

NAVREH CELEBRATIONS

# Youth Must Anchor Future in Tradition to Shape a Developed India: LG Sinha

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Mar 19: Emphasizing the enduring relevance of cultural roots in shaping a progressive society, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday called upon the youth to cultivate a deep and lasting connection with the timeless traditions of the land, asserting that India's spiritual heritage remains one of its greatest strengths.

Addressing a gathering during the Navreh celebrations organised by the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha in Jammu, the Lieutenant Governor underscored the pivotal role of the younger generation in determining the country's future trajectory. He remarked that the youth of today will not merely inherit India's rich legacy but will actively reinterpret and reshape it, steering the nation toward a developed and sustainable



tomorrow.

Highlighting the immense potential of Jammu and Kashmir, the Lieutenant Governor noted that the Union Territory stands at a crucial juncture, with opportunities to emerge as a vibrant hub of culture, innovation, and economic progress. He said that consistent efforts, guided

by vision and dedication, could transform the region into a flourishing and prosperous center. However, he stressed that realizing this vision ultimately depends on the energy, commitment, and sense of responsibility demonstrated by the youth.

He expressed optimism that young people would draw

inspiration from the wisdom and values passed down through generations, using that foundation to contribute meaningfully to the region's advancement. According to him, a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity would be key to elevating Jammu and Kashmir to the ranks of the [More on P6](#)

## India Must Achieve Full Self-Reliance in Drone Manufacturing: Rajnath Singh

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Mar 19: Underscoring the rapidly evolving nature of modern warfare and the growing centrality of emerging technologies, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday called for the urgent development of a robust, fully indigenous drone manufacturing ecosystem in India, asserting that self-reliance in this critical sector is essential for national security and strategic autonomy.

Addressing a distinguished gathering at the National Defence Industries Conclave in New Delhi, the Defence Minister drew attention to ongoing global conflicts, particularly the Russia-Ukraine War and escalating tensions in the Iran-Israel region, to highlight the transformative role of drones and counter-drone technologies in contemporary and future battlefields.

He noted that these



conflicts have vividly demonstrated how unmanned aerial systems have become indispensable tools in surveillance, reconnaissance, precision strikes, and defensive operations. According to him, the extensive deployment of drones in such high-intensity conflicts offers crucial lessons for India as it prepares to strengthen its defence capabilities in an increasingly complex global security environment.

"As the world closely observes these conflicts, it is evident that drones and

counter-drone technologies will play a decisive role in shaping the future of warfare," the Defence Minister said, emphasizing that India cannot afford to remain dependent on external sources for such vital defence equipment.

He stressed that achieving self-reliance in drone manufacturing goes beyond assembling finished products, calling instead for the development of a comprehensive ecosystem encompassing design, research, production, and supply chains. "There is [More on P6](#)

## Eid Shopping Frenzy Grips Kashmir as Markets Overflow Despite Rain



■ KD NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Mar 19: A vibrant festive atmosphere swept across Kashmir on Thursday as markets witnessed an intense last-minute rush ahead of Eid, with shoppers thronging bazaars in large numbers despite intermittent rainfall and a noticeable dip in temperatures.

From the early hours of the day, commercial hubs across Srinagar and other districts of the Valley came alive with heightened activity, as people made their final preparations for the upcoming festival. Streets and marketplaces were abuzz with energy, reflecting both anticipation and enthusiasm that [More on P6](#)

## LG Sinha Pays Obeisance At Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Prays For Peace & Prosperity

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Mar 19: The auspicious festival of Navratri commenced with deep religious fervour across Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, as thousands of devotees undertook the sacred pilgrimage to the revered Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, braving inclement weather and chilly conditions to offer prayers on the first day of Chaitra Navratri.

Echoing chants of "Jai Mata Di" resonated through the Trikuta hills as pilgrims steadily trekked along the winding path leading to the holy cave shrine. Despite intermittent rainfall and a biting cold, the enthusiasm and devotion of the devotees remained undeterred, marking a spiritually charged beginning to the



nine-day festival dedicated to Goddess Durga.

