

Boosting tech policing, IGP Jammu inaugurates surveillance training



JAMMU, MAR 6
A two-day specialised training programme on Electronic Surveillance commenced today at the Conference Hall of Zonal Police Headquarters (ZPHQ), Jammu, aimed at enhancing the technical capabilities of police personnel engaged in investigation. The training programme was inaugurated by the Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Sh. Bhim Sen Tuti, IPS, in the presence of the Sh. Shamsheer Hussain, Staff Officer to IGP Jammu and Sh. Himanshu Mahajan, Sr. Prosecuting Officer, ZPHQ Jammu.

Addressing the trainees, the IGP Jammu emphasised the growing role of technology-driven investigation and electronic surveillance in tackling

modern crimes, including terrorist cyber offences, and organised criminal activities. He stressed that strengthening technical expertise among investigators is crucial for ensuring professional, evidence-based, and legally sustainable investigations. The IGP emphasised that strengthening the technical capabilities of investigators is essential for ensuring professional, evidence-based and legally sustainable investigations. He encouraged the trainees to make the best use of the training programme and apply the knowledge gained in their respective districts and units. During the programme, subject experts and senior officers will deliver lectures and interactive sessions on various aspects of electronic surveillance and technology-assisted

investigation. The training is designed to familiarise trainees with modern tools and methods used in digital investigation and intelligence gathering. The course will also focus on enhancing the trainees' understanding of emerging technological challenges in policing and the role of surveillance and analytical tools in supporting field investigations and operational decision-making. The programme is part of the ongoing capacity-building initiatives of Jammu Police aimed at improving the professional skills of its personnel in dealing with technology-enabled crime and security challenges. Officers and officials from different districts of Jammu Zone are participating in the programme.

Compassionate Appointment: Delayed claim after employee's death is liable to be rejected as time-barred: High Court

SRINAGAR, MAR 6
Observing that delayed claims long after the employee's death are liable to be rejected as "time-barred", the High Court of J&K and Ladakh has set aside its Single Bench's decision whereby the government was appointed to appoint a man on compassionate grounds after eleven years of delay. Allowing the government's appeal against the judgment of May 27, 2015, passed by the single judge, a Division Bench of Justice Sindhu Sharma and Justice Shahzad Azam quashed the same. The primary objective of a compassionate appointment is to provide immediate relief to a bereaved family and prevent it from falling into destitution, the court said.

A B Sheikh, a Warden in the Prisons Department, died in harness on June 8, 1998. For a compassionate appointment, his son applied in 2009, nearly 11 years after his father's death, upon attaining majority. The claim for the compassionate appointment was rejected by the government on the grounds that this



claim was not covered under Rule 3 of the Jammu and Kashmir (Compassionate Appointment) Rules, 1994, which mandates that an eligible family member must apply within one year from the date of death of the deceased employee. Though the limitation period was later extended to five years in certain cases, the application still fell far beyond the permissible time, the court noted. The single bench, it said, failed to take into account the statutory limitation period and the object underlying compassionate appointments. "The rationale is that if the

family has managed without assistance for a sustainable period, it emphasises that they have alternative means of subsistence, negating the need for compassionate relief". The Bench also noted that Sheikh's wife had claimed to have applied earlier but failed to provide the requisite documents when asked, and no record of such an application was traceable. The Bench, while relying on the Supreme Court's ruling, reiterated that delayed claims made after a dependent attains majority, long after the employee's death, are liable to be rejected as time-barred.

CM Omar Abdullah inaugurates new Secretariat block in Jammu to augment office infrastructure

CM congratulates J&K candidates for clearing UPSC Civil Services Examination 2025

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today extended his heartfelt 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 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.



JAMMU, MAR 6
Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today 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 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 Shaheen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Director Estates Jammu Ashwari Khajuria and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.



Zojila Pass Remains Open Beyond Feb 28 For First Time: BRO

JAMMU, MAR 6
For the first time ever, the strategic Zojila Pass along the strategic Srinagar-Leh Highway has remained open beyond February 28 despite heavy snowfall, marking a significant development for connectivity between the two union Territories, the Border Roads Organisation said on Friday. Situated at an altitude of over 11,500 feet, Zojila Pass serves as a crucial lifeline for civilian supplies as well as military logistics to Ladakh. According to the BRO, the vital mountain pass continues to remain operational even after intense snowfall in the region, marking a significant milestone in maintaining winter connectivity. In a post on social media, the BRO said the development reflects the "relentless commitment" of its personnel in ensuring that the critical road link between Ladakh and the Kashmir Valley remains open. "History at the heights of Zojila! For the first time ever, Zojila Pass has remained open beyond February 28 and continues to stay operational despite very heavy snowfall - a testament to the relentless commitment of BRO in keeping the lifeline between Ladakh and the Kashmir Valley open," the BRO said in a post on X. A video shared by the BRO shows massive walls of snow lining the highway while snow-clearance machines and personnel work continuously to keep the road operational. The footage captures bulldozers and snow cutters carving a narrow passage through thick layers of snow as vehicles cautiously move along the cleared stretch, highlighting the extreme weather conditions and the scale of the operation. Last winter, Zojila Pass remained closed for about 30 days. Officials said this year the pass has stayed open beyond February 28, setting a major record. Although comparatively less snowfall was recorded this winter in the higher reaches, including the Zojila Pass, officials said challenging weather conditions still prevailed.



The entire saayara sabha bahu fort strongly condemns the fact that strict action should be taken against those who made fun of Mata Bawli Wali. And in future if anyone does something like this again, the people of Bahu Fort will take strict action against them.

Pushpinder Singh Charak Co Convenor Disaster Management & Relief Department BJP J&K to paid obeisance Special Abhishek Ceremony at Tirupathi Balaji Temple Jammu



JAMMU, MAR 6
Pushpinder Singh Charak Co Convenor Disaster Management & Relief Department BJP J&K, Rajinder Kumar, Sanjeev Kumar, Kavita ji Balkumar Khajuria, Patwari Deepak Sharma and Temple Inspector Sai Krishna Tirupathi balaji Jammu Today paid obeisance at Tirupathi Balaji temple Jammu and participated in the special abhishek of Tirupathi, prayed for the welfare of the country. Every Friday the ceremony of abhishek of Lord Venkateswara is performed and the guests present were

also honored by the temple administration with a photograph of Lord Venkateswara. Pushpinder Singh Charak expressed happiness over the temple said that it is a feeling of pleasure and proud that the Tirupathi Balaji temple is established here for the people of Jammu. With this temple we are able to witness the culture of south India and this feeling is heavenly. He appealed people to visit the temple and pay obeisance here. He said the dedication of Lord Venkateswara temple would give a boost to spiritual tourism. He said overwhelmed to share with you all my divine experience at Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple which is famous as Tirupathi Balaji Temple located amid the scenic Shivalk forests in Majeen, situated in Jammu. I am requesting all Devotees who are unable to visit Andhra Pradesh, can come here and offer prayers to the Lord Venkateswara Swamy and seek blessings. Other present in this occasion Swami Neeraj ji, Anurag Swami Gopal Sharma, Ravi Teja And Chandan ji

Dr Jitendra inspects world's first 'Ocean Conversion' project for simultaneous water, electricity supply

KAVARATTI, MAR 6
Union Minister for Earth Sciences and Science & Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh on Friday reviewed the progress of an Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) project during a visit to Kavarratti in Lakshadweep, as the government moves to strengthen freshwater availability and renewable energy use in island territories. The Minister inspected the ongoing work at the OTEC-based desalination facility, a project designed to convert seawater into potable water by using the temperature difference between warm surface water and cold deep-sea water to generate energy. The energy produced is used to run desalination systems, aimed at providing a stable and sustainable supply of drinking water to the island community. Officials said the project seeks to address long-standing freshwater challenges in Lakshadweep, where limited groundwater, salinity intrusion and dependence on seasonal rainfall have constrained reliable water supply.

During the visit, Dr. Jitendra Singh reviewed the physical and technical progress of the plant and examined key components such as the seawater intake system, the deep-sea cold-water pipeline, the turbine-generator unit and the desalination modules. He also interacted with scientists, engineers and project personnel involved in the implementation and reviewed timelines for commissioning along with environmental safeguards. Officials also briefed him on plans for off-shore OTEC demonstration project under the Deep Ocean Mission. According to project officials, infrastructure development in Lakshadweep faces logistical and engineering challenges due to the region's sealed conditions, which include coral formations, rocky strata and trenches. Work is also limited by narrow operational windows during monsoon months and rough sea conditions, requiring specialised design and installation approaches.

The OTEC-based system is designed to function as a continuous renewable energy source, unlike solar or wind power which depend on weather conditions. Officials said this could eventually reduce the dependence on diesel-powered desalination units, lowering fuel transportation costs and cutting emissions while ensuring uninterrupted water supply for the islands. Globally, India is the first in the world to develop facilities, including projects in Japan and the United States. With the commissioning of the Kavarratti plant, India aims to join the group while exploring the technology's potential for other tropical island regions and coastal areas. During the visit, Dr. Jitendra Singh said island regions face distinct challenges related to water availability and energy security, and integrating ocean-based renewable energy with desalination could provide a long-term solution for sustainable development in such locations.

J&K cricket's journey from JKCA scam to Ranji triumph exposes past corruption: Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia

JAMMU, MAR 6
J&K BJP spokesperson Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia strongly criticized previous regimes and opposition parties while addressing a press conference at BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu, highlighting the journey from the JKCA Scam to Ranji Trophy winners by the J&K cricket team. Congratulating the Jammu and Kashmir cricket team for their historic Ranji Trophy triumph, Dr. Abhijeet said that the victory is not merely a sporting milestone but a reflection of how corruption, nepotism, and political interference had crippled sports in Jammu and Kashmir for decades. Dr. Abhijeet Jasrotia said that for years the people of Jammu and Kashmir kept asking why a region rich in sporting talent could never win the Ranji Trophy after independence.



The answer lies in the mismanagement and controversies surrounding the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA), where merit was ignored and politics dominated sports administration," he said. Referring to the JKCA scam, Dr. Jasrotia stated that although the matter is sub judice and he would not comment on its legal aspects, it is a matter of public record how the association had once reached a pathetic state, leaving young cricketers demoralized and opportunities blocked. He said that a turning point came after 2021 when Jay Shah, then Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), visited Jammu and Kashmir and took serious cognizance of the deteriorating condition of cricket in the Union Territory. "Following his intervention, concrete steps were taken to clean up the system and rebuild cricket in J&K," he said.

Dr. Jasrotia highlighted that new cricket turf were developed in both Jammu and Kashmir and a dedicated team was entrusted with reviving the functioning of JKCA. He credited Brigadier Anil Gupta, Advocate Sunil Sethi, and former international cricketer Mithun Manhas for restoring transparency, professionalism, and merit-based selection in the association. "Unlike the past where favoritism and nepotism prevailed, the new system in Cricket world, ensured equal opportunities for talented players from both Jammu and Kashmir. The result of that honest and transparent approach is visible today in the form of the Ranji Trophy victory," he said. Taking a dig at Omar Abdullah for rushing to congratulate the team, Dr. Jasrotia said that while congratulations are welcome, the same leaders should also explain to the people what role previous political regimes played in pushing JKCA into controversy and disrepute. Dr. Jasrotia also raised concern over the declining performance of Jammu and Kashmir in national sporting events. He pointed out that the medal tally of J&K in the National Games has fallen sharply from 46 medals in the 2024 Goa National

Games to just 25 medals recently, with the ranking slipping from 19th to 37th. He further expressed concern over the poor performance in the recent Winter Games, where J&K secured only two medals despite having ideal natural conditions for winter sports. Mocking superficial measures, Dr. Jasrotia said that creating artificial snow cannot substitute real sports development. "Artificial snow may create headlines, but it cannot produce champions. What is needed is talent identification, transparent selection, proper infrastructure, and serious involvement of the sports leadership," he said and added that the guiding principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" must also be applied in sports to ensure equal opportunities for athletes from both Jammu and Kashmir. Dr. Jasrotia said the historic Ranji Trophy victory proves that when corruption and nepotism are removed and merit is prioritized, the youth of Jammu and Kashmir can compete and win at the highest level. He congratulated the J&K cricket team and said their success has exposed the failures of the past while opening a new chapter of hope and excellence in sports for the Union Territory.

Labourers key to economy growth; Govt committed to their welfare, social security: Deputy CM

Distributes Rs. 84 lakh among beneficiaries in Samba

SAMBA, MAR 6
Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today 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 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 regulations 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



Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary (left) distributing Rs. 84 lakh among beneficiaries in Samba. He is accompanied by Rinchin Singh and other officials. A banner in the background reads 'HEARTIEST WELCOME TO THE DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER'.

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 services by providing 23 services online through the Single Window System. During the current financial year, more than 14,000

registrations and over 11,000 renewals have been processed through the online platform. The Deputy Chief Minister also highlighted the launch of Shramik Wata, an initiative introduced by the Labour Department to directly address workers' grievances.

"Sixteen Shramik Wata sessions have been conducted so far in which 358 grievances were received, most of which have already been resolved," he said. He also mentioned the 24x7 toll-free helpline 'Shram Mitra', has

been established to provide timely assistance and effective grievance redressal to labourers. He appreciated the Department for holding such events, facilitating the Government outreach Workers at their work places and listen to their issues directly.

"We will hold these events 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 (JKBOCWVB), Employees

Compensation Act and ESI schemes.

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

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

To further enhance awareness, a Nukkad Natak (street play) highlighting the benefits of Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare schemes and key provisions of labour laws was also presented during the programme. Among others present on the occasion were Deputy Labour Commissioner Jammu Sukhpal Singh, Inspector of Factories, Assistant Labour Commissioners of Samba and Jammu, IBO Samba Lalit Mahajan, President of Bari Brahmana Industries Association (BBIA), Assistant Labour Commissioner Samba Himani Jethar besides a large number of workers and state-level officials.



Crime Review Meeting at Police Station Hiranagar

HIRANAGAR, MAR 6
A crime review meeting of Police Station Hiranagar was conducted by "Mohita Sharma, IPS, Senior Superintendent of Police, Kathua". The meeting continued for two days w.e.f. 05.03.2026.

The meeting was attended by "Mukund Tibrewal, IPS, SP Operations, along with SDPO Border, D/SP Operations, SPO DPO, SHO PS Hiranagar, Reader" and other investigating Officers of the police station. During the meeting, all pending cases, inquest proceedings, absconders, and missing files were discussed in detail. Necessary directions for their early disposal and proper investigation were issued on the spot.

The Malkhana and Kot were also inspected, and necessary instructions were imparted for their proper maintenance and management. Directions were further issued for systematic upkeep and maintenance of official records.

At the conclusion of the meeting, SSP Kathua expressed satisfaction with the functioning and performance of the police personnel of Police Station Hiranagar.

Power shutdown

JAMMU, MAR 6
Chief Engineer (Distribution) IPDCL Jammu has informed that the power supply to Battal Ballian, Garhi, Mansar, Sansoo, Housing Colony, Generation Colony and adjoining areas will remain affected on March 07 from 8 am to 2 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Barmeen, Johnu, Satanes and adjoining areas will remain affected on March 07 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Chenani, Kud, Samroli, Sudhmahadev, Latt, Dhuna, Phalata, Jib Chak and adjoining areas will remain affected on March 09 from 9 am to 2 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Chenani, Marheen, Paharpur, Rajbhag, Chandwan, Hariachack, Nanan, Barnoti and adjoining areas will remain affected on March 09 from 9 am to 3 pm.

Likewise, the power supply to Residential Guest House Feeders emanating from IME Station and Naryana Hospital, SMVDV University alongwith Residential Guest House and PHE Feeder emanating from R/Sn SMVDV remain affected on March 08 from 10 am to 4.30 pm.

