

# Good Morning Kashmir

17th Year Of Publication



**Narendra Modi**  
@narendramodi

To those who may not have secured the desired outcome in the Civil Services Examination, I understand that such moments can be difficult. However, this is only one step in a larger journey. Many opportunities lie ahead, both in future examinations and in the many avenues through which you can contribute to our nation. My best wishes for the road ahead.

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## CM Reviews Compliance Reduction 2.0 To Ease Business Regulations In J&K



GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

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

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

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, alongside Ministers Sakee-

na Itoo, Javed Ahmed Rana, Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma. Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani also participated in the deliberations.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Additional Chief Secretary for the Chief Minister's Office Dheeraj Gupta. Those also present included Financial Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary of the Power Development Department Ashwani Kumar, Financial Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary of the Tourism Department Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma besides other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary presented the current status of the ongoing reforms, highlighting the objective to substantially reduce the permissions required to start and run a business.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah conducted an in-depth review of each intervention area, seeking specific timelines from the departments concerned. He underscored that the purpose of regulations is to

## Almond Blossoms Paint Kashmir Pink, Signal Arrival Of Spring

Tourists Throng Gardens As First Signs Of Spring Appear

REHAN QAYOOM

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

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

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

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

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

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



attracts tourists eager to witness the first colours of spring.

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

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

The garden, located at the

foothills of the Zabarwan range overlooking Dal Lake, is expected to feature nearly 1.8 million tulips of around 70 to 75 varieties this season, offering visitors another major attraction in the coming weeks.

Last year, the garden witnessed a record footfall of more than 8.5 lakh visitors during its month-long opening, highlighting the growing interest of tourists in Kashmir's spring bloom.

The almond blossoms usually last for a few weeks before the delicate flowers

## LG Congratulates J&K Candidates Who Cleared UPSC CSE-2025

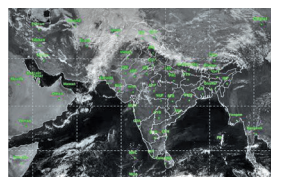
GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Manoj Sinha on Friday congratulated aspirants from Jammu and Kashmir who successfully cleared the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2025, saying their achievement has brought pride to the Union Territory.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said the success of the candidates will inspire young aspirants across J&K to pursue their dreams and work hard towards achieving their goals.

He wished all the successful candidates a bright and fulfilling career in public service, expressing hope that they would contribute meaningfully to the development and progress of the nation.

## Weather Pattern To Change In Coming Days: MeT



GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

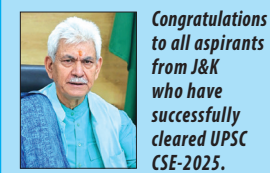
The weatherman, stated that maximum temperatures in many parts of Kashmir division remained 10-12 degrees Celsius above normal, while several areas of Jammu division recorded temperatures about 10-12 degrees above the seasonal average.

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

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

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 31.8°C, around 7.5 degrees above the normal

Office of LG J&K  
@OfficeOfLGJandK



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

## 16 Candidates From J&K Clear UPSC Exam 2025



SIANS

**SRINAGAR:** Bringing laurels to Jammu and Kashmir, 16 candidates from the Union Territory, made it to the final select list of the all India Civil Services Examination 2025 on Friday.

Jubilant broke out in the homes and neighbourhood of these 16 candidates, who made it to the coveted selection list.

Of the selected candidates from Jammu and Kashmir, Suvan Sharma secured 148th rank, Towseef Ahmad Ganie secured 254th rank, Ritika 456th rank, Sooyash Shivam 572th rank, Muneeb Parrah at 581th rank, Ghulam Din at

683th rank, Dwarka Gaadhi at 721th rank, Akash at 747th rank, Koh-E-Safa at 763rd rank, Yasaar at 811th rank, Abhishek at 820th rank, Pankaj at 856th rank, Mohd Ajaz at 869th rank, Azhar at 886th rank, Sarfraz at 936th rank and Irfan Ahmad Lone (differently-abled candidate) at 957th rank.

It is for the first time that 16 candidates from Jammu and Kashmir made it to the final selection list of the nationwide competitive exam.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which recommended 958 candidates for appointment to various services, including

## Precautionary Restrictions Lifted

### Highspeed Mobile Internet, Prepaid Services Restored

DGP Prabhat, IGP Birdi Visit Downtown, Sensitive Areas Assess Situation

SAJID RAINA

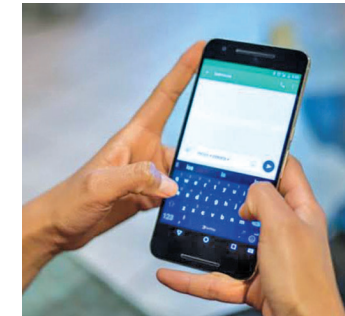
**SRINAGAR:** Authorities have decided to lift precautionary restrictions across Kashmir from Saturday onwards, while high-speed internet and prepaid mobile calling services were restored across the Valley on Friday evening.

According to the details available, the decision to lift curbs was taken after a review of the situation following congregation prayers.

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

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

Pertinently, the precautionary



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

In the days that followed, security forces maintained heightened vigil in downtown and other sensitive locations across the Valley to prevent any untoward incident.

As part of the precautionary measures, authorities had slowed down mobile internet ser-

vices to 2G speed and suspended prepaid mobile calling services across Kashmir.

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

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

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

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

Earlier in the day, Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat accompanied by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir V K Birdi, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Central

## CS Reviews Mission YUVA Progress Across J&K Districts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

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

Deputy Commissioners participated in the meeting

through video conferencing from their respective districts.

The meeting reviewed the status of awareness initiatives under Udyam Jagriti 4.0, establishment of institutional mechanisms including Project Management Units (PMUs), Small Business Development Units (SBDUs), Business Help Desks (BHDs) and engagement of Motivators and Yuva Doots. Progress regarding application processing, loan sanctioning, enterprise incubation and ecosystem development under the Mission was also assessed.

Taking note of the progress achieved so far, the Chief Secretary impressed upon the Deputy Commissioners to take earnest steps towards completing the institutional framework in their districts. He directed them to ensure

Pradesh for four years and 301 days (June 24, 1993 – April 21, 1998). He also held the additional charge of Governor of Uttar Pradesh for 77 days (May 3, 1996 – July 19, 1996).

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

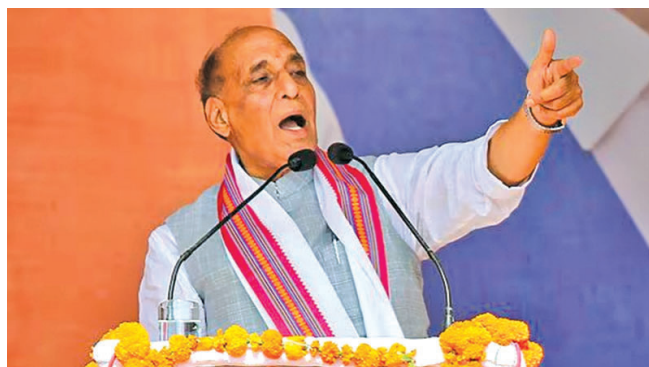
## Instability Risks Like Ongoing Gulf Crisis Becoming New Normal: Rajnath Singh

SIANS

**NEW DELHI:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday that the risks of instability caused by geopolitical rivalry across land, sea, and air, such as the current tensions in the Gulf region involving the US, Israel, and Iran, are increasingly becoming the new normal.

Speaking at the Sagar Sankalp Seminar in Kolkata on Friday, the Defence Minister spoke at length about the impact of the crisis, considering the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf for global energy security.

"Any disruption in the region directly affects oil and gas supplies worldwide, and hence, uncertainties in the region will significantly impact global trade and economies. Rising geopolitical competi-



tion across land, sea, air, and even space is surely a matter of concern. What is even more worrying is that such instability risks are becoming the new normal," Singh said.

According to him, the current development in West Asia being highly unusual, it is difficult now to make any specific and firm comment on what the

crisis will ultimately lead to. However, he added, that despite the uncertainties over the geopolitical competition, he is confident that India will provide leadership in the maritime sector. "Self-reliance is the only way out to achieve that, overcoming the supply chain disruptions," the Defence Minister said.

Claiming that in the current era of global geopolitics, oceans have once again come to the centre of the world's power balance, the Defence Minister observed that as a major maritime nation, India will have to provide leadership with confidence, capability, and a clear vision.

"In the defence sector of the country, high-end and precision technologies are being utilised. Hence, our government has, from the very beginning, believed that in this era of uncertainty, the only way to avoid supply chain disruptions is self-reliance. One of the major pillars of our vision for self-reliance is defence public sector undertakings," Singh added.

He also said that the goal of the Indian government is to make India emerge as one of the top ten global players in the sector of shipbuilding.

## Infiltration Threat Rises, Forces On High Alert Across J&K

AGENCIES

**SRINAGAR:** Security forces have been put on high alert in Jammu and Kashmir following intelligence inputs about possible infiltration attempts by terrorists along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border, official sources said on Friday.

According to security officials, several terrorist launching pads across the border have reportedly become active in recent days, raising concerns about attempts to push infiltrators into the Union Territory.

They said the Army, Border Security Force (BSF) and Police have intensified surveillance and patrolling along the borders, particularly in the Samba, Jammu, Rajouri and Kupwara sectors.

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

## J&K's Gubernatorial Legacy: Men Who Rose To Lok Bhavans

4 Politicians Among Who Held Governor's Office

AGENCIES

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

According to details collected from multiple sources, the number of persons from J&K who have held the office of Governor has now risen to five with Gupta's appointment.

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



Pradesh for four years and 301 days (June 24, 1993 – April 21, 1998). He also held the additional charge of Governor of Uttar Pradesh for 77 days (May 3, 1996 – July 19, 1996).

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# NABARD organises 'Grameen Bharat Mahotsav'

GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

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

The Mahotsav was inaugurated by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Finance, Shaileendra Kumar, in presence of Chandrashekhar Azad, Regional Director, RBI; Dr. Shubhra Sharma, MD, JKRLM, Vikas Mittal, General Manager/Officer in Charge, NABARD J&K RO and Sanjay Gupta, Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Gramin Bank.

Shaileendra Kumar visited the stalls set up by FPOs, OFPOs, SHGs and artisans. He interacted with the primary producers, artisans and

farmers and appreciated their diverse range of rural products. He offered valuable suggestions to the participating FPOs, OFPOs and SHGs.

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

FPOs from Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh highlighted value added millets and rice products aligned with the modern nutrition trends. The exhibitors from Gujarat showcased GI tagged handicrafts with strong export potential while Himachal Pradesh brought its signature handloom products including the renowned Kullu woollens.