Official figures indicate that approximately 15,000 devotees visited the shrine on the opening day, reflecting a strong turnout and reaffirming the shrine's enduring significance as one of the country's most prominent spiritual

destinations. Authorities expect the footfall to increase further in the coming days, with daily pilgrim numbers likely to range between 20,000 and 30,000 during the peak of the festivities.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also joined the devotees at the shrine, [More on P6](#)

## Major International Cyber Fraud Network Busted in Srinagar

Seven Arrested in High-Tech Crackdown

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Mar 19: In a significant breakthrough against organised cybercrime, the Counter Intelligence Wing of Jammu and Kashmir Police has dismantled a highly sophisticated international cyber fraud racket operating from Srinagar, arresting seven individuals and seizing a large cache of digital equipment used in the illegal operations.

Officials said the operation was launched following a series of credible technical inputs indicating the existence of covert call centres engaged in fraudulent online activities targeting both domestic and international victims. Acting on these inputs, the Counter Intelligence Wing of



the Jammu and Kashmir Police constituted specialised teams comprising cyber experts and field operatives to track down the network.

Through sustained surveillance, digital intelligence gathering, and multi-layered verification processes, investigators were able to identify a key operational hub located in the Industrial Area [More on P6](#)

## Testing Time For India, World Amid West Asia Crisis: MEA

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Mar 19: Amid escalating hostilities in West Asia with far-reaching global implications, India on Thursday described the evolving situation as a significant "testing time" not only for the country but for the entire international community, underscoring the complexity and gravity of the ongoing crisis.

Addressing an inter-ministerial briefing in the national capital, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal highlighted that the government has been actively engaging with multiple stakeholders across the region to safeguard



India's strategic and economic interests, particularly in the domain of energy security.

The conflict, which has now entered its third week, has intensified geopolitical tensions across the Gulf and surrounding regions. It began on February

28 following coordinated military strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran, triggering retaliatory actions from Tehran, including targeting locations in Gulf countries hosting American military bases. The unfolding developments have raised concerns over regional stability, global energy supplies, and the safety of expatriate populations.

Describing the situation as highly challenging, Jaiswal noted that India's leadership has maintained continuous diplomatic outreach with key regional and global counterparts. He referred to recent high-level engagements, [More on P6](#)

## Heavy Snowfall Cripples Road Connectivity Across J&K; Key Highways Shut, NH-44 Movement Sluggish

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Mar 19: Fresh snowfall across several high-altitude and mountainous regions of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday severely disrupted road connectivity, prompting authorities to shut down multiple key highways and strategic routes as a precautionary measure to ensure public safety.

Officials said that continuous snowfall along critical stretches, particularly in the upper reaches, led to hazardous road conditions marked by slippery surfaces, poor visibility, and heightened avalanche risk. Among the worst affected



routes is the Srinagar-Kargil highway, which has been closed for vehicular movement

following heavy snow accumulation along the Zojila axis. Areas such as Zoji La Pass,

Minimarg, Drass, and Gumri have witnessed persistent snowfall, significantly reducing visibility and making travel extremely risky. Authorities noted that the combination of fresh snow deposits and strong winds has further compounded the danger, particularly in avalanche-prone zones. The closure of this vital arterial road has effectively snapped surface connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and the Kargil region, impacting the movement of essential supplies and passengers.

Road maintenance and clearance agencies, including the Border Roads Organisation, are closely [More on P6](#)

## Govt Classifies Energy Data As National Security Matter; Mandates Disclosure Across Oil, Gas Chain

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Mar 19: The government has classified energy data as a matter of national security, mandating all entities across the oil and gas value chain to furnish detailed operational information.

The Oil Ministry's Petroleum and Natural Gas (Furnishing of Information) Order, 2026 requires refiners, LNG importers, pipeline operators, city gas distributors and petrochemical firms, across both public and private sectors, to regularly (even daily in some cases) report granular data to the ministry's Petroleum Planning and



Analysis Cell (PPAC).

The data to be disclosed includes production, imports,

stock levels and consumption patterns, with the order overriding existing confidentiality

provisions, according to a March 18 gazette notification issued by the ministry.

The move comes amid heightened energy security concerns after the war in the Middle East disrupted its gas and LPG supplies.

India imports about 88 per cent of its crude oil, 50 per cent of natural gas, and 60 per cent of LPG.

Before the war broke out, more than half of the crude oil that India imported came from countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the UAE through the Strait of Hormuz. As much as 85-95 per cent of LPG and 30 per cent of the gas came through [More on P6](#)

## LPG Bookings Near Normal, But Supply Concerns Persist Amid West Asia Crisis

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Mar 19: Domestic LPG bookings across India are gradually returning to near-normal levels, offering a measure of relief after days of panic-driven demand. However, the overall supply situation remains fragile and continues to raise concerns, particularly for commercial consumers, as disruptions linked to the ongoing West Asia conflict persist.