Satish Sharma inaugurates YSS-JKSC Cricket League; hails Ranji Triumph, calls for statehood restoration

JAMMU, MAR 6
Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, IT, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, today inaugurated the YSS-JKSC Cricket League at the M.A. Stadium, Jammu.

The Minister formally inaugurated the tournament by unveiling the trophy and distributing team jerseys among the participating teams, signalling the commencement of the much-awaited cricket league which has drawn participation from 18 teams. The league is being organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council under the aegis of the Department of Youth Services and Sports, J&K.



The matches of the tournament will be played under floodlights at M.A. Stadium, adding to the excitement for the spectators. All the games would also be live-streamed on YouTube, enabling the cricket enthusiasts from across Jammu and Kashmir and beyond to end the tournament.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Secretary, J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, senior officers of the Department of Youth Services and Sports, representatives of sports associations, renowned sportspersons and a large gathering of cricket lovers who thronged the stadium to witness the launch of the league.

Speaking on the occasion, Satish Sharma said that sports have the power to shape character, promote discipline and foster unity among youth. He said that the government is committed towards strengthening sports infrastructure and creating greater opportunities for young sportspersons across Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the YSS-JKSC Cricket League will serve as an important platform for young cricketers to showcase their talent and gain exposure, while also nurturing the vibrant sports culture emerging across the region.

The Minister also lauded the historic achievement of the Jammu and Kashmir cricket team in winning the prestigious Ranji Trophy, describing it as a moment of immense pride and inspiration for the entire region.

"Jammu and Kashmir has immense sporting talent and the Ranji Trophy victory has proved that when provided with opportunities and the right platform, our youth can shine at the national level," the Minister said.

Satish Sharma further reiterated the long-standing demand of the people for restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, stating that the aspirations and democratic rights of the people must be respected. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir have always believed in democratic values and development. Restoration of

statehood will further strengthen the governance, empower institutions and accelerate progress in the region," he said.

The Minister also announced a series of major upcoming sporting events in Jammu, aimed at expanding the sports calendar and providing additional opportunities for athletes across disciplines. These included a Football Premier League at Mini Stadium Parade Ground, followed by a National-level Cyclothon and a Volleyball League, which are expected to witness participation from players across the region.

Expressing happiness over the enthusiastic participation of local players, the Minister said that the government is determined to promote grassroots sports and identify young talent from every corner of Jammu and Kashmir.

The YSS-JKSC Cricket League carries attractive prize money, with the winning team set to receive 73 lakh while the runner-up team will be awarded 71.5 lakh. Several individual awards will also be presented, including 720,000 for the Man of the Series along with other recognitions for outstanding performances.

BSP to intensify political activity for local body and Panchayat elections



JAMMU, MAR 6
The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has intensified its political activities for the upcoming Local body and Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir. During a meeting held at the party office on Friday, the party, Jammu and Kashmir in-charge and Central coordinator, Nitin Singh and Daya Chand, stated that the Bahujan Samaj Party is fully prepared for all upcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir, and that party leaders and workers should intensify their political activities for these elections. They also stated that the BSP will organize district and zone-level programs in Jammu and Kashmir to pay tribute to the party founder, marking the 92nd birth anniversary of BSP founder Kanshi Ram, which will be celebrated on March 15th. During this important meeting,

chaired by Bahujan Samaj Party Jammu and Kashmir President Darshan Rana, the party's State Vice President Charanjit Chagotra, General Secretary Raja Singh, Secretary Tilak Raj, Bishan Das Bhagat, District President Tarseem Lal, Raman Kumar, Davinder Kumar, and others were also present. Addressing the meeting, Central Coordinator Nitin Singh stated that the people of Jammu and Kashmir want change and see the Bahujan Samaj Party as an alternative to the existing political parties in power in Jammu and Kashmir have misled the people.

He also highlighted other issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir to pay tribute to the party founder, marking the 92nd birth anniversary of BSP founder Kanshi Ram, which will be celebrated on March 15th. During this important meeting,

Matter Of Great Pride To Serve Nation: Gupta After Appointment As Himachal Governor

JAMMU, MAR 6
Senior BJP leader Kavinder Gupta on Monday expressed his gratitude to the President, prime minister and home minister after his appointment as the governor of Himachal Pradesh, calling the responsibility to serve the nation a matter of great pride.

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



Kavinder Gupta, Ladakh was a small area, and he is a capable person. From now on, people will also recognize his capabilities." Gupta said, as the governor of Himachal Pradesh, he will uphold the dignity of the Constitution and perform his duties with dedication, impartiality and commitment. "It is a matter of great pride and responsibility for me to serve the nation in this important role," he said.

Home Minister Amit Shah for their continuous guidance and full support during his tenure as the lieutenant governor (LG) of Ladakh. After serving the Union territory (UT) for over eight months, he resigned from the post of the LG on Thursday.

The 66-year-old Gupta was appointed as the Ladakh LG on July 18, 2025. He was the third LG since the UT was carved out of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019.

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

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

Escalator inaugurated at Katra Railway Station to enhance passenger convenience

DRM Vivek Kumar says facility will ease movement of pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine

JAMMU, MAR 6
In a significant step towards strengthening passenger amenities in the Jammu Division, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Jammu Vivek Kumar today inaugurated a newly constructed escalator between Platforms 2 and 3 at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Railway Station. Senior divisional officers and railway employees were present on the occasion.

The newly installed escalator is expected to greatly facilitate the movement of thousands of passengers and pilgrims who visit the station daily, particularly the elderly, differently-abled persons, women and children.

The facility will make it easier for passengers to move between platforms, especially those travelling with heavy luggage.

Katra Railway Station witnesses a large influx of devotees throughout the year who travel to pay obeisance at the holy shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi. With the addition of this escalator, passengers will



experience improved convenience and reduced physical strain while navigating the busy station premises. Officials said the escalator will also help in better crowd management on the platforms and save valuable time for passengers during train arrivals and departures. After the inauguration, the Divisional Railway Manager conducted a detailed inspection of the station premises and reviewed various passenger facilities. He issued directions to the concerned officials to maintain high standards of cleanliness and continue efforts to further improve amenities for travellers. Speaking on the occasion, DRM

Vivek Kumar said that providing world-class facilities to passengers remains the top priority of Indian Railways.

"The installation of this escalator at Katra Railway Station will make the travel experience of pilgrims undertaking the Vaishno Devi Yatra more comfortable and convenient," he said.

Railway authorities reiterated their commitment to continuously upgrade infrastructure and passenger facilities to ensure a smooth and pleasant journey for devotees and other passengers visiting the important pilgrimage destination.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (C&W) Firozpur acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the works/services listed below. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make online payments against these tender. Document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on www.irps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Tender No.	Bidding System	Date of uploading tenders	Bid closing Date/Time	Date and Time of opening
Open	Single System packet	06.03.2026 before 15:00 hours	27.03.2026 before 15:00 hours	27.03.2026 Time 15:00 hours

S. No.	Tender Number	Details of Tender
1.	02-HABD-AMC-2026	Work of Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) for Hot Axle Box Detection (HABD) system installed at 05 locations (BWZ, GILL, SNL, PRR and MOW Station) of FZR Division for the period of 02 Years.
		Advertised Value (Tender Document Cost/Earnest Money) Validity of Offer/ Period of Completion
		Rs.2430660.95/- 0.00 Rs.48600/- 30 Days 02 Years

For more details please log on to www.irps.gov.in 788/2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

The Deputy Chief Engineer/BR/Workshop, Northern Railway, Jalandhar Cantt. for and on behalf of the President of India invites open-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-

S. No.	Item No./Notice No.	Name of work	Approx Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date of opening	Bidding start/End date on IRPS	Cost of tender form Rs.	Completion period of work
1	OT-03-192	Instrumentation and condition monitoring of One span each of Br. No. 244,46,002.56	2,72,200.00	2,72,200.00	27.03.2026	13.03.2026 to 27.03.2026	0	18 Months

Date & Time for submission of Tender and opening of tender: Up to 15:00 hrs on dates shown against each opening and tender there after at 15:00 hrs on same date.

Website Particulars where complete details of Tender can be accessed: www.irps.gov.in and tender document is available on www.irps.gov.in

No. 80-W/30/Bridged Invitation Dated: 05.03.2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 754/26

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

JAMMU, MAR 6
The Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today 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 Bhabhal, 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 promotion of public health.

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



remain the most essential traits of successful healthcare professionals.

"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

of JKCA, for corrupt practices and undue favours to undeserving individuals. Arun Kumar Gupta further appealed that the present sports environment in the country is a testimony to the fact that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has taken a keen interest in ensuring an honest and fair approach towards sports. Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the development of huge sports infrastructure under the guidance of the Government of India and will continue to do so for the promotion of sports in the region.

The victory in the Ranji Trophy is a clear message to the people of Jammu and Kashmir that they must remain vigilant against any attempt by anyone to negate the efforts made over the years or revive the practices of previous governments that turned sports into a personal agenda for corruption and misappropriation of funds and resources meant exclusively for future generations, thus helping in building a healthy and prosperous India, said Arun Kumar Gupta.

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

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

The Minister encouraged students to pursue innovation, research and ethical practices in pharmaceutical sciences, stating that the future of healthcare largely depends on the dedication and professionalism of young pharmacists. Earlier, in his welcome address, Director of the college, Dr. R.K. Raina, elaborated on the role of the institution in strengthening pharmacy education, promoting responsible healthcare practices and improving the overall quality of healthcare services in Jammu and Kashmir.

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

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BJP OBC Morcha Holds Organisational Meeting at Pahari Zila Basohli.

JAMMU, MAR 6

The Bharatiya Janata Party OBC Morcha organised an organisational meeting at Raghnath Mandir, Village Lakshari, Mandal Ramkot, District Basohli (Pahari Zila) with the objective of strengthening the party structure at the grassroots level and enhancing outreach among the Other Backward Classes (OBC) community.

The meeting was held in the presence of Brahmajyoti Satti, State President, BJP OBC Morcha JKUT, and Gopal Krishan, District President BJP Basohli, who guided party workers and Morcha members on organisational expansion and public engagement.

Upon arrival at the venue, the District OBC team accorded a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the State President, showering flowers and petals as a mark of respect and honor. Among those present on the occasion were Sunny Sangotra (State General Secretary, OBC Morcha), Ashok Salgotra (State Secretary, OBC Morcha), Jyoti Varma (State Additional Media Secretary, OBC Morcha), Dharam Chand Malgotra (District President, OBC Morcha Basohli), Vikram Singh (DDC Billawar), Narayan Dutt Tripathi (DDC Ramkot), Tikka Thakur (District President, Yuva Morcha Basohli), Tilak Verma (Mandal President, OBC Morcha Basohli), Tikka Sharma (Mandal President Ramkot), Acharya Kumar (Mandal President, Mandli OBC Morcha), and Varinder Kumar (State Executive Member, OBC Morcha) along with several local leaders and party workers. While addressing the gathering, Brahmajyoti Satti highlighted that organisational strength forms the backbone of any successful political movement. He stated that the OBC Morcha has a crucial responsibility in empowering the backward communities by ensuring their active participation in social, economic, and political spheres. He emphasized that the Morcha must work tirelessly to identify and address the concerns of the people while effectively communicating the welfare-oriented policies and developmental initiatives of the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the grassroots level. He also urged the newly constituted team of the district and mandal units to work with discipline, unity, and a strong sense of responsibility. Stressing the importance of regular public outreach, he remarked that dedication, continuous



engagement with the people, and organisational commitment will enable the Basohli unit of the OBC Morcha to emerge as a strong and active force within the party structure, just like other district units across the Union Territory.

Gopal Krishan, while interacting with party workers, also stressed the need for strengthening the booth-level organisational framework and called upon Morcha members to remain actively connected with the public. He stated that a strong district organisation is the foundation of the party's success at the grassroots level.

He urged the newly appointed OBC Morcha team to work with dedication, maintain close coordination with booth-level workers, and remain accessible to the public for addressing their concerns.

He further emphasised that understanding local issues and providing timely assistance to the people will strengthen the party's credibility and deepen its connection with the OBC community.

Victory of Ranji trophy is testimony of honest approach in promotion of sports

JAMMU, MAR 6

The victory of Jammu and Kashmir in the Ranji Trophy after a gap of more than sixty years is a testimony to a hard, sincere, and honest approach towards sports, said Arun Kumar Gupta, State Spokesperson of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Jammu and Kashmir unit, in a press release issued today.

He said that the focus on sports after the BJP came into government in 2014 has shown tremendous results and has proved beyond doubt that sports cannot be promoted in any country if the approach is based on favouritism, partial selection procedures, and financial misdeeds.

Jammu and Kashmir has once again, after a gap of more than 60 years, lifted the Ranji Trophy, and it is the result of a complete focus on honest and sincere selection with no favours at all. Sports cannot be promoted in an environment of corruption and undue benefits to undeserving individuals, said Arun Kumar Gupta.

He added that the dishonest conduct of sports authorities leads to



incapable teams, which results in a big dent in the sporting future of young aspirants. Such dishonest practices not only hamper the growth of sports but also cause great injustice to the youth. BJP Jammu and Kashmir has welcomed the decision of a court in J&K regarding the framing of charges against all those involved, including the then head

of JKCA, for corrupt practices and undue favours to undeserving individuals.

Arun Kumar Gupta further appealed that the present sports environment in the country is a testimony to the fact that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has taken a keen interest in ensuring an honest and fair approach towards sports. Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the development of huge sports infrastructure under the guidance of the Government of India and will continue to do so for the promotion of sports in the region.

The victory in the Ranji Trophy is a clear message to the people of Jammu and Kashmir that they must remain vigilant against any attempt by anyone to negate the efforts made over the years or revive the practices of previous governments that turned sports into a personal agenda for corruption and misappropriation of funds and resources meant exclusively for future generations, thus helping in building a healthy and prosperous India, said Arun Kumar Gupta.

Shamsher Chand voices concern over growing drug network in Bishnah

AICC leader urges collective action to save youth from addiction; calls for stronger measures and youth-centric policies in J&K

BISHNAH, MAR 6

Expressing serious concern over the growing drug menace in Bishnah and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir, AICC Member and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Shamsher Chand on Friday said that the increasing spread of narcotics networks is posing a grave threat to the future of the young generation.

He alleged that vulnerable youth are being exploited by drug peddlers who lure them into addiction and illegal activities. Addressing a public meeting, Shamsher Chand said that drug traffickers are deliberately targeting young people and trapping them in a vicious cycle of substance abuse, which is not only destroying their health but also damaging families and society as a whole. He warned that if the menace is not tackled firmly and collectively, it could have serious social and economic consequences for the region.

While appreciating the efforts of the police in taking action against drug peddlers and cracking down on narcotics networks, Shamsher Chand said that much more needs to be done to effectively curb



the problem. He emphasized that law enforcement agencies must continue to intensify their operations and dismantle the networks responsible for pushing drugs among youth. At the same time, he stressed that the fight against drugs cannot be left to the police alone and requires the active participation of society at large. "It is a shared responsibility to save our young generation from the scourge of drugs. Parents, teachers, community leaders and social

organisations must work together to protect our youth," he said.

Shamsher Chand appealed to parents to remain vigilant and keep a close watch on their children's activities and social circles. He said that proper guidance, communication and emotional support within families can play a vital role in preventing young people from falling into the trap of addiction.

The Congress leader also called upon civil society, edu-

ditional institutions and local communities to come forward and support awareness campaigns aimed at eliminating the drug menace from Jammu and Kashmir. He said that collective efforts and sustained awareness are essential to ensure that the region's youth remain safe from the influence of narcotics. Advocating for long-term solutions, Shamsher Chand urged the government to introduce more youth-centric policies and programmes that can channel the energy of young people in a positive direction. He stressed the need to promote employment opportunities, skill development initiatives, sports activities and cultural programmes so that youth can contribute constructively to society.