Adding a strong local flavour, the artisans from Jammu & Kashmir displayed Kani and Sozini Pashmina shawls, Basohli Pashmina, Chikri craft, saffron, walnut, almond, honey, lemongrass products and the



celebrated GI tagged Mush-kbudji rice, offering the visitors a glimpse into the region's

vibrant rural economy.

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

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

in daily life.

Dr. Shubhra Sharma, MD, JKRLM, appreciated NABARD's efforts in bringing diverse rural primary producers/artisans/farmers onto a common platform, allowing the visitors to explore and purchase authentic products from farmers and artisans from across India. She also acknowledged NABARD's contributions towards livelihood promotion and skill development.

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

## SKUAST-K issues advisory for combating dry weather

GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

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

The university has strongly urged farmers across the Valley to adopt timely crop management practices, emphasising that the primary goal during this period must be to protect crops from heat stress and soil desiccation. For fruit growers, the most critical recommendation is the application of 4-6 inches of organic mulch, such as paddy straw or grass clippings, to tree basins to retain moisture. Experts from SKUAST-K's Division of Agrometeorology have specifically warned against the use of inorganic mulches like polythene sheets, which can inadvertently increase soil temperature



and damage root systems. In orchards lacking irrigation, the university advises delaying all fertilizer applications until sufficient soil moisture is available and cautions against excessive hoeing or heavy tractor movement that could further dry out the land. The advisory extends to field crops where growers of wheat, mustard, and peas are encouraged to monitor their fields regularly and prioritize the removal of weeds through intercultural operations to eliminate competition for limited water. Urea application in these crops

should be strictly limited to 2.5 kg per kanal and only performed when adequate moisture is present. For vegetable and floriculture sectors, particularly tulip cultivation, the university recommends light and frequent irrigation during the early morning or late evening hours. Nursery beds for sensitive crops like tomato, chili, capsicum, and cabbage should be protected with shade nets or straw coverings to mitigate heat stress. Additionally, raking the soil in orchards can help expose dormant pupae and grubs to sunlight, while the

installation of 8-10 pheromone traps per hectare is recommended to monitor for apple leaf blotch and fruit borer. The advisory also covers the fisheries sector, where maintaining dissolved oxygen levels above 6 mg/L via aeration systems is vital. Fish farmers should maintain a water depth of 1.5-2 meters and reduce feeding rates to 1-1.5 percent of body weight during low oxygen conditions, utilizing high-protein floating pellets supplemented with Vitamin C and probiotics to ensure fish health during this challenging climatic phase.

## Secretary IT reviews progress of key IT initiatives at Civil Secretariat

GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

The meeting was attended by CEO JaKeGA Mahima Madan, Additional Secretary IT Devinder Singh Bhau, Senior Director NIC Anil Kumar Sharma along with other officers and officials of the Information Technology Department and JaKeGA.

During the meeting, a detailed review was undertaken regarding several important projects including upgradation of the LAN network at the Civil Secretariat, strengthening of Wi-Fi connectivity



across government offices and implementation of the Chief Minister's Internship Scheme. Dr. Singla emphasized the need for robust digital infrastructure to support efficient governance and seamless communication within government departments. He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely completion of the ongoing works related to network upgradation and

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

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

## DC Kupwara inaugurates Hygienic Retail Fish Sale Outlet at Handwara



GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

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

The outlet has been established by the Department of Fisheries Kupwara in collaboration with J&K Bank under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, marking a significant step in strengthening the district's fisheries sector. Speaking on the occasion, the DC said the outlet will serve as a dedicated, hygienic marketplace for

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

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

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

## GMC Srinagar mourns untimely demise of Dr. Riyaz Magray

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** The Government Medical College Srinagar (GMC Srinagar) and its associated hospitals are deeply saddened to announce the sudden and untimely demise of Dr. Riyaz Ahmad Magray, a noble and kind-hearted person.



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

committed individual who dedicated his life to the medical fraternity. His passing is a great loss to the medical community, and he will be deeply missed.

GMC Srinagar extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, especially to his wife, Dr. Shagufta, and other family members. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.

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

## KPDCL announces Power Shutdown in Kashmir parts

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL has informed that the Shutdown of 33 KV Baramulla-1st Kanlibagh Tapline will be observed due to which power supply to GMC, Kanlibagh, Microwave, Sangri and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 01 PM on 07 March 2026.

Similarly, shutdown of 33 KV Mattan Pahalgalam line will

be observed due to which power supply to Pahalgal, Batkoot, Aishmuqam, Saller and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 02 PM on 09 & 11 March 2026.

Likewise, shutdown of 33 KV Pampore-Pulwama line will be observed due to which power supply to Kakapora, Nawa, Pahoo, Nehama, Zadoora, Gudoor, Parigam and adjoining areas will be affected from 08 AM to 12 Noon on 10 & 12 March 2026.

## SCERT Jammu celebrates International Women's Day



GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

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

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

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

A special highlight of the event was the presentation of the SHE Portal, reflecting SCERT's commitment towards gender equity and empowerment. The programme also featured a reflective poem by

Dr. Jyoti Sudan, Academic Officer and a documentary showcasing inspiring journeys of women who have made significant contributions to society.

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

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

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

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

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

## DC Anantnag reviews traffic regulation with officers, traders, transporters

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**ANANTNAG:** In a proactive move to discuss and streamline traffic movement within main town and its adjoining areas,

other places besides provision for parking places, taxi stands and utilities of importance. They also shared grassroots-level insights and raised the issues faced by them due



the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat Friday chaired a comprehensive review meeting with the stakeholders, at DC office.

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

Recognizing the importance of a well-regulated transport system in the town, the DC called for a coordinated approach and solicited cooperation from all the stakeholders, adding the ultimate goal is to minimise inconvenience to the general public, commuters and local businesses/traders.

During the meeting, representatives from the Traders Union, Market Association, and Transport Association raised their concerns regarding traffic congestion at Mehndi Kadal, Lal Chowk, Ganjwara, Court Road, Ashajipora and

to heavy traffic, roadside parking and jamming.

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

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

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

# Surge in demand for Kashmiri bakery items during Ramadan

Bakers express concern over rising flour costs, say working in tough conditions

JAHANGEER GANAIE

**SRINAGAR:** The demand for traditional Kashmiri bakery items is witnessing a significant surge across the Valley in the ongoing month of Ramadan.

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

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

Local bakers said that despite the intense heat from the tandors and the long working hours, they continue to prepare fresh and hygienic products for customers.

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

However, bakers



expressed concern over the rising prices of flour in the market, saying that the increasing costs are affecting their livelihood. They urged the government to provide relief to traditional Kashmiri bakers so that they can continue their trade without financial burden.

Renowned traditional baker Manzoor Ahmad from Ganderbal said the demand for bakery products increases significantly during Ramadan.

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

he said. Another renowned traditional baker, Ashraf Ahmad, said Kashmiri bakery items hold deep cultural and religious importance during Ramadan.

"Traditional Kashmiri rotis are an important part of Sehri and Iftar in almost every household. Despite challenges, we are committed to maintaining quality and meeting the growing demand during Ramadan," he said.

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

'Labourers key to economy growth'

# Govt committed to their welfare, social security: Deputy CM

GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

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

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

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

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



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

He said that the Code on Wages ensures uniform wage regulation and timely payment of wages while promoting gender equality. The Industrial Relations Code strengthens dispute resolution mechanisms and facilitates better engagement between employers and workers, he added.

He further said that the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code provides a comprehensive framework for workplace safety and health standards, while the Code on Social Security expands coverage of welfare benefits to workers in organised, unorganised and sectors.

"The Labour Department is working towards implementing these reforms effectively in Jammu and Kashmir to create a fair, transparent and worker-friendly labour ecosystem," he added.

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

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

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

been processed through the online platform.

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

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

He appreciated the Department for holding such events, facilitating the Government outreach Workers at their work places and listen to their issues directly. "We will hold these event in all other districts to meet our Workers at their doorsteps. Moreover, exclusive conferences shall be conducted for women workers as our Government has already taken measures

and reforms for their safe and secure work conditions in J&K," he said.

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

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

Earlier, Labour Commissioner Charandeepr emphasized the importance of registration of eligible workers under the JKBOCWBB so that they can avail various welfare schemes provided by the Board.

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

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

# Pharmacists vital for strengthening healthcare delivery across J&K: Sakeena Itoo

GMK NEWS NETWORK

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

The Minister made these remarks while delivering the keynote address at the National Pharmacy Education Day celebrations held at Mad-e-Meharban Campus of Health Sciences (MMCHS), Chak Bhalwal, here today.

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

motion of public health. Sakeena Itoo reiterated the Government's commitment to strengthening educational infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, adding that skilled paramedic professionals are vital for achieving universal health coverage and improving healthcare accessibility, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

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

The Minister also advised students to uphold the values of compassion and patient care after entering the professional field. She emphasized that empathy and dedication remain the most essential traits of successful healthcare professionals.



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

She also stressed the need for greater public awareness regarding the proper use of medicines and the dangers of self-medication. "Pharmacists and paramedics have a key responsibility in guiding patients about cor-

rect medication practices and preventing misuse of drugs," she added.

The Minister lauded the Mad-e-Meharban institution for nurturing competent professionals who contribute significantly to the healthcare sector. She appreciated the efforts of the College in training and upskilling the students of the College in terms of the New Education Policy to improve their employability potential.

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

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

Financial fraud case

# Court in Shopian rejects bail of 5 HDFC bank officials involved

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**SRINAGAR:** The Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) in Shopian district on Friday rejected the bail application of five HDFC bank officials allegedly involved in a major financial fraud case.

Officials said on Friday that in a significant development in a large-scale financial fraud case, the Court of CJM Shopian has rejected the bail applications of five officials of HDFC Bank who were arrested in connection with an alleged fraud at the Shopian branch.

The case is being investigated by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of the Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir, which termed the development a major breakthrough in the ongoing probe into the alleged financial irregularities.

The accused individuals include Adil Ayoub Ganai, son of Mohammad Ayoub Ganai, a resident of Memendar Shopian presently residing at Hamza Colony Baghat-e-Kanipora Nowgam; Irfan Majeed Zargar, son of Abdul Majeed Zargar, resident of Sheikh Mohalla Bonigam Shopian; Mubashir Hussain Sheikh, son of Ghulam Mohammad Sheikh, resident of Karena Kulgam; Zaid Manzoor, son of Manzoor Ahmad Din, resident of Dagerpora Khannabal Anantnag; and Javid Ahmad Bhat, son of Abdul Rahim Bhat, resident of Below Rajpora Pulwama.