Senior officials in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas indicated that while household demand has stabilised, the broader supply chain remains under strain due to reduced imports and

logistical challenges arising from geopolitical tensions in the region.

Prior to the escalation of conflict on February 28—triggered by military strikes involving the United States and Israel against Iran—India's over 33 crore LPG consumers were booking an average of around 55 lakh cylinders daily. However, the situation changed dramatically following retaliatory actions by Tehran, which led to the effective disruption of shipping through the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz.

The closure of this vital energy corridor—through which major Gulf producers such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates export

crude oil, natural gas, and LPG—severely impacted India's access to nearly 60 per cent of its LPG imports. The disruption triggered widespread concern among consumers, leading to a surge in bookings that peaked at 87.7 lakh cylinders on March 13.

Since then, the situation has shown signs of stabilisation. Bookings have declined to approximately 56-57 lakh as of March 18, indicating that panic buying is gradually subsiding. Officials attribute this normalization to consistent government messaging, improved supply management, and increased domestic production.

According to Sujata Sharma, the decline in [More on P6](#)

## Dr. Farooq extends Navreh, Navratri greetings

Party rank and file also extend warm greetings to people on the auspicious eve

■ KDNEWSERVICE

Srinagar, 19 Mar: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah Thursday extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Navratri and Navreh.

In his message, Dr Farooq described the festival as a reflection of Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage and composite traditions. He said that Navreh symbolizes renewal, hope, and the enduring spirit of harmony that has long defined the cultural ethos of Kashmir. He expressed hope that the festi-



val would be celebrated in the true spirit of brotherhood, unity, and gaiety, and would further strengthen communal harmony among the people. He added that

such occasions serve as a reminder of the region's pluralistic identity and its tradition of peaceful coexistence. He also prayed for lasting peace,

progress, and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir and the country as a whole.

Meanwhile, several senior party leaders including Ali Muhammad Sagar, Shami Oberoi, Nasir Aslam Wani, Tanvir Sadiq, Choudhary Muhammad Ramzan, Mian Altaf Ahmad, Sakina Itoo, Shameema Firdous, Sajjad Kichloo, Imran Nabi Dar, Showkat Mir, Rattan Lal Gupta also extended their greetings to the people on the festive occasion.

They expressed hope that the celebrations would usher in an era of peace, prosperity, and well-being for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

## JMC launches citywide awareness drive, residents urged to clear water dues before March 31 deadline

■ KDNEWSERVICE

JAMMU, MARCH 19: With the deadline for payment of water bills approaching on March 31, the Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation Dr. Devansh Yadav issued comprehensive directives to ensure maximum public participation in clearing pending dues and to streamline the collection process across the city.

In line with these directions, the Jal Shakti Department particularly Divisions 1 and 2 functioning within the jurisdiction of JMC launched a widespread awareness and facilitation campaign. As part of this initiative, 12 dedicated camps have been established at various locations across Jammu to educate residents about the importance of timely payment of water charges

and to provide convenient on-the-spot payment facilities.

Under Division 1, camps have been set up at Roonagar, Dhonthli, Resham Ghar, Janipur and Hazuri Bagh. Similarly, under Division 2, camps are operational at Kunjwani, Trikuta Nagar, Sainik Colony, Digiana Ashram, Channi Himmat, Channi Rama and Greater Kailash. These camps witnessed active participation from residents, with officials providing guidance, addressing queries and facilitating immediate bill payments.

The initiative aims not only to improve revenue realization but also to promote a sense of civic responsibility among citizens regarding the maintenance and sustainability of essential water supply services. Officials highlighted that water dues amounting to nearly 30 crore are still

pending across Jammu city, which significantly impacts the department's ability to maintain and upgrade infrastructure.

Appealing to the public, the department urged all consumers to take advantage of these camps and clear their outstanding dues well before the deadline to avoid last-minute inconvenience. The camps have been strategically located to ensure easy accessibility for residents from all parts of the city.

Providing further details, Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Department (Division 1) Tajinder Pal Singh said that strict action may be initiated against defaulters after the due date. He cautioned that non-payment of water charges could lead to disconnection of water supply connections and urged residents to act promptly.