"The mind is a devil's workshop. When young people are left without opportunities or constructive engagement, they become vulnerable to negative influences. Therefore, it is crucial to provide them with avenues where they can use their talent and energy for productive purposes," he said.

Chief Secy reviews Mission YUVA progress across J&K districts

JAMMU, MAR 6
Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo today 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, JKML; Director, Employment; Director, Colleges; Convenor, UTIBC and other concerned officials. 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 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 out-



reach, 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 pending cases 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 digital 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, staff 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 2,02,829 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 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 Lakshpati Didis, while 418 positions are yet to be filled.

Sanjita Dogra discusses ongoing programmes of BJP in Jammu Kashmir



JAMMU, MAR 6
Jammu Kashmir BJP General Secretary and Headquarters Incharge Sanjita Dogra discussed the ongoing programmes of the party in the Union Territory during a meeting held at the party headquarters in Jammu.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Arun Sharma along with other leaders. The discussion focused on the current organizational and public outreach programmes being carried out by the party at different levels across the Union Territory. Sanjita Dogra said that the BJP has a healthy tradition of remaining connected with the public through a series of programmes conducted at the state, district, mandal and booth levels. She said that these programmes serve a dual purpose of strengthening the party organization at the grassroots level and maintaining continuous interaction with the people to understand their concerns and aspirations. She emphasized that through such initiatives, the party workers remain actively

engaged with the public and ensure that the policies and welfare schemes of the government reach every section of society. Dogra added that these programmes also provide an opportunity for party leaders and workers to receive feedback from the people and address their issues effectively. Sanjita Dogra further said that the BJP leadership has always encouraged regular interaction between party workers and the public, which helps in strengthening democratic values and building trust among the masses. She urged party workers to actively participate in all organizational programmes and continue working with dedication for the welfare of the people.

BJP Secretary Arun Sharma also shared his views during the meeting and stressed the importance of coordinated efforts at all levels of the organization. He said that well-planned programmes help in enhancing the party's outreach and ensure that the message of development and good governance reaches every household.

The viral hypochlorous spray is a god-sent for skincare lovers, acne-prone skin

NEW DELHI: If you've been scrolling on SkinTok lately, you are bound to have come across videos of women spraying their faces with a red-ish, orange bottle in their car after a hike or returning from the gym or on an aeroplane. You would've seen them touting the importance of adding Hypochlorous acid (HOCl) to their post-exercise skincare routine as they use the Tower 28 SOS Daily Rescue Facial Spray. This new product has prompted a skincare trend on social media. But how beneficial is this for your skin and skin barrier? Dermatologists share expert opinions. What's hypochlorous spray? Amassing loyal users whenever someone uses it, Hypochlorous Acid is gaining popularity due to its gentle cleansing and fungal and microbe-fighting capabilities. Produced naturally by the body's white blood cells, it gets rid of bacteria and harmful organisms. While HOCl is unstable in its natural state, in its commercial form, the spray typically consists of hypochlorous acid in a water-based solution. It may also contain salts and stabilizers to enhance shelf life. "This spray makes for an effective topical antiseptic agent for wounds and creates a clean environment. It reduces risks of infection and facilitates the healing process," shares Dr Rashmi Shetty, Dermatologist and founder, RA Skin and Aesthetics. Agreeing, Dr Jaishree Sharad, Cosmetic Dermatologist at Skinfiniti Clinic, says, "Based



on research, HOCl's antimicrobial properties can reduce the acne-causing bacteria, soothe skin affected by eczema and help manage flare-ups by disinfecting areas prone to eczema. It can reduce inflammation and irritation." It is also used for atopic dermatitis and post-surgical care to reduce the risk of infections. It can be used to treat minor skin irritations, burns, etc. Valued \$439.1 million in 2022, the forecast suggests that the global Hypochlorous Acid Market will grow to \$515.2 million by 2029. Countries like China, India, and Japan, it is experiencing rapid growth in this market as it's driven by urbanisation, industrialisation and increasing awareness regarding hygiene and sanitation. Varying uses for different skin types The experts are in consensus that HOCl spray is safe for use on almost all parts of the body, including the face, arms, legs, torso and even the scalp. It can also be used around sensitive areas like the eyes and mouth, as it is non-

toxic and does not sting or irritate when applied. "How frequently you use it varies as it depends on the condition being treated," says Dr Chytra V Anand, Dermatologist and founder of Kosmoderma Skin Hair & Body Clinics, adding, "For general skincare or mild conditions, it can be used one to two times a day, daily. In severe cases, it may be applied more frequently, as directed by a healthcare professional." Hypochlorous is produced when salt and water are electrolysed to separate the molecules and recombine them into HOCl. It's recognised for its safety across all skin types, largely because it lacks typical skincare irritants like fragrances and preservatives. Dr Rashmi Shetty suggests that with its gentle nature and great for cleansing, it's helpful for those with oily skin and soothes dry skin. Those with sensitive and combination skin may benefit from its ability to address irritation and excess oil without harsh chemicals. "The slayer of aeroplane acne, a real struggle faced by travellers, airplane acne can show

up as pimples, whiteheads or blackheads after a long flight. It can pop up on the face and neck. Humidity on an airplane decreases by 20%, so dry skin can accumulate excess oil under dehydrated skin cells and those with oily skin may experience an increase in oil production. Coupled with recycled air with potential irritants along with travel stress and changes in your diet can further cause breakouts.

Instead of using hypochlorous sprays, dermatologists suggest focusing on hydration and drinking sufficient water while in transit. It's also advisable to skip alcohol consumption. Consider facial wipes if you want a quick refresh without the use of harsh chemicals. Cleanse your skin to remove sweat, oil and any impurities. Use a lightweight moisturiser. The excess oil production on a flight causes airplane acne, so keep a few blotting papers on hand.

Word to the wise As with any skincare product, one should not overuse it. This product is formulated for daily use and is generally safe, but it should be used in the correct concentrations. Too high a concentration might irritate the skin, cautions Dr Jaishree Sharad. People who are allergic to chlorine should exercise caution.

On the other hand, Dr Chytra V Anand says, "Remember, HOCl is used as a disinfectant for pre-procedure in clinics and hospitals so as doctors we don't advocate daily use of this product.

Common diseases and how to prevent them with the help of supplements

NEW DELHI: Insufficiencies in nutrition and nutritional deficiencies are universal issues that have a deleterious impact on health and well-being however, a variety of ailments that are now ubiquitous can be prevented by taking supplements as they are a great way to ensure that your body is getting the nutrients it needs to improve your diet and fend off common diseases. Incorporating a well-balanced diet along with the use of supplements are preventative measures that can lower your risk of developing various health problems. Therefore, multivitamins and minerals, probiotics and prebiotics, and other botanical compounds and herbs can help in achieving a balanced intake of essential nutrients. Let's discuss how these supplements can help ward off common diseases and maintain a healthy lifestyle.



In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Yogni Patil, BAMS and Nutritionist at LivLong, shared, "People who suffer greatly from malabsorption can benefit from adding supplements to their diets. If we talk in brief about why malabsorption occurs, it is caused by digestive issues such as colitis, gastritis, IBS, and IBD, among others. Therefore, adding supplements for those who suffer from malabsorption can be beneficial, as they provide essential nutrients to the body without any further burden on the digestive system."

She added, "Supplements containing herbs and botanical compounds have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that can boost the immune system and protect it against infectious agents. Therefore, for those with malabsorption, taking a multivitamin supplement can help ensure that they are receiving the necessary nutrients and vitamins to maintain good health. Ultimately, people can greatly benefit from dietary supplements, which are an excellent way to avoid nutrient deficiencies and support the immune system while ensuring that the digestive system is not overburdened."

Botanical compounds and herbs for immunity Combining a multivitamin supplement with botanical compounds and herbs is a great way to support the body's immune system. One can incorporate herbs and botanical compounds like echinacea, ginger, caffeine, and curcumin to reduce inflammation and facilitate the body's immune system.

To elaborate on specific botanical herbs and compounds, echinacea can be used to boost the immune system, ginger can help reduce inflammation, caffeine has antioxidant and energy-boosting properties and curcumin is a powerful anti-inflammatory agent. Kamanyani Nareesh, Health Expert and founder of Zyroopathy, revealed, "With a hectic lifestyle and sedentary habits, it becomes burdensome to meet nutrient requirements thus, supplements are an excellent way to avoid deficiencies and support the immune system."

Tips one must follow to avoid cancer recurrence: Lifestyle after cancer therapy

NEW DELHI: Even if someone has already dealt with cancer, they must remain vigilant in terms of prevention. In fact, cancer patients are much more at risk of contracting an infection or getting a recurrence of the same cancer or other types of cancer. So, they need to be more cautious. Try implementing the healthy suggestions by experts to help yourself cope with the side effects of cancer treatment and lower your risk of cancer recurrence. In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Satish Kumar, Consultant Hematologist and Hemato-Oncologist at Manipal Hospital in Yeshwanthpur, recommended the following tips one must follow to avoid cancer recurrence.



1. Quit smoking: Smoking after cancer treatment can increase the risk of cancer recurrence and reduce the chances of successful treatment. Tobacco smoke contains more than 70 carcinogenic substances, many of which can cause DNA damage

and contribute to the development of cancer. Additionally, smoking can reduce the effectiveness of cancer treatments. Quitting smoking is one of the best things one can do for their health after cancer treatment, and it can improve the

chances of recovery and reduce the risk of cancer recurrence. 2. Stop or limit alcohol intake: Alcohol consumption may increase the chance of cancer recurrence. According to studies, cancer survivors who

drink more frequently have a higher risk of death and recurrence. Heavy drinking can weaken the immune system and lead to nutritional deficiencies, which can make cancer treatment more challenging. If there is a history of cancer, it's best to limit alcohol intake or avoid it altogether. 3. Reduce weight and avoid obesity: It has been conclusively proven that being overweight or having a sedentary lifestyle increases the risk of certain malignancies and chances of recurrence after treatment. Maintaining a healthy weight through regular physical activity and a balanced diet can help lower the risk of developing cancer. 4. Exercise: Regular exercise helps with fatigue symptoms, lowers stress, and has long-term benefits for overall health. Individuals who routinely exercised had a greater ten-year survival rate than patients who did not. Regular exercise will prevent risk of developing diabetes or heart issues in cancer survivors since they are at a higher risk of same. It is recommended to engage in moderate exercise for at least 3-5 hours per week or 30 minutes of aerobic exercise for 3 days a week and resistance training twice a week.

Meditation is beneficial for people with anorexia: Research

NEW DELHI: Unfortunately, many family members, acquaintances, and celebrities have suffered from anorexia nervosa, or AN, a severe mental illness characterised by extreme concerns about weight and self-esteem. AN symptoms include an eating disorder, nutritional restriction, deliberate vomiting, and severe emaciation. Mindfulness meditation is already commonly used as a therapy for AN. Its clinical utility in treating neurogenic emaciation, on the other hand, has not been explored. Mindfulness meditation, according to a team of researchers at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Medicine, does alleviate such worries. The study's findings demonstrate alterations in the activity of brain areas associated with anxiety. The team's mindfulness meditation program has seen a significant decrease in obsessive thoughts about the test subject's self-image and brain activity associated with related emotions. "Our results suggest that the participants in the study became better at accepting their anxiety as it is," says lead author Tomomi Noda. Mindfulness and meditation work hand-in-hand. The former teaches practitioners to hone their awareness of their present experience and their ability to not judge and rather accept their circumstances. The latter is the medium by which mindfulness can be approached. "We focused on the possibility that patients with AN try to avoid their crippling anxiety about weight gain and self-image by restricting food or vomiting," adds co-author Misumori Isobe. A 4-week mindfulness intervention program examined neural changes using tasks designed to induce weight-related anxiety. The researchers then regulated this anxiety by helping patients accept their current situations and experiences at face value, instead of avoiding them. The researchers used functional magnetic resonance imaging – or fMRI – to analyze attention regulation in relation to eating disorders, changes using tasks designed to induce weight-related anxiety.

Have diabetes? Start your day with these amazing drinks to control blood sugar levels

NEW DELHI: Keeping blood sugar levels in check is no mean task and requires dedicated efforts in terms of diet, discipline and active lifestyle. A diabetes diagnosis comes with a range of lifestyle changes and does take some time to correct bad food habits and turn sedentary lifestyle into a more active one. Mornings are the best time to set the tone of the entire day and if you are struggling with this metabolic disorder, why not start your day in a diabetes-friendly way by consuming ingredients (herbs, plant-based foods, seeds) that will help prevent your blood sugar spikes throughout the day. Once you are able to make this one big change in your routine, and your cravings, energy levels and moods improve, you will be motivated to do better every day. Here are 5 drinks suggested by Dietician Manpreet Kalia that can help control your blood sugar.

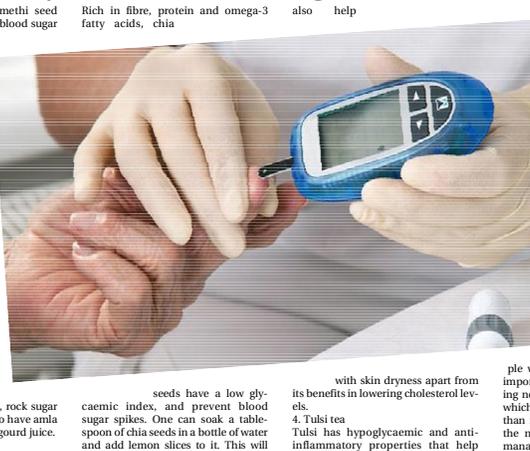
1. Methi seeds water Methi or fenugreek seeds have proven benefits to improve insulin sensitivity naturally. High in soluble fibre and saponins methi seeds can help control blood glucose by slowing down digestion and absorption of carbohydrates. Methi seed is also a superfood for lowering cholesterol and blood pressure. Methi seed water can also help correct discoloration of skin or skin tag

Starting your day with methi seed water can help keep your blood sugar in control for the entire day. Soak 1-2 tablespoons of seeds overnight and drink as a tea. 2. Amla aloe vera juice The potent combination of amla and aloe vera helps regulate blood sugar levels by enhancing insulin secretion. Amla has anti-diabetic properties and helps boost blood glucose metabolism. Aloe vera also provides benefits for people with diabetes as a study suggests that consuming aloe vera gel can help people achieve better fasting blood sugar levels, apart from helping reduce body weight. The juice can also help with various skin issues. Amla aloe vera sugar can be consumed by adding honey, sugar, lemon juice, rock sugar or long pepper. People also have amla aloe vera juice with bitter gourd juice. 3. Chia seeds water

Rich in fibre, protein and omega-3 fatty acids, chia seeds have a low glycaemic index, and prevent blood sugar spikes. One can soak a tablespoon of chia seeds in a bottle of water and add lemon slices to it. This will help with skin dryness apart from its benefits in lowering cholesterol levels. 4. Tulsi tea Tulsi has hypoglycaemic and anti-inflammatory properties that help

manage diabetes and its complications. Tulsi improves insulin sensitivity and glucose metabolism and also helps manage autoimmune disorders and improve immunity. Tulsi tea can be made by boiling water, adding a few (7-8) leaves of tulsi, ginger, and lemon juice. 5. Coriander seed water Coriander seeds have flavonoids that reduce inflammation and oxidative stress. They also maintain insulin activity that help in controlling blood sugar levels. Consuming coriander seed water can also help those suffering from thyroid and water retention issues. How you unwind after a long day can make a great difference in your overall health. For people with diabetes, it is all the more important to end their day on a relaxing note. Utilising your late evenings, which are more stress-free than rest of your day in planning for the next day can also contribute in managing your overall stress levels

which is another risk factor for uncontrolled diabetes. Resisting the temptation to stay glued to screens and gorge on heavy-calorie stuff can also help in better glucose regulation and avoiding weight loss. Besides, sleep is one of the most important factors that can help in diabetes management apart from diet and exercise. Sleep deprivation is linked to worsened insulin sensitivity and by creating the right night-time routine, people with diabetes can live a much healthier life. "Sleep is one of the most important legs in diabetes. The others are diet and exercise." To little sleep worsens insulin sensitivity and is linked to poor blood sugar control, increased risk for heart disease, a greater chance of weight gain and a host of other problems. Adults should get at least 7 hours of sleep per night. Creating a disciplined bedtime routine and experimenting with a night-time ritual would surely allow diabetes to relax before snuggling under the covers." says Dr Manish Maheshwari, Consultant Internal Medicine at Narayana Multi-specialty hospital, Ahmedabad. "Ending your day sets the tone for your sleep as well as the coming day. For people suffering from diabetes, maintaining even the most basic routine is challenging.