According to officials, the accused were arrested during the course of investigation and are at present lodged in judicial custody at the Central Jail Srinagar.

Additional Public Prosecutor Waseem Ahmad Shah, appearing on behalf of the Economic Offences Wing Kashmir, strongly opposed the bail applications. After hearing detailed arguments and examining the case records, the CJM Shopian rejected the bail plea in FIR No. 30/2025.

The case has been registered under Sections 316(5), 318(4), 336(3), 340(2) and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with Section 66(C) of the Information Technology Act, at Police Station EOW Kashmir.

Officials of the Crime Branch stated that the Economic Offences Wing Kashmir remains committed to conducting a fair, transparent and merit-based investigation and will ensure that the case reaches its logical conclusion strictly in accordance with the law.

# CM inaugurates new Secretariat block in Jammu to augment office infrastructure



GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday inaugurated a newly constructed block at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, aimed at augmenting office infrastructure and improving the working facilities for employees.

The new block is expected to significantly add to the available workspace, further strengthening administrative efficiency and overall functioning

at the Secretariat.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Bani Rameshwar Singh, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Estates Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Director Estates Jammu Ashwani Khajuria and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

**GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR LAR**

- Bashir Ahmad Sheikh
- Ghulam Qadir Ganie
- Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat
- Zahoor Ahmad Shah
- Mohd Sultan Dar
- Rafeeq Ahmad Dar
- Mohd. Sultan
- Reshi S/o Ramzan Ganie
- Gul Dar & Ors
- Rafeeq Ahmad
- Abdul Hameed Bhat
- Mohammad Shafi
- Ghulam Hassan Sheikh
- Mohd Sadaq Bhat
- Ghulam Ahmad Sheikh
- Abdul Ahad Sheikh
- Mohammad Afzal Shah
- Manzoor Ahmad Dar
- Ghulam Nabi Bhat
- Mohammad Sidiq Bhat
- And others

**Subject: - Encroachment on Nagradah Kuhl and notice thereof.**  
Whereas, pursuant to the report obtained from field staff which reveals existence of nuisance and encroachment on Nagradah Kuhl, a joint anti-encroachment drive was conducted on 01-01-2026 along with I&F Department Ganderbal.  
Whereas, the encroachment/ nuisance was removed at the identified spots smoothly.  
Whereas, violators were given an opportunity to remove the remaining encroachment/ nuisance on their own voluntarily within weeks' time without fail.  
Whereas, encroachment/ nuisance still existing on spot is really a source of threat to existence of Nagradah Kuhl, public health, free flow of water & its utilization for different purposes.  
Whereas, Nagradah kuhl is spread over large area of land (Kahcharai and Gair Mumkin Kuhl) falling under Survey No. 777 in estate Theeru with width ranging from 55 to 220 feet.  
Whereas, encroachment of water bodies is an offence and is punishable under various sections of Land Revenue Act, Water Conservation and Management Act, Green Tribunal Act and Section 152 BNSS and so on.  
Whereas, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India passed an Order in the case titled **VELLORE DISTRICT ENVIRONMENT MONITORING COMMITTEE REP. BY ITS SECRETARY MR. R. RAJENDRAN** ..... APPELLANT(S)

V/S  
**THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR VELLORE DISTRICT & ORS**

Operative Part of which reads as under:  
**"At the outset, it is imperative to establish the three foundational principles viz., (i) Doctrine of public trust (ii) Principle of Sustainable Development, and (iii) Right to healthy environment, that must guide the consideration of other aspects in the case".**

**PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE**  
The Doctrine of Public Trust asserts that vital natural resources such as rivers, seashores, forests, and air are held in trust by the State for the benefit and enjoyment of the public. Rooted in Roman law, which classified these resources as common property (res communis) or unowned (res nullius), and refined by English common law, this doctrine places a fiduciary duty on governments to protect them from privatization or exploitation that compromises public interests. It imposes three key restrictions viz.,  
(a) resources must remain accessible for public use, (b) cannot be sold for private gain, and (c) must be preserved in their natural state. Courts internationally, have extended its scope to protect wetlands, riparian forests, and ecologically fragile lands, emphasizing the need for environmental preservation in light of modern ecological challenges. This evolving interpretation reflects the doctrine's relevance in maintaining the balance between sustainable development and environmental conservation.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**  
The doctrine of sustainable development was evolved to strike a balance between economic advancement and environmental safeguards. It envisions development that can be sustained by nature/environment. While the advancement of industries and infrastructure is indispensable for fostering employment and generating revenue, such growth cannot come at the cost of irreparable ecological damage.

**RIGHT TO HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**  
Right to life inherently includes the right to enjoy pollution free environment, which are essential for the full enjoyment of life. If anything endangers or impairs the quality of life in derogation of laws, a citizen has the right to have recourse to Article 32 of the Constitution to address the pollution of environment which may be detrimental to the quality of life. This court has recognized the concept of right to healthy environment as part of the right to life under Article 21 and thereby has also recognized the right to clean drinking water as a fundamental right. Infact, environmental rights, which encompass a group of collective rights, are now described as "third generation" rights. Therefore, the State, so as to sustain its claim of functioning for the welfare of its citizens, is bound to regulate water supply by safeguarding, maintaining and restoring the water bodies to protect the right to healthy water and prevent health hazards. This court has also laid down in many cases, that the States shall ensure that the water bodies are free from encroachments and steps to be taken to restore the water bodies.  
Therefore, you are hereby informed to remove nuisance and encroachment on either side of Nagradah Kuhl falling under survey No. 777 in estate Theeru on spot voluntarily within weeks' time and avoid re-encroachment of already evicted land falling which action as warranted under law shall be initiated besides forcible eviction of encroachment / nuisance at your risk cost and responsibility.

No:- OQ/TL/2026/8886-90  
Dated:- 05-03-2026

DIPK-11610-25  
DT: 07/03/2026

Yours Faithfully  
Tehsildar Lar

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

## Rising Pension Bill

The steadily growing pension bill of the Jammu and Kashmir government is becoming a major financial concern for the Union Territory. Official projections show that pension expenditure is expected to almost double between 2020 and 2030, prompting authorities to rule out any possibility of reviving the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) due to the heavy financial burden it could place on the government.

According to data presented in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly during discussions on a cut motion, nearly 2.48 lakh retired government employees are currently receiving pensions and related benefits from the administration. Providing for these retirees has become one of the largest recurring expenses for the government.

Figures show that pension spending stood at 5,829 crore in 2020-21. Over the years, the amount has steadily increased and is projected to reach nearly 11,798 crore by 2030-31. The rising trend is already visible in recent budgets. Pension expenditure climbed to 6,668 crore in 2021-22, 7,463 crore in 2022-23 and 8,364 crore in 2023-24. It further increased to 9,350 crore in 2024-25 and is estimated at around 9,127 crore in 2025-26.

Officials say the pension burden will continue to grow as more government employees retire in the coming years. However, they expect the liabilities to gradually stabilise sometime in the early 2040s. In this context, the government has made it clear that there is no proposal under consideration to restore the Old Pension Scheme. According to officials, bringing back OPS would significantly strain the finances of the Union Territory, which already faces limitations in revenue generation and investment opportunities.

The administration argues that the New Pension Scheme (NPS), introduced in 2010, provides a more sustainable model. Unlike OPS, which guaranteed pensions directly from government funds without a dedicated corpus, NPS operates on a defined contribution system. Under this model, both employees and the government contribute to a pension fund that is professionally managed. Officials also pointed out that Jammu and Kashmir has historically faced rising pension liabilities. For instance, pension expenditure nearly doubled earlier as well, increasing from 731 crore in 2004-05 to 1,495 crore in 2009-10.

Following a cabinet decision in 2009, the government formally shifted from the Old Pension Scheme to the New Pension Scheme for employees appointed on or after January 1, 2010, through amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Service Regulations. At the same time, authorities have reiterated that the government remains committed to fulfilling its obligations to existing pensioners under the Old Pension Scheme. They say efforts are being made to ensure that rising pension liabilities do not come at the cost of developmental projects and public welfare programmes. Officials believe that once the pension burden begins to stabilise around 2040, a larger portion of government resources will become available for development and infrastructure. Until then, managing the growing pension bill will remain a key fiscal challenge for the administration.

# The Alchemy Of Hunger: Moving Beyond The Ritual Of The Plate

HARIS MASHOOQ ZIA

As the moon of Ramadan 1447 AH matures and the initial fervor of the month settles into a steady rhythm across the Valley, a peculiar silence descends. The Masjids remain full, and the collective clock of Kashmir slows its pace to a meditative crawl. Yet, beneath this veneer of ritual, a vital question remains: are we merely counting the hours of hunger, or are we making the hunger count? We risk reducing one of history's most profound psychological exercises to a mere dietary restriction. If Ramadan were only about the biology of the stomach, it would be a medical fast; but it is intended as the alchemy of the soul, a rigorous restructuring of character, thought, and social conduct.

**The Fast of the Five Senses**  
The Quranic injunction, "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you... that you may become God-conscious" (Al-Baqarah 2:183), which points toward Taqwa. This consciousness is not found in the vacuum of an empty stomach but in the restraint of the 'Self'. The true fast is the Fasting of the Tongue, refraining from the casual violence of gossip and backbiting that plagues our social circles. It is the Fasting of the Mind, filtering out the toxicity of negative thoughts and prejudice. As the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned, "If one does not abandon falsehood and action in accordance with it, Allah has no need that he should abandon his food and drink."

**The Sufi Perspective: Emptying to be Filled**

Our own Kashmiri Sufi tradition and the wisdom of Rumi offer a deeper lens. Rumi famously wrote: "There's hidden sweetness in the stomach's emptiness. We are lutes, no more. If the soundbox is stuffed full of anything, no music." For a Kashmiri, this resonates with the teachings of Lalleshwari or Sheikh-ul-Alam, who emphasized that true worship is the annihilation of the ego (Nafs). When we stop the intake of food, we create a



silence within us. The goal is to fill that silence not with the anticipation of Iftar, but with the resonance of character-building.

**A Universal Echo**  
It is fascinating to note that this "restraint for character" is recognized far beyond religious boundaries. The playwright George Bernard Shaw once remarked on the discipline of Islamic fasting, noting its power to build willpower that no secular philosophy could match. Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi, who used fasting as a tool for self-purification, believed that a fast of the body is incomplete without a simultaneous "fast of the heart" from all ill-will.