## DC Samba chairs Block Diwas at Purmandal, listens to public grievances

■ KDNEWSERVICE

SAMBA, MARCH 19: Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan chaired a Block Diwas programme at Mahajan Hall Panchayat Deon, Block Purmandal to address public grievances and review developmental issues of the area.

During the programme, a large number of residents projected their concerns and demands pertaining to road connectivity, water supply and other basic amenities. The Deputy Commissioner gave a patient hearing



to all the issues and assured the public of prompt and effective redres-

sal. Taking serious note of the grievances, the DC directed the concerned departments to take immediate necessary action and ensure that all works are completed within the stipulated time-frame. She emphasized that any delay in execution of developmental works would not be tolerated and accountability would be fixed. Stress was also laid on maintaining quality standards in all ongoing and upcoming projects. The Deputy Commissioner specifically instructed the executing agencies to ensure the use of quality materials

in the construction of roads and other infrastructure works so as to ensure durability and public satisfaction.

While interacting with the locals, the DC encouraged them to explore self-employment opportunities and actively contribute towards the economic growth and development of their area. She highlighted the importance of community participation in achieving sustainable development. Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ACR), Ajay Bharti along with other senior officers of various departments, were present on the occasion.

## Market checking drive conducted in Baderwah, Ramban ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr

■ KDNEWSERVICE

BHADERWAH, MARCH 19: In view of the upcoming festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, a market checking drive was conducted across the entire Baderwah town under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Baderwah Sunil Bhutyal. The drive was carried out in the presence of the Naib Tehsildar, Tehsil Supply Officer (TSO), a team of Veterinary Doctors and representatives from the Municipal Committee.

During the inspection, various shops and business establishments were checked to ensure the availability of essential commodities and to prevent overpricing and black marketing. Special attention was given to food items, sweets, meat and other daily-use products as the demand increases during the festive season. Shopkeepers were directed to display rate lists clearly and follow government-approved prices.

The Veterinary team inspected meat and poultry shops to ensure that only fresh and hygienic products are being sold. The Municipal team also checked cleanliness and sanitation in the market areas to maintain a healthy environment for the public. Instructions were issued to maintain proper hygiene, avoid plastic waste and keep surroundings clean.

The drive aimed to protect consumer interests and ensure a smooth and safe shopping experience for the people. The administration has appealed to all traders to cooperate and maintain fairness so that the festival is celebrated in a safe and positive manner. Strict action will be taken against those found violating the rules.

Meanwhile, in line with the directives of Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan, market checking drives were conducted by joint teams of various enforcement departments across the district to ensure adherence to quality standards and fair trade practices.

In view of the festivals, the drive is continuing across Ramban, a team led under the guidance of Tehsildar Ramban, Deep Kumar carried out intensive inspections of markets with special focus on edible and perishable items. The checking primarily covered fresh consumables including mutton, chicken, cheese and other essential food items.

During the inspection, the team verified the quality, hygiene, pricing and proper display of rate lists. Shopkeepers were directed to maintain cleanliness, ensure the sale of quality products and strictly adhere to the prescribed norms. Necessary instructions were also issued to avoid overcharging and hoarding of essential commodities.

## Two-Day National Seminar on "Role of Media in Promoting Indian Knowledge Tradition" Concludes



■ KDNEWSERVICE

Jammu, March 19, 2026: The two-day National Seminar on "Role of Media in Promoting Indian Knowledge Tradition" organized by the Department of Mass Communication and New Media, Central University of Jammu, under the guidance and patronage of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Sanjeev Jain, concluded today at the Swami Vivekananda Auditorium, Aryabhata Building.

The seminar witnessed the presentation of 80 research papers from across the country, reflecting significant academic engagement on the theme.

Presiding over the valedictory session, Dean, School of Social Sciences, Prof. Ashwini Kumar Nanda highlighted the vastness and richness of the Indian Knowledge Tradition, describing it as a repository of knowledge accumulated over thousands of years. He emphasized that the media plays a crucial role in disseminating this knowledge to all sections of society. He also noted that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has given renewed impetus to the promotion of Indian Knowledge Systems.

The Chief Guest, Dr. Dilip Kumar, Regional Director of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Jammu, remarked that Indian Knowledge Tradition teaches the value of being deeply engaged in knowledge. He stated that "one who is immersed in knowledge is truly Indian," adding that the media has transformed the world into a global village and plays a key role in preserving and promoting cultural values. He expressed pride in India's legacy as a knowledge leader and affirmed that India will continue to hold this position.