EDITORIAL

BJP And Babu

Who'll be CM in Bihar - Nitish Kumar's unsurprising exit will be followed by him joining Rajya Sabha - is not even a blip on the news waves. This is because BJP central command's MO is to appoint party workhorses who have zero name recognition nationally, to positions of power as CMs. Haryana, Odisha, MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh are proof. In fact, even BJP's new party chief started his national career as Nabin Who.

While it's no surprise that Nitish will no longer be CM, the change may have been effected earlier than anticipated. Indications that Nitish's tenth stint would not be full-term were evident during electioneering, his reported state of health one factor.

Nitish's remarkable stint as CM is marked by his dexterity of political re-alignment, having last won an election in 2004 LS polls from Nalanda. He has never contested since, and was sent to Bihar's Vidhan Parishad (upper house) after he became CM for the second time in 2005. Yet, he navigated Bihar's caste politics smartly, created an EBC base, and was among early politicians to champion caste-impact of backward Muslim communities, the Pasmandas. And more than within a withered JDU, which has been but a one-man party, it is this EBC/Pasmanda Muslim base that will eventually see a slow churn, with BJP at the helm - even if in Bihar, Hindutva politics have always ridden on a social justice plank.

BJP is now Big Bro in all big states where it was once junior partner to a regional party. Its electoral victories in Maharashtra and Bihar are evidence of its firm grounding, turfing out the state party it once piggybacked. And yet, even if only for the optics of it, BJP could not avoid giving deputy CMship to Nitish's greenhorn son in "good faith". That's another measure of how much Nitish means to Bihar's politics, even when he's out of it.

GILGIT BALTISTAN'S DESTINY - LIFE OF A PROTESTOR
A State that turns its Guns on its Own Populace

State Response to Peaceful Demonstrations

What began as solemn gathering of mourners to express grief over the killing of Iran's Supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khomeini, has turned into a tragic chapter in history of Gilgit Baltistan. Shias marched peacefully, protestors faced tear gas, baton charges, curfew, troop deployment and firing, with the death toll rising between 13-15 citizens, including six children and numerous injured in Gilgit and Skardu.

GLOBAL RAGE, LOCAL GRAVES

Pakistan once again demonstrated its grim old habit "When Anger erupts, its Citizens pay the price". Recently, after the death of the Supreme Leader of Iran, Shia Muslims across the globe had gathered everywhere showcasing their grief and solidarity. Numerous peaceful gatherings were witnessed in Pakistan, including Gilgit Baltistan region, where men, women, children and men gathered and poured in cities like Karachi, Islamabad, Gilgit and Skardu in disbelief that their paramount religious authority and a symbol of strength for the minority Shia had been killed. The demonstration, started with collective mourning, participants lit candles, offered prayers and voiced sorrow for their leader, whom the Shia community revered as a spiritual figure. Little did they know, they were not walking on streets, but on a battleground. Instead of political maturity and restraint, the situation quickly descended into deadly confrontations. Pakistan Government, turned its peaceful streets full of protestors into a bloodshed, killing 13, including six children and leaving numerous injured. Brutal ammunition was used against its own people carrying out peaceful protests, where the Federal Govt in Pakistan chose to control the crowd with force rather than dialogue.

THE IRONY IS STAGGERING

The people protesting and mourning peacefully ended up witnessing its own blood being spilled with children and men being killed right in front of their families. Use of force against grieving civilians, became yet another episode of domestic bloodshed highlighting Pakistan's battles fought not against external aggressions, but against its own people, or the people it claims as



its own. Amnesty International condemned and pulled up Pakistan for this brutal act highlighting that the protests could have been handled in a more mature manner. How many funerals will it take for Pakistan to realise that the dissent is not an enemy? When will the state stop treating its own as a threat? How long will GB mourn for peaceful protests? How long will the Peaceful Streets Echo with Gunfire instead of Dialogue? Commander FCNA had visited the protestors a few days back, but turned his eyes away when the bloodshed com-

menced, exposing and contradicting FCNA's portrayal of itself as Masiha for the Awaam. GB residents gathered in Skardu to carry out the funeral procession for the people whose own government had killed, but refused to bury them, demanding strict action against the aggressors. Post intervention by Caretaker CM, the protestors agreed to any peaceful voice, patrolling 24x7 against its own citizens. It seems as if these killings were not sufficient; they

have deployed their Army to eliminate anyone turning their heads up. With the curfew being extended, however, the grief still echoing inside the hearts of every Shia, alongwith the inflation due to the killing of protestors, will the situation normalise? With the history of Pakistan and protests, this doesn't seem like happening in GB at present or in future.

What is the price in here for Shia in solidarity with Iran? The answer is simple - "LIFE OF A PROTESTOR"

7 Common Mistakes to Avoid When Buying Health Insurance Online

The internet has made buying health insurance easier than ever. You can now compare policies from multiple insurers right sitting at home. Online purchasing is paperless, fast, and transparent as everything can be tracked on a single dashboard. However, whether you're buying your first policy or switching to a better plan, it's crucial to know what pitfalls to avoid. Here are the 7 most common mistakes people make when buying health insurance online and tips to help you choose the right plan. **Not Reading the Policy Carefully:** One of the biggest mistakes is skipping the policy document, as the terms and conditions outline coverage, exclusions, limitations, waiting periods, and claim processes. Ignoring these details can lead to unpleasant surprises during claim settlement, so it is essential to read the entire document carefully, paying close attention to payment options, treatment coverage, and room rent limits, and to seek clarification from the insurer or a professional if anything remains unclear. **Focusing Solely on Lower Premiums:** While low premium

may seem appealing, it often comes with inadequate coverage, making it a costlier mistake to choose a plan without assessing your actual needs. It is important to evaluate your health, age, lifestyle, and existing conditions, along with the medical requirements of your dependents, and ensure that the policy provides comprehensive benefits such as hospitalization, pre- and post-hospitalization care, coverage for critical illnesses, and preventive check-ups. **Not Disclosing Medical Conditions:** Hiding medical history can lead to claim rejection, while being transparent may slightly increase your premium but ensures smooth claim processing when needed it most. **Always disclose** existing conditions honestly when applying, as this protects you from complications and guarantees that your coverage works effectively when required. **Not Comparing Different Plans:** Settling for the first plan recommended by a friend or broker can mean missing out on better options, so it is important to compare coverage benefits and exclusions, hospital networks, avail-

able add-ons and riders, as well as the claim settlement ratio and overall service record to ensure you choose the most suitable policy. **Ignoring Waiting Periods:** Every policy has waiting periods for certain benefits, particularly for pre-existing conditions and maternity coverage, and ignoring these can leave you unprotected when you need care. It is therefore essential to check waiting periods carefully and, if they are too long, consider opting for a separate critical illness plan to ensure immediate protection. **Overlooking Riders and Add-Ons:** Many buyers overlook optional features that can significantly enhance coverage, such as riders for wellness programs, preventive check-ups, or alternative treatment coverage. Selecting add-ons that align with your long-term health goals ensures that your policy provides value beyond emergencies and supports overall well-being. **Ignoring Deductibles and Co-Payment Terms:** Deductibles and Co-Payment terms directly affect your out-of-pocket expenses, and a high deductible or frequent co-pay can make a seeming-

ly affordable plan expensive in practice. For instance, if your policy has a ₹20,000 deductible and your hospital bill is ₹85,000, you must pay ₹20,000 before the insurer covers the rest. Similarly, with a 20% co-pay, you would pay ₹2,000 on a ₹10,000 bill while the insurer pays ₹8,000. Understanding these costs and balancing them with realistic healthcare usage is essential to avoid financial strain. **Buying health insurance online is fast and convenient and effective only if done wisely.** Avoiding these common mistakes can save you from claim denials, financial stress, and inadequate coverage. Whether protecting yourself or your family, make informed decisions, compare thoroughly, and understand the fine print. The right plan ensures peace of mind and preparedness for life's unexpected health challenges.

By Mr. Amarnath Saxena, Chief Technical Officer - Commercial, Bajaj General Insurance Limited (formerly known as Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited).

Reset in ties

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to New Delhi this week, the symbolism extended far beyond diplomatic protocol. The two governments were not merely signing agreements; they were attempting to redraw the political boundaries of a cyclical relationship that had, until recently, appeared fractured beyond repair. At the heart of the reset lies a 10-year civil nuclear energy arrangement. Canada, home to some of the world's largest uranium reserves, will supply fuel to India while exploring collaboration on small modular and advanced reactors. This is not a minor commercial understanding.



demands new alignments. The United States' increasingly unpredictable tariff policies have unsettled traditional trade assumptions. Ottawa is seeking to reduce overdependence on its southern neighbour, New Delhi, for its part, is working to widen its economic partnerships while reducing exposure to single-source vulnerabilities in energy and technology. This rapprochement unfolds under the long shadow of the 2023 killing of

Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada, an episode that triggered expulsions of diplomats and a near-freeze in visa services. The legal process surrounding that case continues. Domestic political debate within Canada - particularly among members of the Sikh diaspora and some parliamentarians - has not vanished. What has changed is the calculation of cost. Confrontation has yielded diminishing returns; engagement promises measurable gains.

There is a hard-edged realism in this shift. Neither government has pretended that mistrust evaporates overnight. Instead, both appear to have concluded that structured cooperation in areas such as critical minerals, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and defence serves national interest more effectively than prolonged diplomatic estrangement. The deeper question is whether this reset can mature into resilience. Strategic partnerships are tested not in moments of ceremony but in those of crisis. If fresh allegations surface or domestic political pressures intensify, will institutional mechanisms withstand strain? That will determine whether the current thaw represents tactical convenience or durable transformation. For now, the message from New Delhi is clear: economic statecraft has overtaken political grievance. India and Canada are choosing interdependence over isolation, energy security over rhetoric, and negotiated trade expansion over symbolic confrontation. In a fractured global order, that may be less about reconciliation and more about survival - and that is precisely why it matters.

The inmates are running the asylum

AMID the unprovoked and illegal attacks launched by the United States and Israel on the Islamic Republic of Iran on February 28, the rupee is falling, stock markets have crashed, oil prices have soared and there is a looming shortage of LNG and LPG. None of this is linked with the fiscal strategies of the Ministry of Finance or monetary policies of the Reserve Bank of India. And it comes in the wake of the chaos unleashed by US President Donald Trump's tariff tantrums and the turbulence created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Welcome to a brave new world where geopolitics has become the new macroeconomics.

In Trump's topsy-turvy Washington DC, there is a dense fog over the objectives of the attacks. Initially, the stated focus was on Iran's nuclear programme. Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Al Busaidi mediated several rounds of talks in Muscat that brought Iran and the US close to a final agreement. But the guns were locked and loaded, forcing the usually low-key Busaidi to make a desperate public plea. Give diplomacy a chance, he said, because Iran had finally agreed that it would not accumulate or stockpile any enriched uranium. That didn't prevent Israel and the US from launching a volley of strikes on the morning of February 28 to assassinate Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several other senior members of the theocratic regime in Iran. Because neither President Trump nor Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could take Yes for an answer.

It wasn't just the nuclear programme; it was also Iran's missiles and launchers, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio later clarified. No, the real problem was the regime itself, Trump asserted. Regime change? Surely Washington hadn't already forgotten its disastrous experiments with regime change in Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan? In Iraq, Saddam Hussein's alleged nuclear weapons were never found but he was defeated, deposed and captured in 2003. The power vacuum created by the dismantling of the Ba'ath Party gave birth to the Islamic State and a host of other extremist groups. The Americans ended up with 37,000 casualties (dead or injured), a bill of \$2.9 trillion and a battered and bruised country.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban paid the price for hosting Osama bin Laden in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. They were defeated and removed from



power in 2001, only to triumphantly return to Kabul in 2021. The Americans suffered over 25,000 casualties and spent \$2.3 trillion in the taxpayer-funded fiasco. In Libya, Muammar Qaddafi was taken down in 2011, but the country went through a destructive civil war and still remains cleaved into two antagonistic parts. Arms flowing into Libya have also fed into Islamist groups in the Sahel, leading to violent insurgencies in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Regime change has consequences.

Israel, though, has no such misgivings. Netanyahu is quite clear that his end goal is to get a friendly regime in place in Tehran. "This is what I have aspired for 40 years," he

crowded. Don't miss this opportunity to take back your country, he told the Iranians. And unlike the Americans who were looking for a quick exit, Israel is quite prepared for a campaign that would last several weeks. The emerging script suggests that we are, once again, witnessing a case of an aggressive tail wagging a befuddled dog.

For the Iranians, who have been at the receiving end of an unpopular and repressive regime, it isn't a question of simple binaries. Hating the theocratic regime doesn't mean embracing the US and Israel. The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) Operation Ajax in 1953 to remove then Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and install the Shah

hasn't been forgotten. Bombing a school in Minar and killing over 160 schoolgirls isn't going to win hearts and minds in Iran. Nor will reports that the CIA is planning to arm the Kurdish minority to rise against Tehran. Having seen Iraq and Syria next door, they would also realise that even a bad government is better than having no government at all.

Iran's own response to the bombings appears to have caught the US by surprise. The regime has survived the decapitation of its top leaders by pivoting to a collective leadership and a more decentralised command-and-control structure. They have managed to land some blows on US military bases in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. They have also hit airports,

ports, hotels and energy infrastructure in each of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and announced the closure of the Strait of Hormuz to all shipping traffic.

In lashing out at its Arab neighbours, Tehran appears to have reserved a special ire for the UAE, despatching over a thousand missiles and drones at Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Fujairah. Effective air defence systems have kept damage to a minimum, but Tehran clearly hopes that its attacks will force the rulers of Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia to use their special relationship with Trump and bring the war to an early halt. That tactic might backfire. Abu Dhabi has formidable defence capa-

bilities but has so far chosen to act with restraint, as have the other Gulf nations. This is not our war, they have maintained, even as they have asserted their right to respond to Iran's aggression.