**The Modern Shadow: A Fast from the Noise**

In today's hyper-connected world, the alchemy of hunger must also extend to a "Digital Fast." We live in an era where

our attention is constantly hijacked by the trivial and the divisive. If we restrain our bodies from bread but feed our souls a constant diet of vanity and social media validation, the spiritual "soundbox" remains cluttered. True Taqwa in the 21st century requires us to disconnect from the digital noise to reconnect with the Divine signal. This is the "Fast of Attention", directing our focus away from the screen and toward the neighbor, the scripture, and the inner self.

**The Civic Challenge**

In the contemporary landscape of the Valley, our fast must also extend to a "Fast of Consumption." We live in an era of excess, where the spirit of the month is often overshadowed by extravagant Iftar spreads and a culture of waste. If we are empathetic to the hunger of the poor during the day but remain indiffer-

ent to their plight at night, our hunger serves no social purpose. The alchemy lies in converting personal restraint into collective compassion.

**The Real Iftar**

As the great Persian poet Saadi Shirazi once cautioned: "The fast of him who libels is not a fast." The goal of this month is not to merely endure the day, but to transform the man. The real Iftar is not the breaking of bread at sunset, but the breaking of our own arrogance and the shattering of our worst habits by the end of the month. Ramadan is not a month of waiting for the night; it is a month of waking the soul. If we emerge from these thirty days with our characters unchanged, we haven't fasted, we have simply been hungry.

The author can be mailed at haris-mashooqharis@gmail.com

## Where Are The Real Heroines?

Show Business Hidden Behind The Glitter Of Respect



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

Respect once held a profound meaning in society. Honoring someone wasn't just a formal ceremony, but a moral obligation to publicly acknowledge their struggle, labor, and contributions. Respect meant society's acknowledgment of the individual's life's role in paving the way for others. However, in recent years, a strange trend has emerged—a market for awards in the name of "women's honor."

Today, it seems as if every institution, every platform, and every organization is competing to distribute awards with grand names like "Nari Shakti Samman," "Woman Icon Award," "Woman Leadership Award," and "Global Women Excellence Award." Open social media and every other day, you'll see photos of some woman being honored with the "International Women's Honor" or "National Women's Ratna." Smiling faces on stage, glittering trophies in hand, and large banners behind—everything looks incredibly attractive. But behind these glamorous images lie many questions that often go unaddressed. The question isn't why women are being honored; the question is: are these honors truly honors, or are they merely becoming a means of show and publicity?

In fact, today, "women's empowerment" has become a term that, the more frequently used, the more its true meaning is diluted. Podiums are proclaimed, speeches extol the power and potential of women are delivered, long lists of awards are distributed, photos are taken, social media posts are made, and the next day, everything returns to normal.



In all this, the women who need empowerment the most are often missing.

In Indian society, honors weren't just about trophies or certificates. Honoring someone was a recognition of that person's social contributions. It was a form of society's expression of gratitude, that you paved the way for others through your life. But when the purpose of honor shifts to publicity, networking, and personal branding, its value gradually diminishes. Today, many award ceremonies have a vague selection process. Participants are sometimes required to submit their own nominations, while others charge a fee, and ultimately, almost everyone is honored in a lavish ceremony. In such events, stage decorations, camera flashes, and social media posts are given more importance than the dignity of the honor itself.

The era of social media has further accelerated this trend. Today, honors are no longer just certificates, but part of digital identity. As soon as someone receives an award, photos are shared on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The captions often read, "I received the International Women's Honor." Looking at these posts, it seems

as if receiving honors is the ultimate goal of empowerment. Gradually, the competition for honors becomes more important than the actual work itself.

This trend is evident not only at the individual level but also at the institutional level. Many organizations use awards ceremonies as a means of publicity. They bestow grand titles, stage grand events, and then use the event to enhance their organization's recognition. Sometimes, it's even the case that a single individual is honored by several different organizations within a few months.

The biggest question is: if so many awards are being given, are the hardworking and struggling women of society truly coming to the fore? There are millions of women in rural India who are doing amazing work for their families, society, and communities. They are running self-help groups, promoting education in villages, contributing to environmental protection, or fighting against domestic violence and social evils. Many women are working tirelessly to educate their children despite limited resources. Many women are breaking social barriers and standing on their own feet.

But these women lack access to major platforms or

the means to promote themselves. Therefore, their work often remains unnoticed. They rarely appear on honor lists. In contrast, some individuals are honored repeatedly. Sometimes they receive the "Mahila Shakti Samman" from an organization, sometimes the "Mahila Prerna Award" from another organization, and sometimes the "Rashtriya Mahila Ratna" from another platform. This situation calls into question the credibility of the honor itself.

Today, it wouldn't be wrong to say that an "awards industry" has developed in some places. This industry has a set structure. First, an award is announced with a catchy name. Then, nominations are invited. A selection committee is formed, the process of which is often not transparent. Finally, a ceremony is held in a large hotel or auditorium, where dozens of people are honored.

Often, these events prioritize connections, recognition, and pay over actual accomplishments. Some even charge enrollment or registration fees. When honors are commodified, it's natural to question their ethics.

Women's empowerment won't happen simply through awards. True empowerment will occur when society pro-

vides women with equal opportunities. Even today, millions of girls in India are deprived of education. Many women are economically dependent. Problems like domestic violence, gender discrimination, and social pressure still exist. Distributing honors without addressing these issues will not solve empowerment, but will be a beautification of the problem.

Honor is meaningful when it serves as a hallmark of struggle, not merely a decoration on the stage. If honor inspires, it propels society forward. But if it becomes merely a means of prestige and publicity, it gradually loses its meaning.

This responsibility lies not only with institutions, but also with society. We must understand that honors are only valuable when bestowed with honesty and transparency. We must also consider how the work of those being honored is truly impacting society. If we determine honors solely based on glamour and big names, those who make genuine contributions will always be left behind.

The purpose of Nari Samman should be to recognize women for their true role and contribution to society. But when recognition is limited to photos, certificates, and social media posts, it becomes not respect but a market for respect. More than trophies, women need equal opportunities, security, education, and a dignified life. They need a society where their hard work is recognized even without the glare of the stage.

Because history doesn't ask how many awards someone received; history asks what they changed for society. And perhaps that's the question we should be asking ourselves today, are we truly honoring women, or simply creating a new market for honor.

Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker. She can be mailed at priyankasaurabh9416@gmail.com

# International Women's Day: Women As Vulnerable Victims Of War



DR. RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

The tragedy of war is measured not only in destroyed cities or lost territories but in the silent suffering of human lives, particularly the lives of women and children. Across history, countless women and young girls have been among the most vulnerable victims of armed conflict. When we reflect on this painful reality, especially in the spirit of International Women's Day, the celebration of women's dignity acquires a deeply tragic undertone. The stories of women and girl children killed in wars remind us that the price of violence is often paid by those who have no role in creating it.

War has always been brutal, but modern warfare has made civilian casualties far more common than in earlier centuries. During the catastrophic conflicts of the twentieth century such as World War I and World War II, millions of civilians lost their lives. Among them were countless women and children who were caught in bombings, sieges, and forced displacements. Entire families disappeared under collapsing buildings or were swept away by famine and disease that followed the destruction of infrastructure. These tragedies reveal a cruel truth: wars may begin with political decisions, but they end in human suffering that extends far beyond battlefields. In contemporary conflicts, the vulnerability of women and girl children has become even more evident. Air strikes, artillery shelling, and urban warfare often occur in densely populated areas where families live. When bombs fall on cities, they do not distinguish between soldiers and civilians. Schools, hospitals, and homes become unintended targets, and the innocent pay the highest price. In many war zones, young girls who should be attending school or playing with friends instead live with the constant fear of violence.

The death of a girl child in war is particularly heartbreaking because it represents the loss of a future that had barely begun. Each child carries within her the potential for dreams, talents, and contributions to society. When war extinguishes that life, it erases a story that was never fully written. The grief of parents who lose daughters is immeasurable, and the psychological wounds left in communities can last for generations. Women too face unique dangers in wartime. Apart from being exposed to bombings and shootings, they often bear the responsibility of protecting children and elderly family members. In moments of chaos, when families flee their homes to escape advancing armies or aerial attacks, it is often mothers who carry infants in their arms while guiding frightened children through uncertain paths. In many tragic instances, these journeys end in death due to violence, starvation, or exhaustion.

The suffering of women during war has also been documented by many thinkers and writers. The Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy portrayed the devastating consequences of war on families and communities, emphasizing that war destroys not only armies but the moral fabric of society. Similarly, modern writers and journalists have repeatedly shown that the grief of mothers and daughters forms one of the most painful dimensions of conflict. Their testimonies remind us that the real history of war is often written in tears rather than in military records. Scientific and philosophical voices have also warned about the catastrophic implications of modern warfare. The physicist Albert Einstein famously suggested that future wars might reduce humanity to primitive conditions if nuclear weapons were ever used on a large scale. His warning carries a haunting implication for women and children. In a world devastated by nuclear conflict, the survival of future generations itself would be uncertain. The dream of nurturing life, so central to motherhood, would be overshadowed by the fear of extinc-

tion. Another dimension of this tragedy is displacement. Many wars force families to flee their homes and become refugees. Women and girls often face extreme hardships in refugee camps or during dangerous journeys across borders. Lack of healthcare, inadequate nutrition, and exposure to violence make survival uncertain. Some perish during these migrations, while others suffer long-term health and psychological consequences. The international community has increasingly recognized the need to protect civilians in conflict zones. Organizations such as United Nations have established conventions and humanitarian principles aimed at safeguarding noncombatants. International humanitarian law prohibits attacks on civilians and emphasizes the protection of women and children. Yet despite these legal frameworks, violations continue to occur, reminding us that laws alone cannot eliminate the brutality of war.

Women activists and peace advocates across the world have consistently raised their voices against this cycle of violence. Many mothers who lost children in wars have transformed their grief into powerful movements demanding peace and justice. Their message is simple yet profound: no political objective can justify the death of innocent children. When mothers speak from such grief, they appeal not only to governments but to the conscience of humanity. The loss of women and girl children in wars also affects the social structure of communities. Women often serve as educators, caregivers, and cultural transmitters within families. Their absence leaves emotional and social gaps that are difficult to fill. Communities that lose large numbers of women and children face long-term demographic and psychological challenges. Thus the impact of war extends far beyond immediate casualties.