Delivering the valedictory address, Sh. Sanjeev Sharma, Programme Executive at All India Radio, Jammu, emphasized that media serves as a vital bridge in transferring knowledge traditions from one generation to another. He highlighted the role of radio in reaching remote areas and disseminating essential knowledge for societal development.

Presenting the seminar report, Co-Convenor Dr. Umesh Kumar informed that a total of 108 abstracts were received from various parts of the country, out of which 80 papers were selected for presentation. The seminar was conducted in nine sessions, including two offline and seven online sessions. The valedictory session was conducted by postgraduate students Mahi Charak and Swati Suman, while the formal vote of thanks was delivered by Seminar Convener Prof. Paramveer Singh. The guests were welcomed by faculty member Pushpalata.

The event was attended by Head of the Department Dr. Abhay S.D. Rajput, Prof. Bharat Bhushan (Head, Department of Hindi), Dr. Rashid Ali, Dr. Shashikant Mishra, Dr. Ratnesh Kumar Yadav, Dr. Vandana Sharma, Dr. Anita, research scholars from Central University of Kashmir, and students and scholars from the Departments of Hindi and Mass Communication of Central University of Jammu. On this occasion, a book titled "Vritti Chitra Nirman" authored by Prof. Paramveer Singh was formally released by the dignitaries. The book provides a comprehensive understanding of documentary filmmaking, including its conceptualization, production, and editing processes. Prof. Singh noted that the book would be highly beneficial for media students and professionals engaged in film production.

## DC Rajouri conducts surprise inspection; 35 domestic LPG cylinders seized for violations

■ KDNEWSERVICE

RAJOURI, MARCH 19: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today conducted a surprise inspection across various market areas in the town to check irregularities and ensure strict enforcement of essential commodities regulations.

During the inspection, the team visited a gas agency and reviewed its functioning. Continuing the drive, the Deputy Commissioner directed officials to seize two LPG cylinders from a pizza shop at Salani Market for unauthorized usage.

At Mandi Chowk, three LPG cylinders were seized from a hotel operating under the name "Welcome Hotel" for similar violations. Further, one LPG cylinder was seized from Raju Sweet Shop during the inspection. The Deputy Commissioner also conducted random market inspection, checking hygiene standards, rates and overall compliance with regulations. He strictly directed all commercial establishments not to use domestic LPG cylinders and warned that



violations will invite stringent action under the law.

Meanwhile, similar enforcement drives were conducted in different subdivisions of the district by Tehsildars under the supervision of respective ADCs. During these drives, 10 LPG cylinders were seized in Kotranka, 03 in Kalakote, 06 in Rajouri and 16 in other subdivisions. With this, the total number of LPG cylinders seized across the district has reached 35.

The district administration reiterated its commitment to enforcing regulations and urged all business establishments to adhere to prescribed norms, failing which strict action will be taken. The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by ADC Rajouri Chander Prakash, Assistant Director FCS&CA, Rohit Kumar; SHO Rajouri, Gaurav and other enforcement officials from concerned departments.

## Training on Phase-1 House-listing, Housing Census conducted in Reasi

■ KDNEWSERVICE

REASI, MARCH 19: A training programme for Phase-1 of the House-listing and Housing Census was organized in Reasi by Census

officials. The session aimed to thoroughly train Charge Officers, Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) and their Census Clerks on all aspects of the upcoming first phase of Census operations. The training covered critical

components of the House-listing and Housing Census, including preparation of the House-list, collection of data on housing conditions, household amenities, assets and infrastructure facilities.