Over the last few years, the Gulf countries had worked assiduously to mend fences with Iran. They had actively opposed this war, not only for its potential to destabilise the region but also because a belligerent Israel had started to appear as a larger strategic threat than a weakened Iran. But Iran's actions over the last six days have endangered their economic security and may even push some into joining the US-Israel coalition. It is a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Lessons from raising a child with autism

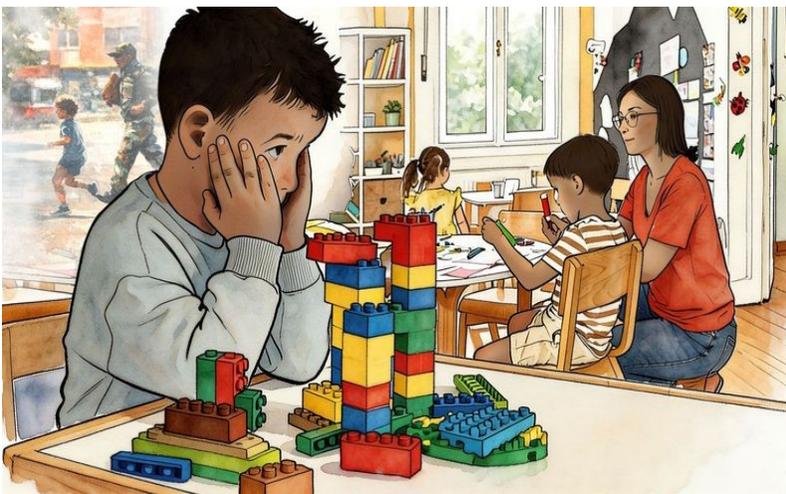
AS a doctor in uniform, I have worn the olive green for years, managed trauma in high-pressure environments and made life-saving decisions in seconds. On the battlefield, chaos demands clarity. Emotion is secondary to action. But nothing in my training prepared me for a sentence from a specialist in a calm and composed tone: "Your child has autism."

There was no protocol, no triage drill, no combat manual. Just silence. My wife's fingers tightened around mine; I remember staring at the wall — not because I was brave, but because I was breaking. Bruce Lee once said, "Do not pray for an easy life. Pray for the strength to endure a difficult one." That day, strength felt distant. We were in denial — a phase I am not proud of. I could feel this would be the fiercest battle and, that too, with an invisible enemy. United in resolve, we decided to tackle it head-on.

My son was two and a half years old. He didn't respond to his name, he tore paper into strips, avoided eye contact. My wife saw it, but I refused to; I resisted. As a father, I hid behind denial — because accepting autism felt like accepting defeat. But autism does not wait for your readiness. It arrives, stays and teaches. New Delhi: Where fear turned into fire.

We entered the world of early intervention — speech, occupational and behavioural therapy. Our real training began. Along with it came hefty bills. Finances felt like combat logistics, but quitting was not an option. Autism does not wait; professional development is time-sensitive. Early years are decisive. My wife took the bravest decision to specialise in autism spectrum disorders. What began as maternal anxiety became professional competence. She studied while raising our son and converted pain into purpose. That decision transformed our journey.

Our son secured admission to a reputed school. On paper, it was inclusion, but in practice, we discovered that inclusion without sufficient numbers of trained special educa-



tors, structured shadow support and measurable accountability is fragile. Awareness campaigns are not enough. Schools require autism-specific training, realistic teacher-student ratios and regulatory oversight.

"Absorb what is useful, discard what is not, add what is uniquely your own." That became our model. We absorbed therapies, discarded blind hope, added relentless parental involvement, stopped searching for miraculous cures and began building structured, evidence-based routines at home.

We realised something powerful: Therapists give one hour. Parents

shape the other 23.

On a Sunday morning, when he was five, we were in Delhi contemplating a detour to a temple. In seconds, he bolted towards the main road. I caught him once; the second time, I couldn't. A stranger stopped him just before the traffic line. That day, I stopped being a passive father and became hyper-aware. Roads became war zones, crowds became unpredictable terrain. I realised autism is not just delayed speech. Sometimes, it is a child who cannot process danger fast enough. I learned to adapt, anticipate, flow around behaviours

instead of colliding with them. Mumbai: When regression broke us again.

In 2018, we moved to Mumbai. With relocation, we rebuilt our ecosystem from scratch — new therapists, routines, sensory adaptations. Then Covid struck. Lockdown shattered routines and dismantled structure. Regression followed. One evening, he ran out of the house towards a swing 150 metres away, driven not by defiance but by an unprocessed sensory need. His speech couldn't clearly explain his need; his behaviour did. My wife said something that changed me: "He isn't being difficult. He is trying to communicate."

That sentence humbled me. I emptied my ego, stopped trying to control and started trying to understand.

Jaipur: Discipline meets love. In 2023, we moved to Jaipur. We applied discipline differently. For 90 straight days, we practised structured behavioural walks with our son and practised behavioural techniques. Interruptions like viral fevers proved to be great setbacks — days when it felt like we were back to zero. But consistency strengthened his working memory and significantly reduced impulsive road-running. I still remember that evening when he

walked 100 metres ahead and turned back responsibly — I did not clap. I did not shout.

I simply looked at the sky and whispered Thank you.

We were never extraordinary. We were just consistent.

What autism taught me

It taught me that:

1 Progress is microscopic before it becomes visible.

1 Setbacks are not reversals — they are rehearsals.

1 Inclusion without trained infrastructure is illusion.

1 Sleep, structure and sensory regulation are not luxuries — they are foundations.

Most importantly, it taught me that leadership at home is harder than leadership in uniform.

In the armed forces, commands are obeyed.

At home, love must persuade.

To every parent fighting quietly

You are not weak because you are tired.

You are not failing because progress is slow.

You are warriors in civilian clothes.

My son is 17 now.

He loves structure and predictability. He is not "less". He is wired differently.

And I no longer ask, "Why us?"

Because Bruce Lee was right: "You fall seven times, stand up eight."

Autism was never the enemy. Hopelessness was. And we chose not to surrender.

This journey shaped my broader reflection: Autism care in India must move beyond episodic therapy towards ecosystem-based reform.

Autism is no longer rare. This is not a niche condition. It is a public health and education priority.

As a combat doctor, I know wars are not won by emotion alone; they require systems and sustained logistics.

Autism demands the same seriousness.

Families like mine stand up every day.

It is time our systems stand with us.

Henna benefits your hair needs



Henna has been an integral part of Indian culture for centuries. Traditionally, the leaves of the henna plant have adorned Indian weddings, where intricate temporary motifs are drawn using dye extracted from dried henna leaves. It is believed that the richness of the mehndi color symbolizes the auspiciousness of the union between the bride and groom. Beyond its role in mehndi, henna has long been utilized for its hair dyeing properties, owing to its potent tannin content. While scientific research has affirmed various benefits of the henna plant, such as its anti-inflammatory properties and its ability to relieve pain and reduce cramps, henna also offers significant advantages for hair and skin health. Continue reading to discover how henna powder can enhance the health of your hair.

Benefits for Your Scalp
An itchy scalp can arise from various factors, including infrequent hair washing, inadequate removal of shampoo, scalp-irritating

products, and dermatitis. Not only is an itchy, flaky scalp uncomfortable, but it can also be painful. Lawsonia, the primary active compound in henna, possesses antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties, making a henna pack a soothing remedy for your scalp and hair. Acts as a Deep Hair Conditioner
One of the most overlooked benefits of henna is its profound conditioning effect on both the hair follicles and the scalp. In addition to conditioning, henna strengthens the hair follicles, promoting moisture retention and preventing dryness, flakiness, and dandruff. Improves pH Balance
Henna aids in maintaining the pH balance of your scalp by eliminating dirt, grime, and excess oil that often clog hair follicles. By keeping the scalp clean, henna contributes to the restoration and regeneration of scalp and hair health.

Promotes Hair Growth
With its active ingredients and

array of benefits, henna fosters hair growth by addressing issues such as dandruff and excess oil while inhibiting over-secretion from the sebaceous gland. When combined with other nutrient-rich ingredients like egg and yogurt, henna packs not only deeply nourish but also impart a shiny, silky smoothness to the hair.

Helps Eliminate Oxidative Stress
Oxidative stress occurs when the body's cells are unable to neutralize free radicals, leading to an imbalance that affects bodily functions as well as hair and skin health. Oxidative stress often manifests as severe hair loss, dandruff formation, and weakened, brittle hair. Thanks to its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, henna aids in balancing and reducing oxidative stress. In conclusion, henna serves as a potent elixir for hair health. Whether used alone or in combination with other ingredients, henna offers an array of benefits for your hair.

Patanjali positions Dant Kanti Gandush Oil Pulling as a traditional Gandush practice backed by modern testing

Anew Ayurvedic oral care product is being presented as a bridge between ancient tradition and modern dental science, and the company behind it says it could change the way people think about daily mouth care. According to Patanjali Ayurved, its Dant Kanti Gandush Oil Pulling is inspired by a classical Ayurvedic practice but supported, as claimed by the company, with scientific testing and research.

Oral health problems are no longer small issues limited to toothaches or bad breath. With more people eating spicy fast food, sugary snacks, and highly processed meals, problems like cavities, gum swelling, bleeding gums, loose teeth, and chronic bad breath are becoming common. In India, where dental care awareness is still limited in many areas, the burden is said to be even higher. This context, the company claims, has revived interest in traditional Ayurvedic practices that focus on prevention rather than only treatment.

One such practice is Gandush, ancient daily routine described in Ayurvedic texts. It involves holding medicated oil in mouth for a few minutes early every morning. Classical Ayurvedic scholars are said to have recommended this method not just for cleaning the mouth but also for strengthening teeth and gums, supporting voice quality, and aiding digestion. The idea, according to the company's explanation, is that the oil stays in the mouth long enough to act on the oral tissues and microbes before being spat out, without rinsing immediately, so that its effects last longer.

Building on this traditional concept, the company says it has developed a ready-to-use oil pulling blend over years of research. It claims the product is made entirely from natural plant-based ingredients and does not contain harmful chemicals, alcohol, or artificial additives. The oil blend, as described, includes tumburu oil, clove oil, peppermint oil, eucalyptus oil, and tulsi oil. Each of these, the company says, has a specific role in oral care. Tumburu oil is claimed to strengthen teeth and gums. Clove oil is described as having anti-inflammatory properties that may help reduce tooth pain. Peppermint oil is said to have antiviral and antifungal properties that help tackle bad breath. Eucalyptus oil, the company claims, may help control harmful oral bacteria, while tulsi oil is described as having antibacterial effects that protect against tooth decay.

According to research conducted by the company's own scientists, the oil pulling formulation has shown the ability, as claimed, to reduce bacteria and yeast in the mouth in a dose-dependent manner. Chemical analysis using GC-MS/MS techniques reportedly identified active compounds such as limonene, eucalyptol, linalool, menthol, estragole, eugenol. These compounds are said to be beneficial for maintaining oral hygiene. The company further claims that oil can act against microbes like Streptococcus mutans, Streptococcus pyogenes, Proteus mirabilis, Candida albicans which are commonly linked with cavities, infections, fungal growth in mouth.

One of the key claims is related to dental biofilm, sticky protective layer formed by bacteria that makes them resistant to many medicines and treatments. The company states that its oil pulling blend can break down this



biofilm and reduce acid production by cavity-causing bacteria. This, it says, may help prevent tooth decay more effectively. It also claims that scanning electron microscope analysis confirmed the oil's ability to reduce harmful microbes both individually and when they appear together, which is often the case in real oral conditions. The product is also being positioned as useful for people wearing dental braces. According to the company, braces often encourage plaque and biofilm buildup on both traditional and modern silicone-based brackets. The oil pulling blend is claimed to reduce such biofilms when used regularly, thereby supporting cleaner teeth even during orthodontic treatment.

10 traditional Holi foods and sweets you can easily make at home

In the world, March marks the start of spring and the end of the winter season. It doesn't feel like spring to us Indians till Holi, Holi, also known as the blissful festival of colours, spring, as well as love, has always been a celebrated occasion to spread happiness and welcome a brand-new season. The Hindu festival of Holi, which always falls in March, has a variety of customs, but the main attraction is the game of colours. In the absence of a worldwide pandemic, people congregate in public places like parks and sidewalks to play while dousing one another in coloured powder or water. It's a gesture meant to mend rifts or symbolise the triumph of good over evil. It's also pure, messy fun. But the good times don't stop there. We, Indians, are foodies; as we enthusiastically celebrate each festival, we also want to satisfy our taste buds. In this festival of colours, we have a variety of sweets and snacks to offer. The sweets are delicious, simple to make, and made with pure A2 milk and A2 ghee, among other things. This article contains 10 Holi sweet recipes to enjoy this festival.

10 Holi Sweet Recipes to Try
Every Indian festival has something to offer, whether it's a valuable lesson, entertainment, or our favourite sweet dishes. And Holi is no exception. This collection of Holi sweet recipes includes classics like Gujiya, Puraan Poli, and more. Our recipes are simple, quick, and easy to make. Sweet dishes made with milk, all-purpose flour, A2 ghee, nuts, and other ingredients will be included in these recipes. Let's get this party started.
Mawa Gujiya: Mawa Gujiya is a traditional Gujarati Holi sweet

recipe, which is also prepared during Diwali. It's a deep-fried pastry with mawa, suji, and grated coconut inside. In a mixing bowl, combine A2 ghee and all-purpose flour to make a dough. Using pure A2 ghee adds an authentic and pure flavour to your recipe. Cover the dough with a muslin cloth while you make the filling. To make the filling, toast the suji and Mawa until golden brown. In a mixing bowl, combine cardamom, almond, sugar, mawa, and suji. Set aside for 10 minutes to allow the mixture to cool. Form the dough into medium-sized balls and fill them with the fillings. After adding the filling, shape the dough into a gujiya. Deep fry your gujiya in oil until golden brown. Your mawa gujiya are ready to be served.

Water Poli: Another traditional Holi sweet recipe from Maharashtra is Puraan Poli. Lentils, ghee, and jaggery are the main ingredients in this dish. Chaana dal that has been soaked overnight is required for this recipe. The dal should be cooked in a pressure cooker for three whistles before being blended for two minutes to a smooth paste-like consistency. Combine the cardamom powder, nutmeg, ghee, and jaggery in a pan. Boil the jaggery till it melts and takes on a sweet consistency. The dal paste and jaggery paste have now been combined. The filling is prepared. Combine flour and salt in a bowl to make the outer dough. To form a thick dough, add water right now. Roll out a small portion of the dough using your rolling pin. Roll once

again, adding the filling in the spaces. On medium flame, cook it in a pan with ghee. Serve hot.

Besan Ladoo: All we love this Holi sweet recipe. This taste ladoo is prepared from gram flour, ghee, and nuts. In a pan, add ghee, gramme flour, and semolina. Cook for at least 20-30 minutes or until the mixture turns golden brown. Make sure to keep stirring the mixture.

After the mixture has been thoroughly cooked, add the powdered sugar and cardamom powder. Mix all and shape them into a ball. Enjoy. **Shrikhand:** One of the most well-liked and well-known Holi sweet recipes is shrikhand. There are just 2 simple ingredients needed for this recipe, making it very simple to make. The first step is to drain the excess water from the curd. Take a piece of cloth and fill it with curd to make this. Place the cloth on your window for 30 to 40 minutes after straining all the water. You can now sweeten your shrikhand by adding powdered sugar, jaggery, or honey. Properly combine everything. You can add cardamom, dried rose petals, saffron, and other ingredients for flavour.

Kada Prasad: We all have enjoyed kada prasad, and most of us were lucky to have it in the temple. It is also one of the popular Holi sweet recipes. Add ghee and wheat flour to a pan. Sauté the mixture until the flour gets an exquisite shade of golden brown. Combine water and sugar in a different container. Boil the sugar until it is dissolved. Now add the water to your cooked wheat flour. All of them should be combined until the water is entirely



dissolved. You can add raisins, cashew nuts, and sliced almonds for flavour. Serve hot. **Coconut Peda:** This delicious Holi sweet recipe can be prepared in under 10 minutes and is highly delicious. Add coconut powder to a frying pan and toast until golden brown. Then add ghee and condensed milk. Cook for an additional 3 minutes.

After that, flavour the coconut mixture to your preference by adding milk powder, cardamom powder, dried rose petals, saffron, and other ingredients. Cook for another 5 minutes. To allow the mixture to cool, set it aside for 15 minutes. Create a little ball-like shape now and have fun.