Literature, art, and memorials have tried to capture this sorrow. Paintings of grieving mothers, poems about lost daughters, and monuments dedicated to civilian victims all serve as reminders of the human cost of conflict. These cultural expressions preserve memory so that future generations may understand the consequences of violence and strive to avoid repeating such tragedies. In reflecting on the deaths of women and girl children in wars, we confront a moral question: why does humanity continue to allow such suffering despite knowing its consequences? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the way wars are often glorified through narratives of heroism and national pride. While bravery on the battlefield is real, the suffering of civilians is frequently overlooked in these narratives. Bringing the stories of women and children to the fore-



International Women's Day offers a meaningful moment to reflect on these issues. While the day celebrates the achievements and potential of women, it also reminds us of the vulnerabilities many women face around the world. Remembering those who lost their lives in wars transforms the celebration into a solemn commitment to protect future generations.

Peace is not merely the absence of war; it is the presence of justice, cooperation, and mutual respect. Creating such conditions requires sustained efforts from governments, institutions, and ordinary citizens. Women themselves have played a vital role in peace movements across the globe, advocating dialogue and reconciliation instead of violence. Their experiences as caregivers and community builders often inspire a vision of society grounded in empathy rather than domination. The death of a single girl child in war is a tragedy that echoes far beyond the immediate moment. It symbolizes the fragility of human life and the urgent need for a more compassionate world. When multiplied by thousands or millions, such losses

women is protected by the enduring commitment to peace.

The observance of International Women's Day each year reminds humanity of the long and unfinished journey toward gender equality. In the present decade, the women's movement has taken on new forms, new voices, and new energies that reflect the rapidly changing social, political, and technological landscape of the world. The women's movement today is no longer confined to a single region, ideology, or social group; it has become a global conversation that connects women from villages to megacities, from classrooms to parliaments, from social media platforms to international institutions. The present decade has therefore emerged as an important chapter in the evolving history of women's struggles for dignity, representation, and justice.

The roots of the women's movement stretch far back into the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when women first began organizing collectively for basic rights such as education, property ownership, and suffrage. Those early struggles laid

and political polarization. The emergence of digital activism has significantly shaped contemporary feminist movements. Online campaigns have brought attention to issues that were once hidden behind silence or social stigma. Women have used digital platforms to tell their stories, challenge discriminatory practices, and mobilize public opinion. The ability of individuals to document and share experiences instantly has created new forms of accountability. Institutions and powerful individuals can no longer easily ignore allegations of harassment, discrimination, or injustice.

Perhaps one of the most influential moments in recent feminist activism was the global resonance of the MeToo movement. What began as a campaign highlighting sexual harassment quickly evolved into a worldwide conversation about gendered power structures in workplaces, educational institutions, and public life. Women from different cultures and professions came forward to share their experiences, challenging longstanding patterns of silence and fear. The movement not only exposed individual cases of abuse but also revealed the systemic nature of gender inequality embedded in many social institutions. In addition to political and economic activism, cultural and intellectual contributions by women have expanded significantly during this decade. Women writers, artists, filmmakers, and scholars have explored themes of identity, gender justice, and social transformation. Their works challenge stereotypes and create new narratives that celebrate women's experiences and perspectives.

International Women's Day therefore serves as both a celebration and a reminder. It celebrates the remarkable progress achieved by women through collective effort and courage. At the same time, it reminds the world that the journey toward equality is far from complete. The movements of this decade illustrate how women continue to challenge injustices and reimagine the structures of society. The most inspiring aspect of contemporary women's movements is perhaps their emphasis on hope and solidarity. Women from diverse backgrounds are increasingly recognizing their shared aspirations for dignity, safety, and opportunity. Whether through grassroots organizations, academic research, artistic expression, or political leadership, they are shaping a future in which gender equality becomes an integral part of social progress. As the world observes International Women's Day in this decade, the voices of women echo across continents with renewed strength. Their movements are not confined to protests or policies alone; they are visible in classrooms where girls pursue knowledge, in workplaces where women demand equal opportunities, in communities where mothers teach values of respect and compassion, and in public spaces where women assert their right to participate fully in society.

Reflecting on this question encourages a renewed commitment to peace. If societies genuinely value the lives of women and children, then preventing war must become a central priority. Diplomacy, international cooperation, and conflict resolution should replace violence as the primary tools of political negotiation. The memory of women and girl children who died in wars should not fade into statistics. Their lives deserve recognition, remembrance, and respect. By acknowledging their suffering, humanity can reaffirm its dedication to protecting life and dignity. Such remembrance also strengthens the moral foundations of peace movements worldwide. Ultimately, the tragedy of women and girls killed in wars reminds us that the future of humanity depends on safeguarding the most vulnerable. A civilization that cannot protect its children cannot claim true progress. The vision of a peaceful world, where girls grow up with opportunities rather than fear, remains one of the most important aspirations of our time.

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front challenges this romanticized view of war.

Education plays a crucial role in changing these perceptions. Teaching young people about the human cost of conflict can foster empathy and critical thinking. When students learn not only about battles and treaties but also about the lives destroyed by war, they may become more committed to peaceful solutions in the future.

become a collective moral failure of humanity.

On every International Women's Day, therefore, the world should remember not only the achievements of women but also the lives lost in the violence of wars. Their memory calls us to build a future where such tragedies no longer occur, where the laughter of children replaces the echoes of bombs, and where the dignity of

the foundations for the recognition of women as equal participants in society. Over time, the movement expanded to include issues such as workplace rights, reproductive health, political representation, and protection against violence. Today's movement builds upon these historical achievements but also confronts new challenges created by globalization, economic inequality, digital communication,

# CM congratulates J&K candidates for clearing UPSC CSE-2025

GMK NEWS NETWORK

**JAMMU:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday extended his heartiest congratulations to the candidates from Jammu & Kashmir who have successfully cleared the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2025, describing their achievement as a moment of immense pride for the region.

In his felicitation message, the Chief Minister lauded the hard work, perseverance and dedication of the successful



candidates, saying that their accomplishment reflects the determination and potential of

the youth of Jammu & Kashmir.

He said that the success of these young aspirants would inspire many more students across the Jammu and Kashmir to set high goals and pursue their dreams with commitment and sincerity.

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

# In 1-year, Jammu woman IAF officer runs 7 marathons

YOGESH

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

According to the details available, Neha Devi joined the Air Force Academy in July 2013 while being nearly 10 kilograms overweight.

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

By 2017, structured running and strength training had become an integral part of her routine. "Even during the COVID-19 pan-

dem, when organised training was disrupted, she continued to maintain fitness through home workouts," he said.

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

In 2023, she finished sixth overall in the Station Cross Country (10 km) and secured the third position overall in the Station Unity Run (21 km), where she was the only female participant, he said.

In January 2024, while pregnant, she decided to continue exercising under medical supervision, motivated by the need to challenge the social stigma surrounding physical activity during pregnancy. "At four months preg-

nant, she secured second position in the TCS 10K (virtual)."

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

Within 15 months postpartum and without professional coaching, she completed the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon 2025 in 1 hour 35 minutes and the Kashmir Marathon 2025 in 1 hour 40 minutes, securing eighth position overall in the female category, including international athletes, he said.

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

On January 24, during the 24-Hour Stadium Run in Delhi, she completed her first 100 km in 9 hours 52 minutes, narrowly missing the national qualification mark by 22 minutes, Lt Col Bartwal said.

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

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

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

## FROM THE FRONT PAGE .....

### CM Reviews Compliance

organise systems efficiently, not to create unnecessary procedural hurdles for the public. The Chief Minister emphasised the need for simpler, more direct processes across sectors and called for a visible reduction in red tape in the government's dealings with citizens and businesses. The meeting took stock of a broad range of priority interventions under discussion, spanning land use, industry, education, healthcare and digital governance. The issues that came up for discussion included land use framework to ease building permissions and industrial land utilisation in rural and urban areas, removing dual licensing requirements for businesses and strengthening the role of a nodal agency for industrial development to deal with industrial approvals. The meeting also deliberated on simplifying minimum requirement norms for private educational institutions and streamlining medical practitioner registration through a unified licensing mechanism for the healthcare sector.

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

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

### Almond Blossoms

give way to fresh green leaves, signalling the full arrival of spring across the Valley—(KNO)

### Weather Pattern To

level. Banihal registered 27.4°C, Batote 27.2°C, Katra 31.8°C and Bhaderwah 25.8°C, all remaining above the seasonal average.

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

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

"Generally cloudy weather is expected between March 7 and 9, with the possibility of light rain or snowfall in higher reaches at isolated places," the MeT said.

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

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

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

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

### 16 Candidates

the IAS, IFS and IPS. The UPSC results were announced after the written examination held in August 2025 and personality test interviews conducted between December 2025 and February 2026.

The commission said a total of 958 candidates have been recommended for appointment across different services.

The recommended candidates include those selected for the IAS, IFS, IPS and several central services under Group-A and Group-B. In a proud moment for Rajasthan, Kota's Anuj Agnihotri, a doctor by profession, has secured

the top rank in the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2025 conducted by the UPSC, achieving the feat in his third attempt.

Official data shows that the selection includes candidates from multiple categories. Among them are 317 from the general category, 104 from economically weaker sections, 306 from other backward classes, 158 from scheduled castes and 73 from scheduled tribes.

The commission has also maintained a consolidated reserve list of 258 candidates in accordance with the rules governing the examination. The number of vacancies reported by the state government for the examination cycle stands at 1,087 across various services.

These include 180 vacancies in the IAS, 55 in the IFS, 150 in the IPS, 507 in Central Services Group-A and 195 in Group-B services.

Officials said the claims of recommended candidates with regard to reservation categories will be subject to verification by the concerned authorities.

The commission also noted that the candidature of 348 recommended candidates has been kept provisional while the results of two candidates have been withheld.

The Civil Services Examination conducted by the UPSC is one of the country's most competitive examinations and serves as the primary gateway for recruitment into India's top administrative and diplomatic services.

### Highspeed Mobile

Kashmir and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar and other officers visited downtown in Srinagar and reviewed the security situation.

DGP Prabhat, IGP Birdi and other officers assessed the security arrangements in several sensitive areas of the old city. They visited Jamia Masjid, Nowhatta, Hazratbal shrine and other pockets to take stock of the deployment of police and security personnel, an official said. During the visit, the DGP, IGP and other senior officers interacted with officials on the ground and asked them to remain alert while ensuring smooth public movement and the peaceful conduct of religious activities, the official added.

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

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

Authorities warned that the spread of misinformation or rumours could create panic, disturb public order and affect communal harmony. Police said legal action would be taken against individuals or groups found involved in spreading false or misleading information under relevant provisions of law—(KNO)

### CS Reviews Mission

that SBDUs and BHDs become fully functional at the earliest and that Motivators and Yuva Doots are onboarded in a time-bound manner to ensure effective implementation of the Mission across the Union Territory.

