathlon, Mixed Relay, and Duathlon - as the state dominated the endurance competition at the 38th National Games, securing a total of six medals, including two gold, two silver, and two bronze. In the recently announced Duathlon (Individual) event, Maharashtra athletes won one silver and one bronze, bringing the state's total medal count to six. Maharashtra's triathlon team showcased remarkable skills, with Parth Sachin Miraje winning bronze in the Individual Triathlon (Men), while Dolly Devdass Patil claimed gold and Mansi Vinod Mohite secured silver in the same

event for women.

Additionally, Dolly Patil won silver in the Duathlon, and Mansi Mohite clinched bronze. Maharashtra strengthened its medal tally by securing a gold medal in the Mixed Relay event, solidifying its position at the top of the triathlon medal standings. Among other states, Madhya Pradesh won a total of three medals, including one gold, one silver, and one bronze. Manipur delivered an outstanding performance in the individual triathlon, winning two gold medals, and secured a gold in the duathlon. Services won a silver and a bronze medal in duathlon, while Tamil Nadu secured a bronze medal in the mixed relay.

Maharashtra's stellar performance in triathlon events has propelled the state to the top of the leaderboard in the discipline.

**Duathlon (Individual) Results:**

- Men:**
    - Gold: Sarungbam Athouba Meitei (Manipur) - 49:29 minutes
    - Silver: Adarsh Muralidharan Sinimol (SSCB) - 49:44 minutes
    - Bronze: Sapan Panchal (SSCB) - 50:35 minutes
  - Women:**
    - Gold: Aadhya Singh (Madhya Pradesh) - 56:43 minutes
    - Silver: Dolly Devdass Patil (Maharashtra) - 57:28 minutes
    - Bronze: Mansi Vinod Mohite (Maharashtra) - 59:54 minutes
- Maharashtra's triumph fuels the spirit of competition, motivating athletes and showcasing its excellence in endurance sports.

## Fakhar Zaman, Faheem Ashraf back in Pakistan squad for Champions Trophy

AGENCIES

**F**akhar Zaman has been named in Pakistan's squad for the Champions Trophy, marking his return after he fell out with the PCB over a social media post in October 2024. In a squad that PCB called "horses for courses", Faheem Ashraf, who last played international cricket in 2023, has also been called up. Khushdil Shah and Saud Shakeel are also included. The same squad will also play the ODI tri-series against South Africa and New Zealand in the build-up to the Champions Trophy.

The squad confirms what was widely feared within Pakistan: Saim Ayub remains unavailable because of the ankle fracture he sustained during the Cape Town Test. At the time, it was announced he would be out for six weeks, but it was believed his chances of recovering in time for the Champions Trophy were exceptionally slim. Earlier today, PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi confirmed Ayub's

return remained "at least four weeks" away.

Abdullah Shafique's loss of form has cost him a place in the squad. In the recently concluded ODI series against South Africa, which Pakistan won 3-0, he became the first player to be dismissed for a duck in every match of a series. It means Pakistan will go in with a completely different opening pairing, with Fakhar likely to pair up with either Babar Azam or Saud Shakeel, with the PCB citing Babar's success opening in Test cricket as a potential factor to consider.

"Fakhar's opening partner could be either Babar Azam or Saud Shakeel, depending on various factors such as conditions, opposition and match strategy," a statement from Asad Shafiq, a member of the selection panel, said. "Both players are highly capable at the top of the order, with Babar being particularly seasoned in the role, regularly opening in T20Is and also excelling in the Cape Town Test by scoring two half-centuries in Saim Ayub's



absence."

The squad also retains its pace-heavy element that saw Pakistan win three successive away ODI series towards the end of last year. Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf and Mohammad Hasnain are all part of the final 15, with only one specialist spinner in Abrar Ahmed. Neither Sufiyan Mueqem, who took four wickets on debut in the only ODI he played, nor Shadab Khan, who captained his side to Champions Cup glory in September, have made the final cut.

"One of the standout qualities of this side is its flexibility - an essential trait in today's modern-day cricket," Asad Shafiq, a member of the selection panel. "We are confident that this squad strikes the right balance between youth and experience, and has all bases covered. Each player has been chosen with a clear role in mind, ensuring the captain has versatile options at his disposal."

Irfan Khan, who was eyed by

the selection committee as a key component of Pakistan's middle order and feted for his fielding, also drops out. Faheem's return comes off the back of limited ODI cricket, having had an indifferent Champions Cup in September. Strong showings with the bat in the President Cup in October, however, seem to have played a part in earning him what appeared an unlikely recall.

Pakistan's first game at the Champions Trophy comes against New Zealand in Karachi on February 19, following which they go to Dubai to play against India. They play their final group game against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi on February 27.

Pakistan squad for Champions Trophy 2025  
Fakhar Zaman, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel, Tayyab Tahir, Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Rizwan (capt, wk), Khushdil Shah, Salman Agha, Usman Khan, Abrar Ahmed, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Hasnain, Haris Rauf, Naseem Shah