Thandai: This recipe for Holi sweet recipe also uses milk, almonds, sugar, and other ingredients. To increase the enjoyment of the celebration, it is frequently enjoyed with a bang.

Almonds that have been chopped, saffron, cardamom powder, and any other nuts you choose should be roasted for two minutes in a frying pan. Next, let them soak for two hours in water.

Take the soaked almonds, cold milk, and sugar, and add them to a blender. Mix them until there are no lumps left. Serve the beverage topped with chopped almonds and dry rose petals. **Gur Ka Pua:** Another simple, quick, and easy Holi sweet recipe is gur ka pua, sometimes referred to as gulgula. All you need for this recipe is wheat flour, milk, and jaggery.

Add jaggery and warm water to a bowl. Set the mixture aside till all of the jaggeries have dissolved. Add milk, wheat flour, and rice flour to a different bowl. Add the jaggery water after thoroughly blending everything. For four hours, set the mixture aside.

After 4 hours, you can add almonds, fennel seeds and any other ingredients you choose. After that, enjoy your deep-fried pua. **Peda:** This dudh Peda dish is ideal for your children. It is simple and quick to create, just like other Holi sweet recipes.

Add your milk to a pan and heat it over a high flame until it has reduced to half. Then adjust the heat to medium and continue cooking until the milk solids float to the top. Cook for an additional 5 minutes after adding the sugar and cardamom powder. After putting the mixture on a plate, let it cool.

Shape the mixture into a ball and top with almonds before serving. **Kheer:** Although there are other kheer recipes, rice kheer is the most popular and adored by both kids and adults. Rice, milk, almonds, and cardamom powder are all

needed. Use a pressure cooker to heat the milk until it begins to boil. Add your milk after properly washing the rice, and cook for 40 minutes.

Add sugar, sliced almonds, and cardamom powder when the rice is done cooking and becomes soft.

Serve hot after 3 more minutes of cooking. **Conclusion**
We Indians take great pleasure in the celebration of Holi. But the event wouldn't be complete without at least five or six Holi sweet recipes for us to enjoy. The sweet aroma of a sweet dish also appears during the holiday season. We present the top 10 Holi sweet recipes to you this year, all of which require the fewest ingredients, money, and time. We advise using only pure dairy products because they will improve the flavour of your food and offer you a variety of health advantages.

International Women's Day: MCD organizes 'Swadeshi Haat' event under the leadership of Rekha Rani

Rekha Rani appeals to citizens to use indigenous products to advance the nation

NEW DELHI, MAR 6

On the occasion of International Women's Day, a 'Swadeshi Haat' event was organized today under the leadership of Rekha Rani, Chairperson of the Women Welfare and Child Development Committee of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Satya Sharma, Chairperson of the Standing Committee, inaugurated the event. Stalls showcasing indigenous products set up by various women's self-help groups, NGOs, and vocational training centers attracted significant attention. These stalls showcased Banarasi sarees, clothing, perfumes, bags, jewelry, bakery products, handmade items, and other indigenous products. These products prepared by women entrepreneurs were highly appreciated by the public and a large number of purchases were made. A health check-up camp was organized by Hindu Rao Hospital. On this occasion, Satya Sharma said that International Women's Day is not just a formal day, but an important opportunity to honor the contributions, hard work, and self-reliance of women and to demonstrate society's commitment to their empowerment. Programs like 'Swadeshi Haat' provide women a platform to showcase their skills and products and play a vital role in empowering them economically. The Municipal



Corporation of Delhi is continuously striving to promote women's empowerment and self-reliance. Rekha Rani, Chairperson of the Women Welfare and Child Development Committee, said that the purpose of this program is to encourage women and promote indigenous products. We are proud that a large number of women entrepreneurs participated in this 'Swadeshi Haat' and showcased their talents and products. She added that it is our endeavor to further the vision of women empowerment of Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta by benefiting women through their schemes. Organizing such programs in line with the demand of Mahila Morcha, the corporation's women employees also participated enthusiastically in this program

and played a crucial role in making it a success. Such programs will continue to be organized in the future to provide opportunities for women to thrive. The program was attended by Mayor Sardar Iqbal Singh, Deputy Mayor Jai Bhagwan Yadav, Standing Committee Chairperson Satya Sharma, and a large number of members of the Opposition. Mukesh Goyal, Nazia Danish, all corporation councilors Rajpal Baisoya, Anju Ji, Bobby Ji, Sarita Chaudhary, Manisha Punia, Meenu Goyal, Neelam Chaudhary, Smita Ji, Shashi Chandna, Sandeep Kapoor, Manish Chadda, Geeta Sharma, and a large number of women from the state and district, including Mani Bansal, Charu Kaushik, Neha Upreti, Navneeta Gaudra, and Shaali Sharma from the Mahila Morcha. Everyone wholeheartedly praised the program for its success

Siddaramaiah to present 17th budget amid revenue strain

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah will present Karnataka's Budget for 2026-27 in the Legislative Assembly today, as the state grapples with revenue pressures, rising welfare commitments and disagreements over debt estimates. The CM will present his record 17th budget at 10.15 am. Officials indicate the overall outlay could reach about 74,200 lakh crore.

Like the previous Budget, the 2026-27 plan is expected to project a revenue deficit. The state is unlikely to meet the revenue targets set for 2025-26 due to several factors, including the impact of GST rate changes.

Economic adviser to the chief minister, Basavaraj Rayareddi, said Karnataka is likely to show the current financial year with a revenue shortfall of around 71,800 crore, largely due to GST rate rationalisation introduced in September last year. "States should have been compensated for this," he said. The administration has also taken steps to increase revenue from mining. Earlier this week, it created a new post of secretary (mines), assigning additional charge to commercial taxes commissioner Vipul Bansal. Officials expect the mining sector to bring in an additional 3,000 crore to 34,000 crore in the next fiscal. At the same time, the government faces growing expenditure commitments. For 2025-26, 73,024 crore has been earmarked for the Congress government's flagship guarantee schemes, though there have been suggestions in some quarters to scale back the allocations. The administration must also account for its plan to fill 56,432 vacant posts, a move expected to significantly increase salary expen-



diture. The state's salary bill has already risen from 76,149 crore in 2023-24 to an estimated 78,500 crore in the current fiscal. Overall, the government is projected to allocate about 73.45 lakh crore towards routine expenditure in the coming financial year. Salaries and pensions alone are expected to require an outlay of around 71.36 lakh crore. In the current fiscal year ending in March, Karnataka's Budget size stood at 74.09 lakh crore. About 82% of this amount went towards revenue expenditure and debt repayment, leaving 71,336 crore for capital expenditure. Revenue expenditure includes recurring commitments such as salaries, pensions, subsidies and interest payments. The Mid-Year Review of State Finances released in December noted that increased spending on welfare initiatives had contributed to rising committed expenditure. "The increase in committed expenditure, including the state's spending on guarantees and various welfare schemes, has increased the revenue expenditure," the Mid-Year Review said. Revenue deficit trends have

also shaped the state's fiscal situation. When the Congress government presented its first Budget of the current term in 2023-24, with allocations for the guarantee schemes, the estimated revenue deficit stood at 21,523 crore, which later declined to about 30,000 crore in revised estimates. For 2024-25, the revenue deficit was projected at 27,354 crore but eventually dropped to slightly below 22,000 crore. In 2025-26, the deficit is estimated at about 19,262 crore and could widen due to GST-related revenue losses and slower collections in the Stamps and Registration Department. Meanwhile, the state government has challenged the estimate by the Reserve Bank of India that Karnataka's outstanding liabilities will reach 78.14 lakh crore by the end of the current fiscal. "The figure of 78.14 lakh crore reported externally overstates the state's liabilities, and the correct figure of state total liability is likely to be 76,655 crore at the end of 2025-26," the finance department said in a statement. According to the RBI's estimate, Karnataka's liabilities would

amount to 26.5% of Gross State Domestic Product, exceeding the permissible limit of 25%. The state government, however, maintained that its liabilities stood at 24.91% of GDP.

"The difference between the figure cited in the RBI report and the state government's liability estimate arises due to the inclusion of certain items that do not constitute the State's actual debt obligations," the finance department said. Officials said the RBI report included 220,412 crore raised as GST compensation loans under the state's liabilities. "However, this borrowing is backed by the Union government and is serviced through the cess collected by the Centre," it said. The finance department also said 23,810 crore had been "double counted" because funds collected through certain state cesses were recorded both as public account balances and as investments in earmarked funds.

"The state receives own tax receipts through the levy of certain cesses. These cesses are deposited in a fund and later used for capital investments in major infrastructure projects," it said.

"These funds are double counted as a regular public account fund balance as well in a separate category called 'investment in earmarked funds,' leading to double counting," it added.

Another 716,300 crore invested by the state in the Consolidated Sinking Fund and Guarantee Redemption Fund of the RBI had also been treated as a liability. "These are investments made by the state as per the recommendation of the RBI as a security for future repayment and hence cannot be considered as a liability," the department argued.

Karnataka cabinet defers decision on internal quota in Supreme Court

BENGALURU: The Karnataka government on Thursday postponed a decision on implementing internal reservation within the Scheduled Caste quota.

Law and parliamentary affairs minister HK Patil said the government remained committed to implementing internal reservation but required further deliberation before arriving at a final decision. "The government is committed to implement internal reservation. The discussion on the matter has continued. The matter will be discussed further in the next cabinet meeting. A decision on when the meeting will be done will be decided by the government," Patil said, adding that there was a need for clarity on legal aspects. He said the decision was postponed because the issue could not be fully discussed during Thursday's meeting. Responding to questions on recruitment notifications issued by the government, Patil said, "Nothing stands changed. The discus-



sion on any matter is ongoing," without providing additional details. The cabinet meeting had been expected to determine how internal reservation would be distributed within the Scheduled Caste category. However, divisions within the government and new demands from certain groups have complicated the process. Earlier in the day, home minister G Parameshwara said the government had already agreed in principle

to provide internal reservation but concerns had arisen over how it would be implemented. "The government has already agreed to provide internal reservation. However, issues have surfaced regarding confusion in the distribution of this reservation. There is a concern that during the roster preparation, one specific category might receive a higher share of the reservation," he said. The state had earlier decided to allocate 17% internal reservation

within the Scheduled Caste category. More recently, a demand has emerged for a separate 1% quota for nomadic communities known as Aalemaris.

"A decision was previously made to provide 17% internal reservation for the SC community. However, there is now a demand to provide a separate one per cent for nomadic communities (Aalemaris). The court has also stated that the 50% reservation limit," Parameshwara said. Last year, the cabinet approved internal reservation covering 101 caste groups based on a 1,766-page report prepared by the Justice Das Commission. Ahead of Thursday's meeting, Dalit ministers met on Wednesday to try to build consensus on the issue, which has caused divisions within both the Scheduled Caste community and the Cabinet. Minister KH Muniyappa said the ministers also held discussions with Mallikarjun Kharge regarding the implementation of internal reservation.

Amid declining fertility rate, Andhra Pradesh shifts focus to 'population care'

AMARAVATI: Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday announced a comprehensive "Population Management Policy," stating that the government is shifting its focus from traditional family planning to "population care" in view of declining fertility rates and future demographic challenges. Presenting the draft policy document in the state legislative assembly, Naidu said currently about three lakh families, accounting for 50% of the total number, have only one child, while around 2.17 lakh families have two or more children. The chief minister explained that the state's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is currently 1.5, a sharp fall from 3.0 recorded in 1993, whereas the ideal level should be 2.1 to maintain demographic balance. If the TFR continues to decline rapidly, the number of working-age people could reduce significantly, potentially slowing economic growth, he explained. To be sure, India's TFR is currently at 1.9. Declining population is of concern to almost all southern states, who are staring at a possible reduction in their proportionate representation in the Lok Sabha after the next delimitation exercise (which will happen after the ongoing National Census). Naidu himself had spoken of the need for a population policy last year, as did Tamil Nadu chief minister M



K Stalin. "People are our strength. Population is our strongest economic resource. The world is increasingly relying on countries with large populations. Earlier, I promoted family planning but now I stress the need for population management. To avoid a human resource crisis in the future, the fertility rate in the state must rise. Joint families are disappearing. There's growing concern about the declining population in South India.

Adani triples LNG price for industrial users as Iran war disrupts supply

NEW DELHI: Adani Total Gas Ltd. has tripled LNG prices for industrial consumers exceeding their daily quota, in what is seen as a direct fallout of an escalating Iran war choking India's energy supply. The city gas distributor—a joint venture between India's state-owned Adani's conglomerate and France's TotalEnergies SE—raised LNG rates for volumes consumed beyond 40% of daily contracted limits to 7120 per standard cubic metre from 740, Bloomberg reported citing sources. The price revision took effect at 6:00 am on Wednesday. A spokesperson for Adani Total Gas did not immediately respond to Bloomberg's

request for comment. Qatar Supply Crunch The price surge underscores India's acute vulnerability to maritime disruptions. Domestic consumers are facing a severe supply squeeze after Qatar's Ras Laffan plant—the world's largest LNG terminal—halted operations following an Iranian drone strike. The outage is particularly bruising for New Delhi, which relies on imports for half of its natural gas needs, with Qatar accounting for 50% of those overseas shipments. Industrial and commercial units represent roughly 30% of Adani Total's demand profile. Unlike residential segment, which receives priority

allocation of cheaper domestic gas, this bulk demand is met entirely through expensive LNG imports purchased on the spot market. Force Majeure Risks The crisis is rippling through India's energy infrastructure. Peers including Petronet LNG Ltd. and Gopichand Gas Ltd. have already invoked force majeure clauses to limit deliveries, citing an inability to secure scheduled shipments. Adani Total currently operates across 53 geographical areas, reaching roughly 14% of India's population through its direct footprint and a separate venture with Indian Oil Corp. Ltd.

Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon surprised by Iran war impact on stock market

NEW DELHI: Goldman Sachs Group Inc. CEO David Solomon said he's been surprised by the "benign" reaction in financial markets to the Iran war, adding that it will take weeks to understand more about the situation. "It's very hard to speculate because there is so much that is unknown at this point," Solomon said at the Australian Financial Review Business Summit in Sydney on Wednesday morning. Investors are considering whether this will become a more prolonged event and start to impact consumer confidence, he said. US assurances on securing shipping



through the Strait of Hormuz have helped steady nerves in markets. Still, the Iran war has reverberated across the region, with Israel bombarding Tehran in a fresh wave of strikes. The Islamic Republic fired missiles at Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, with Doha saying targets weren't limited to military interests. "I look at the market reaction

and I'm actually surprised," Solomon said. "The market reaction has been benign." The S&P 500 index of US stocks fell less than 1% on Monday and Tuesday, partly reflecting its exposure to large technology shares that have held their ground. Since Solomon spoke, some moves have extended, with the MSCI Asia Pacific Index slumping as much as 4.5% and South Korea's KOSPI plunging more than 12%. India's rupee weakened to a record low on fears that higher energy prices will stoke inflation.

US Treasuries have fallen this week amid inflation concerns, reducing expectations for interest-rate cuts. The dollar has strengthened after a prolonged run of weakness. Solomon said that he wasn't surprised to see the VIX Index and other volatility measures climb. "It's going to take a couple of weeks for the market to digest the implications," he said. Much of the market response centres on oil prices, and whether crude can move unobstructed through the Strait of Hormuz. Brent rose above \$82 a barrel on Wednesday after rallying about 12% over two days, the biggest gain since 2020.