Emphasising the need to expand outreach, the Chief Secretary asked the concerned departments to further intensify Udyam Jagriti initiatives in colleges and among Self Help Groups (SHGs). He stressed that aspiring entrepreneurs should receive proper mentoring, counselling and handholding support so that they are able to translate their ideas into viable enterprises. Reviewing the role of financial institutions in supporting the Mission, the Chief Secretary observed that loan sanctions amounting to around Rs 1,200 crore and disbursements of nearly Rs 964 crore indicate encouraging progress. However, he advised the banks to maintain a steady pace of 150-200 loan disbursements per day so that legacy pendencies are cleared and annual targets under the Mission are achieved in a timely manner.

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

The Chief Secretary further underscored the need to address gaps identified in incubation centres established in higher educational institutions. He asked the concerned department to share the detailed assessment criteria used for

evaluating these institutions so that corrective measures can be taken to strengthen the incubation ecosystem and ensure optimal utilisation of the facilities.

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

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

He also outlined the gaps observed in incubation centres established in higher educational institutions, particularly in terms of governance structure, start-up success, infrastructure, networking and funding patterns, while highlighting the strengths and best-performing institutions.

Further, he demonstrated the weak-performing blocks and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in certain districts where greater efforts are required in capacity building of applicants to enable them to effectively utilise bank credit and establish sustainable enterprises.

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

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

These efforts have resulted in 1,937 SHG credit applications and facilitated handholding support to 6,281 sanctioned applicants, registering significant growth over the previous month.

Regarding institutional strengthening, the meeting was apprised that 187 posts have been filled out of 367 sanctioned positions under SBDU/BHD recruitment, while 180 posts remain vacant. Officials informed that 28 percent of these posts have been filled since the last Apex Committee meeting, increasing the number from 90 to 187. Similarly, under Motivator empanelment, 582 motivators have been empanelled out of 1,000 sanctioned positions, including 65 Lakhpati Didis, while 418 positions are yet to be filled.

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

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

Out of these, 56,167 applications have been verified by SBDUs, while 50,743 have been approved by District Level Implementation Committees (DLICs). Banks have sanctioned 18,093 loans, out of which 15,192 loans have been disbursed, resulting in the establishment of 3,187 enterprises, with 2,053 more currently under implementation.

The meeting was also informed that applications for neo-innovative enterprises have witnessed significant growth, increasing from 119 on January 19, 2026 to 364 by February 4, 2026, marking nearly a threefold increase within a short span. Under the Mission's five-year incubation target of 500 innovative enterprises, all 14 incubation centres have been onboarded, while 80 percent of these centres have already conducted InnovateX 1.0 awareness events. In addition, three evaluation committees have been empanelled for the Innovation and Sustainability Challenge. Out of the 364 applications received, 86 have been shortlisted by the expert panel, while 30 applications have progressed to the final selection stage. The Selection Committee is expected to finalise the ventures for incubation by March 25, 2026.

While reviewing the overall progress, the Chief Secretary emphasised that Mission YUVA is

a transformative initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship, generating employment opportunities and building a vibrant start-up ecosystem for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. He called upon all stakeholders to work in close coordination to achieve the objectives of the Mission in a time-bound manner.

### Infiltration Threat

The sources said around 50 terrorists were recently moved to some of the newly activated launching pads, while nearly 150 others are believed to be present at camps located about 10 to 20 kilometres from the LoC and the International Border.

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

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

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

### J&K's Gubernatorial

Pradesh for 312 days (May 8, 1990 - March 16, 1991).

Babu Parmanand: Babu Parmanand, a minister in the erstwhile state as well as Speaker of the Assembly, was Governor of Haryana for four years and 12 days (June 9, 2000 - July 1, 2004).

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

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

# Nepal elections: Top leaders of traditional political parties stare at defeat

IAN S

**KATHMANDU:** Most of the top leaders of traditional political parties are facing a tough contest in the parliamentary elections, with candidates from the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) taking significant leads in two-thirds of the seats under the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system.

In Nepal's 275-member House of Representatives, 165 members are elected through the FPTP system, while 110 seats are filled through the proportional representation system. According to the latest data from the Election Commission Nepal, RSP candidates are currently leading in 110 seats, with the party already securing victories in three constituencies.

Based on vote counting till late Friday evening, Balen Shah, the RSP's prime ministerial candidate, is leading by a wide margin against former Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli at the latter's traditional stronghold in Jhapa-5 in eastern Nepal.

According to the latest vote count, Shah has secured 13,694 votes, while Oli trails with 3011 votes.

Nepali Congress President Gagan Thapa is also trailing RSP candidate Amaresh Kumar Singh in the Sarlahi-4 constituency.

Fresh from being elected party president through a



special general convention held in January, Thapa was expected to make a strong showing in the parliamentary elections in what has traditionally been a Nepali Congress stronghold.

However, Singh, a former lawmaker from the Nepali Congress party, is ahead with 4496 votes, followed by Thapa with 2530 votes.

While top leaders of the two parties that were part of the government toppled by the GenZ movement in September last year are struggling in the polls, former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, coordinator of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP), secured victory from Rukum East, his party's traditional stronghold in western Nepal. Dahal has been accused of abandon-

ing Gorkha-2, from where he was elected in the 2022 elections, due to the higher risk of losing the seat.

Nepali Congress General Secretary Pradip Paudel is trailing RSP candidate Sasmit Pokharel from Kathmandu-5 by a wide margin. According to the latest vote tally, Pokharel has secured 18,051 votes, while Paudel has received only 5,627 votes.

Former Deputy Prime Minister and vice-chairperson of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML), Bishnu Prasad Dahal, is also trailing RSP candidate Sulav Kharel by a wide margin. Kharel had secured 24,741 votes by Friday evening, while Paudel had received only 5,231 votes. Former Deputy Prime

Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha of the NCP is also trailing RSP candidate Narendra Sah Kalwar in Sarlahi-3 in Madhesh Province by a wide margin. Kalwar has so far received 5,424 votes, followed by Shrestha with only 720 votes.

Voters appear to have overwhelmingly turned away from traditional political parties, whose seasoned as well as new leaders are facing setbacks.

"One of the main reasons behind the poor performance of traditional political parties is anti-incumbency, as people were tired of the same parties and the same leaders for years and did not see a marked improvement in their lives during their rule," political analyst Arun Subedi told IANS.

# PM Modi, Netanyahu have zero tolerance for terrorism: Israeli PMO spokesperson

IAN S

**TEL AVIV:** David Mencer, the spokesperson for the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, on Friday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership while hailing the Indian leader's friendship with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and their common "zero-tolerance" attitude towards terrorism.

In an exclusive interview with IANS, Mencer recalled PM Modi's recent "very successful" two-day visit to Israel, including his historic address at the Knesset during which he said that 1.5 billion Indians are with Israel in the fight against terrorist forces.

"I was proud to have accompanied our Prime Minister (Netanyahu) who welcomed Prime Minister Modi just a week ago, just a number of days ago. We went to the airport and welcomed him for his two-day visit here. I can't tell you how moved we were as a people to welcome Prime Minister Modi. I don't think there was a dry eye in the house when Prime Minister Modi addressed our Knesset, our parliament, the things that he said, the leadership that he showed, the understanding he showed. Because he understands, as our Prime Minister Netanyahu does, both leaders understand that there must be a zero-



tolerance attitude towards terrorists. When you appease terrorists, it just leads to more war. Terrorist states need to be stood up to and defeated and that's precisely what we're doing," Mencer told IANS.

PM Modi was on a two-day State Visit to Israel, last week during which he was accorded a grand welcome by Netanyahu and his wife, Sara Netanyahu, at the airport in Tel Aviv. During his visit, PM Modi addressed lawmakers in the Knesset, held talks with Netanyahu and Israel President Isaac Herzog.

"We had Prime Minister Modi here just last week. It was a very, very successful visit. When he said in our Knesset, he said the words, 'Am Yisrael Chai'. I will never forget that

moment because it means that the 'people of Israel live' and so much of the international media likes to portray Israel as being isolated. Of course, we're not isolated with our partners in the US and many other countries.

"But more than that, Prime Minister Modi said, 1.5 billion Indians are with us in our battle against terrorist forces. Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Netanyahu are of the same mind. Zero tolerance towards terrorism is what brings success. Appeasement of terrorism only brings more war. Both leaders, together with President Trump, believe in peace through strength. First comes the strength, then comes the peace and we're seeing that lived out

in reality right now," the spokesperson mentioned.

In his address at the Knesset, PM Modi said that India stands firmly with Israel with full conviction in the fight against terrorism.

"I also carry with me the deepest condolences of the people of India for every life lost and for every family whose world was shattered in the barbaric terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7. We feel your pain. We share your grief. India stands with Israel firmly, with full conviction in this moment and beyond. No cause can justify the murder of civilians. Nothing can justify terrorism. India has also endured the pain of terrorism for a long time," PM Modi had said.

# Govt assures farmers of adequate fertiliser supply amid Iran crisis

IAN S

**NEW DELHI:** Addressing market speculation triggered by geopolitical disruptions in West Asia and the Strait of Hormuz, the Centre's Department of Fertilisers on Friday firmly assured the farming community that India's fertiliser stocks remain robust and are sufficient to handle the upcoming kharif season.

The Department of Fertilisers said that the country's reserve stocks of fertilisers have risen by a massive 36.5 per cent from 129.85 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) on March 6, 2025, to 177.31 LMT as on March 6, 2026.

This huge buffer is driven by an unprecedented increase in critical soil nutrients, most notably DAP stocks (now at 25.13 LMT) and a rise in NPK reserves (reaching 55.87 LMT). Furthermore, the availability of urea -- the country's most widely consumed fertiliser -- has also grown to reach 59.30 LMT. "This robust inventory demonstrates that the nation is exceptionally well-stocked and fully insulated against any global supply chain shock, as we approach the peak Kharif sowing season," the official statement said.

These fertiliser reserves, which are significantly higher than last year, provide a vital operational cushion, ensuring that international logistics bottlenecks do not translate



into domestic farm-gate shortages.

To ensure continuity of supplies of all grades of subsidised fertilisers, the department has already tied up critical incoming shipments. The government has so far imported 98 lakh metric tonnes of finished fertilisers up to February 2026, and further imports of more than 17 lakh metric tonnes are already lined up for the next three months.

Furthermore, to insulate the country from regional pricing and supply volatility, Indian companies have secured long-term supply agreements with major international producers for P&K fertilisers, the statement said.