Over 4,000 police personnel to manage traffic during AI impact summit in Delhi

NEW DELHI: Over 4,000 Delhi Traffic Police personnel, including 10 deputy commissioners of police (DCPs), will be deployed to manage traffic during the India Artificial Intelligence (AI) Impact Summit being hosted at Bharat Mandapam in September 2023—when travel and access to the national capital were severely restricted, particularly in the New Delhi district or Lutyens' Zone—no such extreme traffic and security curbs would be imposed for the India AI Impact Summit. All schools, offices and business establishments will remain open as usual, the traffic officials said. "We are devising the AI Summit-related routes plan in such a way that the traffic restrictions and diversions will not impact the movement on other vehicles, including buses and four-wheelers carrying school children. The process of identifying and earmarking alternate routes for such vehicles is in progress. Our objective is to ensure minimum inconvenience to the public on roads during the event," said additional commissioner of police (traffic)



Dinesh Kumar Gupta, who is in charge of the AI Summit traffic arrangements plan. According to the traffic plan, seen by



HT, areas in and directly around Bharat Mandapam, the summit venue near Pragati Maidan—have been divided into two traffic zones, marked Zone 1

and Zone 2, and four traffic sectors labelled A, B, C and D. Each zone will be headed by a DCP, while an assistant commissioner of police (ACP) will be deputised to oversee each sector. The ACP will be assisted by one traffic inspector (TI) and multiple zonal officers (ZO) of sub-inspector (SI) and assistant sub-inspector (ASI) ranks. Meanwhile, IGI Airport and the routes leading to Dhaula Kuan via National Highway-10 have been categorised as Zone 9 and Zone 10 and divided into five sectors named R, S, T, U and V. The remaining six traffic zones and nine sectors will cover the 10 hotels and routes identified for VIP movement between the hotels and Bharat Mandapam. "Taj Palace, ITC, Maurya, The Leela Palace, The Imperial, Le Meridien, Hyatt regency, The Oberoi, The Claridges, Taj Mahal and The Oberoi have been confirmed so far as the place

of stay for foreign delegates. If more hotels are added after confirmations of additional heads of state, we will make necessary changes to the route plan. As of now, heads of state from 15 countries have confirmed participation," said one of the officers cited above. According to the officer, Sarda Patil Marg, Shanti Path, Teen Murti Marg, G Meethi, Pritiviraj Road and C Hexagon—known better as the India Gate Circle—will be the key routes for VIP movement during the event. Apart from the 22 ACPs heading traffic sectors, one ACP will be present in the pilot vehicle of each foreign delegate's motorcade. The officer said the inspector will act as the warning officer's job will be to ensure a clear passage for the motorcade, for which announcements will be made using the public address system installed in the official vehicle," the officer added.

CONTINUATION HELPLINE

India on verge of eliminating Maoists: Amit Shah

Industries and Parliament, Shah said the force "played the role of a catalyst for the economic growth of the country". Shah emphasised that higher economic growth is achieved when peace exists. "Our security personnel have effectively implemented their resolutions to maintain industrial peace".

He said that the vision of building a strong national economy and making India the world's largest economy cannot be realised without industrial development, and providing a secure environment for industrial growth requires a national-level industrial security force.

In his address, Shah said that after completing 56 years today, the CISF has risen from zero to the pinnacle in the field of industrial security, which is a saga of the force's dedication and valour.

He said that by combining courage, sacrifice, and dedication with the rich traditions of India's history, and equipping itself with modern weapons, CISF has demonstrated the resolve to face every kind of challenge.

Stating that the vision for India's industrial development cannot be imagined without the CISF, Shah said his ministry has recently decided to entrust the security of all ports to the force.

In the coming days, the force will also provide security to private industrial groups in hybrid mode, the union home minister added.

The Prime Minister has placed these resolutions before the people - to make India a fully developed nation by 2047, to achieve the top position globally in every sector, and to make the country the world's third-largest economy by 2027, he pointed out.

He stated that CISF is playing the role of a catalyst in achieving these goals.

Shah inaugurated two residential projects and laid foundation stones for three reserve battalions with a total cost of Rs 890 crore on virtual mode.

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mahji, Assembly Speaker Surma Padhy, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and others were present at the programme.

CM Omar Abdullah interacts with delegations; development and community issues discussed

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

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

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

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

CM Omar Abdullah reviews Compliance Reduction 2.0 to ease Business

Secretary Atul 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 organise systems efficiently, not to create unnecessary procedural hurdles for the public.

The Chief Minister emphasised the need for 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.

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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.

16 Candidates from Jammu Kashmir Clear UPSC Civil Services Exam 2025

In the final merit list include Ritika (456), Soorash Shivam (572), Muneeb Parrah (581), Gulam Din (683), Dwarka Gaadhi (721), Akash (747), Koh-e-Safa (783), Yasara (811), Abhishek (820), Parajal (856), Mohd Azar (869), Ashar (886), Sarfaraz (936) and Irfan (957), totaling the total number of successful candidates from the region to sixteen.

Some of them had already cleared the civil service examination in Jammu and Kashmir and were working as officers. The UPSC announced the final results after completing the evaluation process that followed the preliminary examination, the main written examination and the personality test conducted over the past several months. The Civil Services Examination is the primary gateway for recruitment into the country's top administrative and diplomatic services.

This year, a total of 958 candidates have been recommended for appointment to various services of the Government of India based on their combined performance in the written examination and the interview. According to the commission, the list includes 317 candidates in the general category, 104 from the economically weaker sections (EWS), 306 from the Other Backward Classes (OBC), 158 from the Scheduled Castes (SC) and 73 from the Scheduled Tribes (ST).

The commission has also prepared a reserve list of 258 candidates, comprising 129 from the general category, 26 from EWS, 86 from OBC, eight from SC, six from ST and three from the Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwD) category.

Through the Civil Services Examination, candidates are recruited into several prestigious services including the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Revenue Service (IRS) and other Group 'A' and Group 'B' central services. For the 2025 examination cycle, the government has reported 180 vacancies in the IAS, 55 in the IFS, and 150 in the IPS, besides 507 posts in various Group 'A' services and 195 in Group 'B' services.

Regarded as one of the toughest competitive examinations in the country, the Civil Services Examination attracts lakhs of aspirants every year, though only a small number ultimately make it through all three stages of the process.

The final merit list, containing the names and roll numbers of candidates recommended for appointment, has been uploaded on the UPSC website. The commission said that the marksheet of all candidates will be made available online within 15 days of the declaration of the result and will remain accessible for 30 days. Successful candidates will now be allocated services based on their rank, category and preferences.

CJM Shopian rejects bail of five HDFC bank officials in fraud case

Memorandum, Shopian: A/P Hamza Colony, Baghat-Kanpora, Nowgam; (2) Irfan Majeed Zargar, S/o Abdul Majeed Zargar, R/o Sheikh Mohalla, Bonigam, Shopian; (3) Mubashir Hussain Sheikh, S/o Gulam Mohammad Sheikh, R/o Karesa, Kulgam; (4) Zaid Manzoor, S/o Manzoor Ahmad Din, R/o Dagepora, Khanabal, Anantnag; and (5) Javaid Ahmad Bhat, S/o Abdul Rahim Bhat, R/o Below Rajpora, Pulwama.

The accused persons were arrested during the course of investigation and are presently lodged in judicial custody at Central Jail, Srinagar, the statement said.

The Learned Additional Public Prosecutor, Waseem Ahmad Shah, appearing on behalf of the Economic Offences Wing Kashmir, opposed the bail applications before the Hon'ble Court. After hearing detailed arguments and examining the case records, the Hon'ble Court rejected the bail plea in FIR No. 30/2025, it added.

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

The Economic Offences Wing Kashmir of Crime Branch &J&K remains determined to ensuring a fair, transparent, and merit-based conclusion of the case in accordance with law.

DGP, IGP review security arrangements in Srinagar amid vigil

"The DGP, along with IGP Kashmir, DIG CR, SSP Srinagar, and other officers reviewed the security and law and order situation in several parts of the city, including Hazratbal, Nowhatta, and other areas of downtown Srinagar, to ensure effective security arrangements," Kashmir Zone Police said in a post on X.

Police officials said the high-level visit focused particularly on areas of downtown Srinagar, which are considered sensitive from a security perspective.

Senior officers inspected deployment points, reviewed arrangements at key intersections, and assessed preparedness of the forces on the ground.

The review covered areas including Hazratbal, Nowhatta, across several localities in the old city, where additional security personnel have been deployed as a precautionary measure.

Officials said the visit was aimed at ensuring that the security grid remains alert and capable of responding quickly to any emerging situation.

Authorities had earlier imposed precautionary restrictions and increased security deployment across parts of the Valley following the international development that sparked concern about possible or law-and-order issues.

Security forces were deployed at important religious places, markets, and sensitive neighbourhoods to maintain order. Mobile patrols and checkpoints were also set up in various parts of Srinagar to monitor movement and ensure public safety.

Officials said the measures were purely preventive and aimed at maintaining peace.

Police said that the overall situation across Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir remained calm and under control, with no major incidents reported.

Senior officers also interacted with local police units and reviewed intelligence inputs to assess the evolving situation. They directed officers on the ground to remain vigilant and ensure that security arrangements remain robust.

Authorities appealed to residents to maintain calm and cooperate with the administration in maintaining peace.

Officials also urged people not to pay attention to rumours or unverified information circulating on social media.

Police said they are closely monitoring the situation and will continue to review security arrangements as required.

The administration reiterated that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure the safety of the public and to maintain law and order across Kashmir.

Meanwhile, high-speed internet and prepaid mobile services have been restored across the Kashmir Valley, bringing relief to residents after temporary restrictions on cellular services. Officials said that the restoration of services will help ease communication difficulties faced by the public, particularly students and business communities who rely heavily on internet connectivity for daily activities. With the resumption of high-speed internet and prepaid calling services, normal digital and communication activities are expected to gradually return to routine across the Valley. Authorities are closely monitoring the situation to ensure smooth functioning of services.

J&K's pension bill projected to double 10 years, OPS unsustainable: Officials

run and could pose significant risks to financial stability.

As per official data of the government, Rs 5,829 crore were paid as pension to retired employees in 2020-21 and the figure is set to go up to Rs 11,798 crore in 2030-31. This is as per a government reply to a cut motion in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly recently.

The year-wise pension outgo over the last five years has shown a steady rise Rs 6,668 crore in 2021-22, Rs 7,463 crore in 2022-23, Rs 8,364 crore in 2023-24, Rs 9,350 crore in 2024-25 and Rs 9,127 crore in 2025-26.

Based on the number of employees retiring, the pension outgo is projected to increase further in the coming years. It is estimated to be Rs 11,798 crore in 2030-31.

Officials said that the expansion in pension commitments may continue till the early 2040s, after which the burden is expected to stabilise as employees covered under OPS subside significantly over time.

They said that the introduction of the New Pension Scheme (NPS) in 2010 provides a sustainable pension framework with effective fund management, unlike OPS which does not have a dedicated pension fund.

They said that Jammu and Kashmir, being an expenditure-led region with modest revenue receipts and limited avenues for investment, has witnessed disproportionate growth in pension liabilities in the past.

Earlier also, pension expenditure had nearly doubled from Rs 731 crore in 2004-05 to Rs 1,495 crore in 2009-10, they said.

Following a cabinet decision in 2009, the government transitioned from a Defined Benefit Pension Scheme OPS to a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme NPS for all government employees appointed on or after January 1, 2010, through amendments in the J&K Civil Service Regulations, they said.

They further maintained that while fulfilling its commitment to eligible pensioners under OPS, the government ensures that developmental allocations and activities are not adversely affected. Once the pension outgo stabilizes around 2040, proportionately more funds are expected to be available for the development sector, it added.

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HELPLINE

POLICE STATIONS	
Bagh-e-Bahu	2459777
Bakshi Nagar	2580102
Bus Stand	2575151
City	2543688
Gandhi Nagar	2430528
Gangyal	2482019
Nowbad	2571332
Pacca Danga	2548610
Railway Station	2472870
Sainik Colony	2462212
Satwari	2430364
Channi Himmat	2465164
Transport Nagar	2475444
Trikutia Nagar	2475133
Gandhi Nagar	2459660
SSP City	2561578
SP City North	2547038
SP South	2433778
Public Utility Services	
INDIAN AIR LINES	
City Office	2542735
Air Port	2430449
Jet Air Ways	2453999
City Office	2573399
RAILWAYS	
Railway Enquiry	131, 132, 2476407
Booking	2470318
Reservation	2470315
Public Health Engineering Stations	
Bakshi Nagar	2543557
Gandhi Nagar	2430786
Company Bagh	2542582
New Plot	2573429
Panjitriah	2547537
Telecommunication Department	
Directory Enquiry	197
Fault Repair	198
Trunk Booking	180
Billing Complaint	2543896
JAMMU MUNICIPALITY	
Jn. Lines	2578503
Administration Officer	2542192
Health Officer	2547440
POSTAL SERVICES	
Head Post Office City	2543606
Gandhi Nagar	2435863
FIRE SERVICES	
Control Room	101, 132, 2476407
City	2544263
Gandhi Nagar	2457705
Canal	2554064
Gangyal	2480026
COOKING GAS DEALERS	
Chenab Gas	2547633
Gulmoure Gas	2430835
JAKFED	2548297
HP Gas	2578456
Shivngi Gas	2577020
Tawi Gas	2548455
POWER HOUSES	
Gandhi Nagar	2430180
Canal Road	2554147
Janipur	2533828
Nanak Nagar	2430776
Parade	2542289
Satwari Cantt.	2452813
HOSPITALS	
GMC Hospital	2584290
S.M.G.S. Hospital	2547635
C.D. Hospital	2577064
Dental Hospital	2544670
Gandhi Nagar Hospital	2430041
Sarwal Hospital	2579402
G.B. Pant Cantt. Hospital	2433500
Ayurvedic College	2543661
C.R.P. Hospital	2591105
Acharya Shri Chander	2662536
Mental Hospital	2577444
Swami Vivekanand	2547418
Blood Bank	2547637
Ambulances	2584225, 2575364
Ambulances (Red Cross)	2543739
NURSING HOMES	
Maddan Hospital	2456727
Medicare	2435070
Triveni Nursing Home	2452664
Suvidha Nursing Home	2555965
Al. Firdous Nursing Home	2545050
Astha Nursing Home	2576707
Bee Enn Charitable Trust	2505310
Chopra Nursing Home	2573580
Harbans Singh Mem Hsp.	2541952
Jeevan Jyoti	2576985
Yudhviri Nursing Home	2547821
Medialid Nursing Home	2466744
Sita Nursing Home	2435007
Vibhuti Nursing Home	2547969

Ban, protest, elect: The social media saga in 2025 Gen-Z protests that toppled Nepal government

DHAKA: From a ban on social media triggering violent Gen-Z led protests that toppled KP Oli's government to a social media platform helping the youth elect an interim leader until the general election, Nepal witnessed dramatic scenes unravelling its political circuit in 2025. They were a series of events that seemingly turned into a saga anchored by the power of social media. As nearly 19 million eligible voters cast their ballots on Thursday to finally pick their next Prime Minister and government, let's take a look at the journey that brought the country to this day.

Six months after the anti-corruption protests, which left at least 77 people dead, the 275-member Nepal Parliament went to polls and recorded a 60 per cent voter turnout, according to initial estimates shared by Chief Election Commissioner Ram Prasad Bhandari.

While the toppling of Oli's regime paved the way for a new, hopeful government, it also made a mark on the world by displaying the revolutionary power of social media.

The then-prime minister ordered a ban on social media platforms, and those platforms led to his ouster.

Ban on social media triggers protests

Haram Nepal, a humanitarian and activist group, called for the first 'Gen Z' protest on September 8, four days after the Nepalese government imposed the social media ban, and thousands of youths displayed their dissent on social media. The group presented its Discord server as a hub for organisation and communication for the Gen Z movement.

Citizens spread the word via social media, and thousands of youths gathered at Maitighar Mandala in central Kathmandu on September 8. However, the peaceful protest quickly spiralled into chaos, with demonstrators marching toward government buildings and clashing with security forces.