The government is also actively manoeuvring to optimise resources amid the LNG supply strain. In a high-level review meeting held in the department, the government assured fertiliser companies that gas supply to their sector remains a top national priority. The department

stated that farmers are the priority of the government, and their interests will not be compromised under any circumstances. Farmers are encouraged to proceed with their Kharif preparations without any panic.

The department also observed that the current lean period is traditionally when fertiliser companies schedule plant shutdowns for repair and maintenance. These companies have now come forward to advance their maintenance schedule to March to utilise the disruptive time to their advantage. Multiple global sources are also being tapped for additional imports of finished fertilisers.

The Department of Fertilisers, in close coordination with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, continues to monitor the situation in real time, to ensure early discharge of imports, and it stands ready to execute quick responses, as global energy markets evolve, the statement added.

# BPCL, IOCL dismiss petrol and diesel shortage rumours, say supply chains operating normally

IAN S

**NEW DELHI:** PSU oil marketing companies Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) on Friday dismissed rumours of shortages of fuel -- petrol and diesel -- in certain areas, calling them "completely unfounded" and "baseless".

In a post on its X handle, BPCL said India's energy supply remains reliable and resilient, with ample petroleum reserves and uninterrupted supply chains.

"There have been some rumours about shortages of petrol and diesel in certain areas, which are completely unfounded," it said.

India's energy supply remains reliable and resilient, and there is no reason to be alarmed about fuel availability, it said.

"BPCL is fully operational and steadfast in ensuring a smooth fuel supply for all customers," it added.

Meanwhile, IOCL said: "Reports on social media suggesting a shortage of petrol and diesel are baseless. India has sufficient fuel stocks, and supply and distribution networks are functioning normally."

"IndianOil is committed to maintaining uninterrupted fuel supply across the country. Citizens are requested not to panic or



crowd fuel stations and to rely only on official sources for accurate information", it said on its X handle.

Earlier, government sources said India currently maintains around 25 days of crude oil reserves and 25 days of petroleum products, including shipments in transit to the country's ports. This keeps the nation in a "reasonably comfortable" position despite recent disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz following the Iran conflict.

Oil marketing companies, including Indian Oil, BPCL, and Hindustan Petroleum, have sufficient supplies for several weeks and continue to receive shipments from multiple routes.

The government has also directed OMCs not to export petroleum products to further bolster buffer

stocks.

Strategic storage facilities across the country add to this resilience: Pudur has a capacity of 2.25 million metric tonnes (MMT), Visakhapatnam 1.33 MMT, and Mangaluru 1.5 MMT. Another coastal facility at Chandikhol is under construction.

BPCL and the government emphasised that there is no reason for public alarm.

India imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil, with roughly half historically sourced from Middle Eastern countries.

However, the country has diversified its supply sources in recent years, increasing imports from Africa, Russia, and the United States, while strengthening energy security through strategic reserves.

# India has enough forex to handle rise in global oil prices, economy poised for high growth

IAN S

**NEW DELHI:** While the Iran war has already driven Brent crude up around 9 per cent to near \$80 per barrel and LNG prices by around 50 per cent in the global market, India has sufficient foreign exchange reserves, a low current account deficit (CAD) of 0.8 per cent of GDP in H1 FY26, and low inflation rates, which collectively allow it to effectively mitigate the impacts of rising global crude oil prices and ensure domestic energy security, according to the Finance Ministry's monthly review report released on Friday.

In view of positive developments, including recent successful trade deals and consecutive strong growth of 7+ over the previous three years, real GDP growth has been upgraded to 7.0-7.4 per cent for FY27, the report pointed out.

External developments, including global growth conditions, trade dynamics, commodity price movements, and geopolitical factors, will continue to shape the outlook. Nevertheless, strong macroeconomic fundamentals and continued reform momentum position the economy well for expansion, according to the report.

The external sector is stable despite elevated global trade uncertainty. Moreover, India's active trade diplomacy, including

progress on the India-EU FTA, the India-US Interim Trade Arrangement and the India-Oman CEPA, together with Budget initiatives aimed at improving trade facilitation, logistics efficiency, and export competitiveness, is expected to diversify export destinations and strengthen external resilience over the medium term, the report stated.

The US-Israel strikes against Iran on February 28, killing its Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and sparking retaliatory threats, has disrupted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz -- world's most critical oil chokepoint handling 20 per cent of global oil flows -- and damages to key energy infrastructure assets in the Middle East, mark a pivotal escalation echoing the 1991 Gulf War oil shocks, potentially reshaping global energy geopolitics for decades, the report observed.

If the crisis persists, it could have material implications for the exchange rate and the current account deficit and could stoke inflationary pressures (which otherwise have supportive supply-side dynamics). Subdued capital flows, accentuated by a flight to safety, could put pressure on the currency. Some sectors dependent on LNG and crude, like fertilisers and petrochemicals, could be affected if the crisis is prolonged, the report pointed out.

# BJP issues whip to Lok Sabha MPs for March 9-10, amid likely motion against Speaker

IAN S

**NEW DELHI:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday issued a three-line whip to its Lok Sabha MPs, instructing them to remain present in the House next week, when the second phase of the Budget Session commences.

The directive stated that "very important legislative business" will be taken up in the House on March 9-10, and

it thus necessitates their presence.

The instructions to all the BJP members in Lok Sabha came amid likely discussion on the motion in the House, seeking the removal of the Speaker Om Birla over alleged bias and partisan approach against the Opposition.

"All BJP Members are informed that some very important Legislative Business will be taken up for passing in the

Lok Sabha on Monday, the 9th March 2026 and Tuesday, the 10th March 2026," said the BJP whip, dated March 6, signed by BJP's chief whip in Lok Sabha -- Dr Sanjay Jaiswal.

"All members in Lok Sabha are therefore, requested to be positively present in the House on both the days and support the Government's stand," it added.

Reports suggest that the Lok Sabha is likely to take up

the resolution, moved by the Opposition, against Speaker Om Birla as early as on March 9, for alleged partisan conduct against the Opposition, during a fierce face-off in the Parliament over former Army chief General MM Naravane's unpublished memoirs.

Speaker Om Birla is also likely to be present; however, he is unlikely to chair the proceedings of the House as he had vowed to recuse himself from

the proceedings the day the Opposition moved a resolution against him.

According to laid-down rules and guidelines, Om Birla will have the right to vote against the resolution when it comes up before the House.

More than 100 members from the Opposition had submitted a notice for resolution against the Lok Sabha Speaker in the first part of the Budget Session.

Congress and Opposition

were furious with the Speaker's alleged bias towards Rahul Gandhi as they charged him with multiple accusations, claiming that the LoP was denied a chance to reply to the Motion of Thanks to President's address, his right to raise alarming reports of 'advancing' Chinese troops during Galwan face-off was snatched and when the Opposition protested against it, as many as eight of them were suspended.

Notably, the Congress party is also understood to have issued a similar whip to its Lok Sabha MPs, mandating their presence in the House for three days from March 9 to March 11.

As the Budget Session reconvenes after the recess, the House is set to witness fresh fireworks and tempers flare as the Opposition members will mount fresh efforts to remove Om Birla, currently pursuing his second term as the Lok Sabha Speaker.

# Pink-ball Test: Sutherland, Hamilton help Australia seize upper hand against India

IAN S

PERTH: Australia seized the upper hand in the one-off pink-ball Test against India at the WACA Ground in Perth by ending day one at 96/3 and trailing by 102 runs, after debutant Lucy Hamilton and Annabel Sutherland starred with the ball on Friday.

Skipper Alyssa Healy, in her farewell international game, won the toss and sent India in to bat first under scorching heat. That decision paid off as Annabel found magnificent swing and seam to pick 4-46, while Lucy was accurate and found movement in taking 3-31, as India were bowled out for 198.

Darcie Brown (2-41) and Ashleigh Gardner (1-39) also chipped in to tighten the screws on India's batting line-up. For India, Jemimah Rodrigues scored a composed 52, and that was the only notable contribution, while debutant Kashvee Gautam added a useful 34 not out off 54 balls.

India's innings was marked by them being unable to adapt to the rigours of Test match cricket, especially this being their first game in the longer format after June 2024. Australia's reply was tested under lights, as Sayali Satghare and Kranti Gaud reduced them to 58/3.

But Ellyse Perry and Annabel Sutherland steadied things by sharing an unbroken stand of 38 and looking increasingly assured against the Indian bowlers. Ellyse barely put a foot wrong since arriving at the crease to be unbeaten on 43 off 62 balls, laced with seven boundaries.

Annabel backed up her stellar bowling show by making 20 not out off 29 balls, studded with three boundaries. India will need



to be at their best on Saturday to prevent Australia from taking a significant first-innings lead.

The final session began with Australia not conceding a boundary in four overs before Annabel had Sayali top-edging a pull to Beth Mooney, while Darcie Brown ended India's innings two runs short of 200 when Kranti's half-hearted pull was caught by first slip.

In response to India's 198, Australia lost Georgia early. Sayali produced a sharp inswinger that breached her defence and bowled her for two. Ellyse joined Phoebe Litchfield and looked fluent in driving Sayali through cover for four, but India struck again when Phoebe's scratchy stay ended at nine, as Jemimah Rodrigues took a brilliant low catch at backward point off Kranti.

Skipper Alyssa Healy, playing in her final international game, received a standing ovation from the Perth crowd but could not make it count as she edged away from the body off Sayali to Jemimah at backward point for 13. At 58/3, India's seamers had their tails up, with Sayali and Kranti making the ball talk.

Ellyse, however, grew in confidence, cutting and driving with authority, while Annabel shone from the outset, with her crisp drive through extra cover and a pull behind square being the standout shots.

India went all-pace until the final over, when Sneha Rana was introduced, but Annabel and Ellyse negotiated her comfortably. Previously, India's innings began shakily after Smriti Mandhana survived a probing first over from Darcie Brown. She looked shaky before being undone in the sixth over by Lucy, who claimed her maiden Test wicket with a sharp nip-backer that castled the India vice-captain through the gate.

Shafali Verma looked positive by hitting six boundaries in making 35 off 48 balls, before edging Annabel behind to Beth Mooney, while playing a drive sans footwork. Debutant Pratika Rawal looked scratchy in her 18 off 43 balls and was dismissed after drinks when she slashed at a wide delivery from Sutherland, only to be caught at gully.

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur attempted to counterattack with four

boundaries but was beaten by late movement from Darcie that breached her defence and bowled her for 19.

Jemimah got a thick edge off Lucy for four to begin her stay at the crease, before presenting the full face of the bat past mid-on to get a boundary and end a session where India failed to show the patience needed for surviving the rigours of Test match cricket.

The second session began with India losing Deepti Sharma early to Annabel Sutherland before Jemimah and Richa Ghosh stitched together a promising 23-run stand off 62 balls.

Their resistance was short-lived, however, as Richa fell to Ashleigh and Jemimah, who looked at ease while hitting 52 - her fourth fifty in Tests and second against Australia, edged off Lucy to square leg and gave the teenager her second scalp.

Lucy struck again to remove Sneha Rana cheaply and completed a three-wicket haul on debut. India's lower order survived nervy moments, with Kashvee dropped by Beth Mooney on 16, before she and Sayali stayed unbeaten till dinner break arrived.

After that, though India's innings ended swiftly and they took out three Australian wickets, the hosts ensured they did enough to maintain their upper hand in the final game of the multi-format series.

Brief scores: India 198 all out in 62.4 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 52, Shafali Verma 35; Annabel Sutherland 4-46, Lucy Hamilton 3-31) lead Australia 96/3 in 27 overs (Ellyse Perry 43 not out, Annabel Sutherland 20 not out; Sayali Satghare 2-24, Kranti Gaud 1-28) by 102 runs

# T20 WC: New Zealand are always 'David'; go out there to do the best for country, says Phillips

IAN S

AHMEDABAD: New Zealand's batting allrounder Glenn Phillips said his side were used to being the 'David' against giant sides like India all the time and that they are going to put their best foot forward for the country when the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup final takes place at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

New Zealand, a nation of 5.5 million, has reached the summit clash against the hosts, who can call upon a talent pool vast enough to field multiple competitive sides. "I mean, we're never given a chance to usually even be in the semifinals, and we're always there. So we're always David. I guess that means only one team can fail, doesn't it? For us, we just go out there and enjoy it."

"We have a great time as a group of guys. We go out there, do our best for our country. Obviously, a packed crowd is fantastic. We play to entertain the people, and whether they're supporting us or whether they're supporting India, it's fantastic for cricket in general," Phillips told reporters ahead of the side's training session on Friday.

The high-octane title clash is expected to pit New Zealand's batters against India wrist-spinner Varun Chakaravathy, who's been a little expensive of late. "I think obviously we've played him quite a few times in the past now, which is helpful."

"But obviously he's an incredible bowler, and we will just go out there and try and face the ball one ball at a time. Obviously, he is allowed to have a good day, but we're also allowed to have a good day, and we'll see what happens," added Phillips.

Phillips was candid



about ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah's quality, especially after he produced two match-turning overs in the back end, which helped India edge England by seven runs in the semifinal in Mumbai.

"Obviously, we had a really good trip against him in the bilateral series as well. But he's a class bowler. Obviously, Bumrah is a fantastic bowler. He's got so many variations. He hits the block hole at the death incredibly well."

"Obviously, the way the England boys played him yesterday in terms of trying to take the overs to, I guess, the last two overs and give themselves as much of a chance as possible was, I guess, the tactic that they'd employed. He's human as well. He is allowed to have a bad day, as are the rest of us. So hopefully, we have a good day against him," he added.

Phillips added that capitalising on any loose deliveries from Bumrah would be crucial. "It's not necessarily going to be that, per se. As I said, a bowler is allowed to miss. If he happens to miss, we do have to put it away. But that also means that if he does bowl well, we do have to, I guess, accommodate for

other things and adapt on the fly."

The previous night's semifinal between India and England -- a high-octane run fest -- prompted discussion about batter-friendly surfaces. Phillips stated New Zealand were prepared for any conditions the pitch might offer on Sunday evening.

"Look, obviously that was a fantastic game. It was great to watch last night, great for cricket in general. Obviously, there are things going around about pitches being too batter-friendly and things like that. But obviously, I think it's an entertaining brand of cricket, and the pitches at different stadiums play each time differently."

"So whatever we see, we'll try and adapt to (ahead of the final on Sunday). If that means lots of runs, then that means lots of runs. But if it means that it's going to be a little bit of a scrap, we're up for that as well."

The dew is also expected to be a factor, though some chemical spraying is expected to happen on the ground so that it doesn't make the game lop-sided. New Zealand gained some insight into the dew factor in Kolkata during the nine-

wicket semi-final over South Africa, where they successfully chased down 170, thanks to Finn Allen's record 33-ball century.

"I think coming from Kolkata was a great opportunity to understand that dew factor. We were obviously lucky enough to win the toss and bat and chase down 170 in a very limited number of overs, which is fantastic. So, especially the boys up top, they're used to playing with high strike rates. Obviously, all the Indian boys do the same."

"Obviously, the dew factor is always a thing here in India this time of year. Whether the chemicals work or dew is going to be a factor; if we do end up having to bat first and bowl second, then we're going to have to adapt as much as possible to that situation. I guess, go out there, try to execute our skills as much as possible, whether we've got a wet ball or a dry ball. There's no real excuse," added Phillips.

Phillips said New Zealand's journey to the final, despite one stumble against England in the Super Eights, had been built on collective effort, citing the match-winning contributions of Allen and Tim Seifert in the semifinal.

# T20 WC: Five Indian batters who have dominated New Zealand in T20Is



IAN S

NEW DELHI: Defending champions India will face New Zealand in the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 to be played at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

India and New Zealand have faced each other 30 times in the shortest format of the game. Out of these encounters, the Men in Blue have registered 18 victories, while the Blackcaps have won 11 matches.

Over the years, Indian batters have played a key role in securing wins against New Zealand in T20Is. As the two teams prepare to face off once again in the summit clash, here is a look at the top five Indian players who have scored the most runs against New Zealand in the format.

India's top scorers against New Zealand in T20Is

1. Suryakumar Yadav: India's captain Suryakumar has scored the most runs against New Zealand in T20Is. He has scored 13 matches against the Black

Caps and managed to score 526 runs at an average of 58.44. Surya has also hit one century and four half-centuries against the New Zealand team.

2. Rohit Sharma: Former India captain Rohit Sharma has played 17 matches against the Black Caps and has scored 511 runs against them. The 2024 T20 World Cup-winning captain has also hit six half-centuries against the team.

3. KL Rahul: Indian opener KL Rahul boasts a great record against New Zealand in T20Is. He has amassed 322 runs in just 8 matches and hit three fifties.

4. Ishan Kishan: India's T20 World Cup 2026 star player, Kishan, has been in great touch against New Zealand. He has scored 318 runs at an average of 28.90 in 11 matches.

5. Virat Kohli: India's prime batter Kohli is placed at number five in the list. The former captain has scored 311 runs in just 10 matches at an average of 34.55. Virat has hammered two fifties against the Black Caps.

# ISL 2025-26: Mohammedan Sporting hope to open account against Bengaluru, winless Kerala Blasters cross swords with Chennaiyin

IAN S

KOLKATA / KOCHI: Mohammedan Sporting Club and Kerala Blasters will look to bag their first points of the 2025-26 season when they take the field for their respective matches in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 on Saturday.

Mohammedan Sporting Club will take on Bengaluru FC as both sides aim to secure a crucial victory at the Kishore Bharti Kriangan in Kolkata, while in the second match of the day, Kerala Blasters FC will host Chennaiyin FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi.



Mohammedan Sporting head into the fixture after suffering consecutive defeats, including a 1-5 loss to Mohun Bagan Super Giant. The Black and White Brigade will be eager to bounce back and secure their first points of the season.

The Black and Whites are currently sitting at the bottom of the table without a point from three matches, while the visitors are seventh with four points

from three matches. Mohammedan SC head coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo emphasised his team's focus on the necessity of coping with the pressure of the ISL.

"Every single match is tough in the Indian Super League. We are playing with an all-Indian squad. We need a bit of time to cope with the pressure and intensity. The team is constantly evolving and improving. Only three matches have been played. We need to play regularly to be competitive with the other ISL teams. We must be at our very best to compete and try to secure a

positive result." Mohammedan goalkeeper Padam Chettri said, "We need to spend more time together as a team. The results will definitely follow."

Bengaluru FC, meanwhile, arrive in Kolkata aiming to bounce back from their first defeat of the ISL campaign. Renedy Singh's men sit sixth in the standings with four points, coming off a disappointing 0-2 loss to Punjab FC.

## رمضان كريم

# Ramadan

2026 | 1447 Hijri

### Sehri & Iftaar Time Schedule

10 Days Of Rahmat

RAMADAN	DATE	DAY	SEHRI TIME	IFTARI TIME
1	19 FEB	THURSDAY	05:49	06:21
2	20 FEB	FRIDAY	05:48	06:22
3	21 FEB	SATURDAY	05:47	06:23
4	22 FEB	SUNDAY	05:46	06:24
5	23 FEB	MONDAY	05:45	06:24
6	24 FEB	TUESDAY	05:44	06:25
7	25 FEB	WEDNESDAY	05:42	06:26
8	26 FEB	THURSDAY	05:41	06:27
9	27 FEB	FRIDAY	05:40	06:28
10	28 FEB	SATURDAY	05:39	06:29

10 Days Of Magfirat

RAMADAN	DATE	DAY	SEHRI TIME	IFTARI TIME
11	01 MARCH	SUNDAY	05:38	06:30
12	02 MARCH	MONDAY	05:37	06:31
13	03 MARCH	TUESDAY	05:36	06:32
14	04 MARCH	WEDNESDAY	05:34	06:33
15	05 MARCH	THURSDAY	05:33	06:33
16	06 MARCH	FRIDAY	05:31	06:34
17	07 MARCH	SATURDAY	05:30	06:34
18	08 MARCH	SUNDAY	05:28	06:35
19	09 MARCH	MONDAY	05:27	06:35
20	10 MARCH	TUESDAY	05:26	06:37

10 Days Of Najat

RAMADAN	DATE	DAY	SEHRI TIME	IFTARI TIME
21	11 MARCH	WEDNESDAY	05:25	06:38
22	12 MARCH	THURSDAY	05:24	06:38
23	13 MARCH	FRIDAY	05:23	06:39
24	14 MARCH	SATURDAY	05:20	06:40
25	15 MARCH	SUNDAY	05:19	06:41
26	16 MARCH	MONDAY	05:18	06:42
27	17 MARCH	TUESDAY	05:16	06:42
28	18 MARCH	WEDNESDAY	05:15	06:43
29	19 MARCH	THURSDAY	05:14	06:44
30	20 MARCH	FRIDAY	05:12	06:45

### DUA FOR IFTAR

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي لَكَ صُئْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَى رِزْقِكَ أَطَّرْتُ

### DUA FOR SEHRI

وَيَصُومُ عَدْلًا نَوِيْتٌ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

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