The violent protests prompted police forces to open fire, leaving at least 20 dead and several injured. Amid intensifying tensions, a curfew was imposed across Kathmandu.

Injured protesters were rushed to hospitals, with Hami Nepal's main face leading a hunger strike on social media to address the chaos and present the demonstrators' side. Prime Minister KP Oli called for an urgent meeting of his Cabinet and current head of state KP Oli's home being set on fire by protesters.

Nepal's 2025 Gen Z protests: Timeline of a glancing blow

Gen Z protests ousted Nepal PM KP Oli

An angry mob even assaulted five-time PM Sher Bahadur Deuba and his wife, with visuals surfacing, showing the two bleeding after being beaten during the protests.

Meanwhile, another group of violent agitators set former PM Jhala Nath Khanal's house on fire, with his wife, Rajayakshi Chitrakar, trapped inside the residence. Chitrakar reportedly sustained serious burn injuries and eventually succumbed to her wounds at a hospital.

Though the protests were triggered by the social media ban, they were further fuelled by frustration at the government, as unemployment in Nepal stood at around 10 per cent and the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was just \$1,447 (just over 2 lakh in Nepalese rupees at the time), according to the World Bank.

Eventually, KP Oli was forced to resign as prime minister on the same day.

The Gen Z movement managed to oust the PM, but the agitation continued. Federal buildings, including the Nepalese Parliament, the Singha Durbar and the Supreme Court, went up

in flames as protesters raged over the rampant corruption in the government.

The increasing violence prompted Nepal Army chief Ashok Raj Sigdel to break his silence. He issued a video statement, appealing to the protesters to exercise restraint and "prioritise the motherland".

He called for an end to the violence, asking the youth to ensure the prevention of further loss and requesting their assistance in preserving peace in Nepal.

Later that night, army personnel were deployed across the nation to enforce curfew and restore order. On September 10, the protests finally came to an end. As the dust of agitation settled, the damage to Nepal and its infrastructure became clear. Young people, including students, volunteers and activists, picked up brooms and shovels and mobilised to clean up their country. They picked up garbage, cleared shattered glass from the streets, scraped charred wood, and hauled away burnt furniture from the roads.



The Jasprit Bumrah over that broke England

NEW DELHI: In sports in general and cricket in particular, the winner will inevitably be the team that exerts the most pressure and absorbs it best. There, perhaps, would be no better illustration of this mantra than the 18th over of England's chase at the Wankhede last night. With 45 needed off three overs, India gambled on Jasprit Bumrah's final over.

"We needed three sixes for the equation to be completely different. On a ground like that, three sixes can happen in the blink of an eye," Brendon McCullum would later tell Sky Sports, the English broadcaster. For a side that had been smashing boundaries and sixes at will - 21 fours and 15 sixes in all - a couple of hits to the fence, if not exactly three sixes at that stage, were in order.

But they ran into Bumrah. He mixed slower ones and yorkers with metronomic precision in his final over. Forget three sixes -

England managed just six runs from the six deliveries. "Bumrah is the best bowler in the world and he executed brilliantly and shut the game down," McCullum would admit after India beat them by seven runs to reach the final.

Jacob Bethell and Sam Curran, who had orchestrated the chase well until that point, could not answer the call of their coach, who was on the walkie-talkie. Their 50-run sixth-wicket stand had come off just 27 deliveries, but there was little leeway in that Bumrah over. They failed to force the pace against Bumrah, who kept pounding yorker after yorker in that crucial over.

There was one full-length delivery that could have been put away, but Curran failed to take advantage. It seemed clear that Bethell and Curran were playing the bowler - and his reputation - rather than the situation. Bumrah, on the other hand, was playing the match situation



rather than the batters. The plan for Bethell and Curran, seemingly, was to see Bumrah off and go after the bowlers in the final two overs, but scoring 39 runs off the last 12 deliveries was never going to be easy, particularly after Hardik Pandya conceded just nine in the penultimate over. Shivam Dube completed the job in the final over without much ado, but it was the 18th over that set up the victory

for India when England were threatening to pull off an improbable chase of 254. To say that his figures of one for 33 in four overs, in a match where England's batsmen launched a counterattacking rampage in pursuit of 254, proved decisive would be an understatement. It was the defining over of the match, and, if one were to stretch the point, Bumrah's four overs were the

most vital phase of the contest. In those overs, Bethell-led England did the reverse: inventive and proactive in their boundary hitting on the night - failed to sustain their momentum, managing just four boundaries in 24 deliveries.

The credit goes to Jasprit Bumrah, the world-class bowler, once-in-a-generation bowler. I think that's what he delivered today. This (award) should go to him actually. If we didn't bowl that way in the death overs, I think I would not be standing here. All credit goes to the bowlers, how they backed themselves in the tough conditions." His fans love him for that. At last time, Hardik's Instagram following of 45 million was nearly as strong as Rohit Sharma's and only behind Virat Kohli among current cricketers. His package of tattoos, blonde hair, tan, and a self belief is tantalising to say the least.

Bumrah's slower delivery is special for its degree of deception. While the grip makes it look like an off-spinning slower one, it does not exactly turn like an off-spin. Instead, it gains forward and upward momentum - what bowlers often call lift. Batters frequently end up playing too early, as Brook did on the night. Like many players with a long, high backlift, Brook struggled to adjust to the change of pace. "He's a very good bowler, arguably the best of all time at the minute. And yeah, he's been a very good bowler for a long time. The Indians fielded extremely well. That catch is arguably one of the best catches I've seen so well. So yeah hats off to them," a disappointed Brook said rather stoically.

Bumrah was introduced later in the innings, with skipper Suryakumar holding him back to target Brook, arguably the most dangerous batter in the England camp.

Novak Djokovic hints at Serena Williams comeback, says Wimbledon 'ideal' return stage

NEW DELHI: Novak Djokovic recently claimed that Serena Williams could use Wimbledon as the ideal venue for her comeback later this year. The American tennis legend hasn't played since the 2022 US Open, but recently triggered speculation about a potential return after re-entering the sport's anti-doping pool last year. In doubles, she bagged 23 WTA Tour-level titles, including 14 major women's doubles championships, all with her sister Venus. The duo were undefeated in major doubles finals, setting the best unbeaten record in any discipline of the sport.



Speaking to reporters at Indian Wells, Djokovic said, "I think she's coming back. I don't know, I have spoken to her, but I guess the sentiment is that she's coming back."

"I pick that one (Wimbledon) as well as her comeback, but yeah, I don't know. I think she might maybe play a doubles tournament or two with Venus. That would be nice to see, just from my point of view

and for tennis fans." The Serbian veteran further added, "She's one of the greatest athletes. It would be great to have her back." Serena was ranked as the world No. 1 in women's singles by the WTA for 319 weeks (third-most of all time), and also ended as the year-end No. 1 five times. She clinched 73 WTA Tour-level singles titles, including 23 major women's singles titles, which is also the most in the Open era, and second-most of all time. Serena is also the only player to manage a career Golden Slam in both singles and doubles.

Brendon McCullum would love to carry on as England coach despite T20 World Cup exit, Ashes debacle: 'Time to reflect'

NEW DELHI: Brendon McCullum is facing growing scrutiny after England's disappointing run in recent major tournaments. Following a heavy defeat in the semi-finals of the ICC T20 World Cup, he has only intensified the pressure on the head coach. The former New Zealand captain arrived with high expectations, having transformed England's Test side with the aggressive 'Bazball' philosophy, an ultra-attacking style that initially drew widespread praise. While the approach brought excitement and entertainment, England have struggled to deliver consistent results against top opposition in recent years, highlighted by their 1-4 Ashes defeat in Australia.



McCullum also took charge of England's white-ball teams last year after the 2024 T20 World Cup, but his first two ICC campaigns in the role have yet to produce a trophy. Facing growing scrutiny after England's semi-final exit and a difficult Ashes tour, McCullum in the post-Ashes period across formats while reflecting on the team's recent performances and the need to address short-

comings from the disappointing Test campaign in Australia. "Yeah, it's been busy, hasn't it?" McCullum told Sky Sports. "There's been a bit going on across different formats, but I think the white-ball side has been exceptional in the post-Ashes period. We've played some good cricket, and it's got a real identity about it as well under Brookie's captaincy."

Obviously the Test winter was disappointing. We went to Australia with high hopes and we weren't able to deliver, and that's something that you've got to look and say, "what are the things that you need to improve?" Continuing his honest assessment of England's struggles, McCullum also questioned whether the team truly stayed committed to its aggressive style of play during the Ashes, suggesting the side needs a clear conversation about the direction and identity it wants to maintain going forward. "Did we play the style of play that we took down to Australia or did we not? If we've been honest with ourselves, I probably say

A maverick who is India's ultimate balancing force, Hardik Pandya

MUMBAI: Let's start with Instagram because Hardik Pandya's social media handle is a mirror to his everyday life. Whether it is him gyming, training, being out for a swim, playing with his son or chanting a bhajan, when Hardik is not on the field, he's sharing his real life with the virtual world. His fans love him for that. At last time, Hardik's Instagram following of 45 million was nearly as strong as Rohit Sharma's and only behind Virat Kohli among current cricketers. His package of tattoos, blonde hair, tan, and a self belief is tantalising to say the least.



Not everyone in Indian cricket appreciates his in-your-face persona though. Just the way it holds true in any corporate ladder, the flashy one is perceived not to be the responsible one. Hardik's stint as India T20I captain proved to be short-lived. It may have hurt him, but Hardik has tried to stay to himself. It's a lesson he has learnt the hard way in his roller-coaster journey. A lot of the Baroda all-rounder's on-field success comes from his uninhibited approach to life. That's also the way he plays his cricket. Hardik was so fond of hitting sixes in his younger days that they often ran out of balls at the KLRN Power academy. Sticking to this template, Hardik grew to become India's No 1 power hitter.

Returning to social media, Hardik is among the few public figures who uses his widely followed handle to revisit his early struggles. Last month, celebrating completion of a decade in international cricket, Hardik posted an old interview of him in dishevelled hair, reminiscing about his aspiration to play for India. "EK Sapna hata (It was a dream), but I never thought it was going to happen," he would say. Now living his dream, Hardik does not want to let go of his past. Back then, he wanted to break free. Now, it fuels his desire to continue to excel. His past hardships keep him grounded. Hardik has often spoken in interviews how sport has given him an outlet of expression. When he was scouted by Mumbai Indians and picked in the 2015 IPL auction as a base price buy for ₹ 10 lakhs, he had never seen that much money. Cricket in his family was a way to change his and his family's life.

At 32, Hardik has been through so many twists and turns, from being disciplined for a faux pax at a talk show to being booed by his home IPL fans, that pressures of sport such as tense run chases and defending low totals do not faze him. His redemptive spirit was for all to see in the manner in which he was able to execute what he was tasked to bowl in the final over against South Africa in the 2024 T20 World Cup final. Hardik has polished his bowling skills on the job. That he can bowl across phases of a T20 game is down to his ability to upskill, a trait that often gets lost to his off-field gloss. Batting came the most naturally to him. It's when his batting sharpness saw a fall a few years back, that there were genuine fears, he may have been past his best. When Hardik was being given a hard time by Mumbai Indians fans, his once batting partner and now coach Kieron Pollard predicted, "the world would sing Hardik's praises when time comes". Soon enough with Pollard watching from the opposition dug out for England, Hardik giving him a hard time in the 2024 World Cup semi-final. Hardik, bowling the final over and completing a title triumph for India at Barbados was just the karmic cycle playing out. Every few years, Hardik's career has thrown up some curveballs. For a good

I made a big mistake: Harry Brook refuses to hide behind excuses after game-changing error costs England the WC

NEW DELHI: England captain Harry Brook took the blame on himself after the Three Lions lost the T20 World Cup 2026 semi-final against India by seven runs at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Thursday. Jacob Bethell did hit his maiden T20 century, but his effort didn't prove to be enough as England fell short in the 254-run chase. Sanju Samson was the game-changer for India as he played a knock of 89 to help the defending champions post 253/7 in the 20 overs. However, India's score would have been way lower had Brook held onto the catch of Samson in the third over when the right-hander was batting on just 15. Irfan Archer bowled the ball in the right area, and Samson handed a dolly to Brook at mid-on. However, the England skipper failed to grab onto the chance, and the batter made England pay, hitting a total of eight fours and seven sixes in his 42-ball run, where he batted at a strike rate of 211.90.



Speaking about the fielding lapses, Brook said, "Absolutely and I'll hold my hands up and say that I made a big mistake there dropping Samson and yeah,

catches win matches, that old famous phrase and unfortunately, we just didn't go our way in the field tonight. Another day, it comes off." Brook also explained that he made the call to bowl first because he expected dew to play a role. He also stated that he thought the pitch would offer some early assistance to the pacers, and hence decided to have a go with the ball first up. "We just thought that there

might have been a little bit of hold early on with the pitch being fresh, and we were expecting probably a little bit more spin in the first innings, but it slid onto the bat nicely. They played extremely well, and all of our lads should be so proud of the way that we played tonight and throughout this competition," said Brook. "Just mix-execution here and there. We probably didn't execute as well as we could have.

The Indian batters are some of the best batters in the world and if you mix-execute to some of them, it goes out the park. So, we probably didn't execute as well as we could have done, but like I say, we gave it a red hot crack, and unfortunately, we were on the wrong side," he added.

Bethell's knock. The left-handed batter Bethell single-handedly kept England in the game, as he kept hitting fours and sixes at one end when the asking rate was 13-14 per over. Till the time he was there, England was always in the game, and he only lost his wicket in the final over, where the Three Lions needed 29 runs. "He was absolutely unbelievable. I think he's gonna earn some serious money in his career, and he's gonna have a hell of a career with England, and yeah, he showed the world how good he is tonight. Unfortunately, we were on the wrong side, but that innings is an extremely big positive to take away from this competition and to see him go out there in the manner that he did, taking it to them from ball one and like I said, showing the world what he can do," said Brook.

Lakshya Sen outclasses Hong Kong's Angus Ng Ka Long, enters All England Open's quarterfinals

NEW DELHI: A relentless Lakshya Sen produced a gritty performance to beat Hong Kong's Ng Ka Long Angus and storm into the men's singles quarterfinals of the All England Open Badminton Championships on Thursday. World No. 12 Lakshya, a finalist at the 2022 edition, looked razor sharp as he fought through intense rallies and physical exchanges to outlast Ng Ka Long, a former world top 10 player, 21-19, 21-23, 21-10 in a pulsating round-of-16 contest. Lakshya, a 2021 World Championships bronze medalist, will face either China's sixth seed Li Shi Feng or Ireland's Nhat Nguyen next. Lakshya came into the match after losing all three encounters against his opponent and fell behind initially in the opening game. He fought back from 4-6 down to establish a 15-11 lead, keeping the pressure on his opponent with aggressive returns and sharp placement. He extended the advantage to 17-13 with a well-timed overhead attack, but Ng Ka Long



refused to fade away and narrowed the gap late in the game. At 15-17, Lakshya left one at the backline but it was judged out. The Indian had no video challenges left and had to let it go. The Indian then produced a sharp smash to reach 19-17, but Ng Ka Long clawed back to 19-19 with a cross-court winner. Another jump smash gave Lakshya a game point and he sealed it when Ng Ka Long hit wide.

Lakshya slammed down a cross court smash to start the second game to continue the momentum. He kept his shot quality consistent and mixed his power with precision to take a 11-4 lead at the interval. Lakshya dished out another phenomenal straight smash to make it 14-7. At 12-17, Ng Ka Long engaged in yet another superlative rally, stretching the Indian to the limit to keep himself afloat. Ng Ka Long then produced a spirited fightback.

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