## Sagar demands early Statehood restoration Says Omar govt Delivering on all sectors Despite Limits

■ KDNEWSERVICE

Srinagar, 19 Mar: The Jammu & Kashmir National Conference General Secretary Haji Ali Muhammad Sagar Thursday asserted that the party remains unwavering in its commitment to serve every section of society, even within the constraints of the existing limited administrative framework. In a statement released from the party headquarters Nawa-e-Subha, Sagar said that despite restricted powers, NC govt has consistently worked to address the concerns and aspirations of

the people across regions and communities. "Our commitment is not defined by the powers we hold, but by the trust people have reposed in us. We are duty-bound to deliver, even within these limitations," he said. However, he made it clear that the restoration of full statehood is crucial for unlocking the true potential of governance in Jammu and Kashmir. "An elected government with full statehood will have the necessary authority, flexibility, and institutional strength to accelerate development, ensure accountability, and deliver justice more effectively. The pace and

scale of progress will be significantly enhanced," Sagar emphasized. Referring to repeated assurances, Sagar reminded that both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister have publicly committed inside and outside Parliament to restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. "These assurances are on record and have raised expectations among the people. People did their bit by participating in Lok Sabha and Legislative assembly elections, it's for the Union govt now to deliver on their promises. It is time that these commitments are translated into reality without fur-

ther delay," he stated. He added that the restoration of statehood is not merely a political demand but a democratic necessity. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve a government that is fully empowered to respond to their needs. Half-measures cannot substitute full democratic rights," he said. Reiterating the party's resolve, Sagar said the party will continue to raise the voice of the people and push for the restoration of statehood while ensuring that governance, even within constraints, remains people-centric, inclusive, and responsive.

# DC Bandipora reviews Semi Ring Road works at Sumbal, Assesses subsidence in Hajin & Chandergir areas

Naninara Bridge alternate route to remain closed for one week

■ KDNEWS SERVICE

BANDIPORA, MARCH 19: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today conducted an extensive field visit to Wangipora Sumbal to inspect NHA works, Naninara Bridge, Hajin and Chandergir areas to review ongoing works, assess ground conditions, and examine issues related to infrastructure and land subsidence. During the visit to Wangipora Sumbal, the DC inspected the progress of works under the Semi Ring Road Phase II project being executed by NHA. She took stock of on-site developments and reviewed bottlenecks affecting execution. It was informed that a major issue concerning a graveyard along the alignment has restricted the road width to two lanes at a particular stretch. The DC directed the concerned agencies to resolve the issue in coordination with stakeholders while ensuring minimal disruption to the project timeline. She also stressed the need for accelerating work by deploying adequate manpower and machinery and maintaining close coordination among departments. At Naninara Bridge, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the ongoing works



and assessed the structural condition. Taking note of the prevailing weather conditions and the sensitive nature of the works, she said that the alternate

route will remain closed for all types of vehicular movement, including two-wheelers, for another one week. She appreciated the efforts of the R&B

Sub-Division Sumbal for their work, along with the support of SDM Sumbal and the District Administration. On the occasion, the DC acknowledged the inconvenience faced by the public and appealed for patience and cooperation, emphasizing that the quality and safety of the structure remain the top priority. The DC also visited Hajin and Chandergir, where she inspected areas affected by land subsidence. She directed the concerned departments to carry out detailed assessments and ensure coordinated, time-bound measures to mitigate risks and safeguard affected areas. She reiterated the need for a long-term and sustainable solution to address the issue. During her visit, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with local residents, listened to their concerns, and assured them of all possible support from the administration. She emphasized that public cooperation is essential for timely completion of works and effective resolution of ongoing issues. The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zaffar Hussain Shawl; Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sumbal, Executive Engineers, Tehsil Sumbal and other concerned officers.

## District Admin Bandipora organises Potential Entrepreneurship Mela under Mission YUVA

■ KDNEWS SERVICE

BANDIPORA, MARCH 19: District Administration Bandipora organized a one-day Potential Entrepreneurship Mela under Mission YUVA at GDC Sumbal. During the mela, various departments including Handicrafts and Handloom, Agriculture, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, NRLM, DE&CC, J&K Bank and RSETI set up stalls to showcase schemes and provide on-the-spot guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs. Help desks and advisory counters were established to facilitate interactions regarding credit facilities,

training programmes, and institutional support. Sanction letters were also distributed among applicants whose cases had been approved by the bank, marking a significant step towards facilitating entrepreneurship on the ground. Successful entrepreneurs and members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) also participated in the event and shared their experiences, motivating aspiring youth to explore entrepreneurship as a viable career option. The programme witnessed active participation from local youth, women entrepreneurs, officials, and other stakeholders.

## 7-Day Scientific Training for Beekeepers culminates at Agriculture Complex Lalmandi

■ KDNEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, MARCH 19: Directorate of Agriculture Kashmir today successfully concluded a comprehensive seven-day training program on Scientific Beekeeping for beekeepers from the Kashmir Division. The valedictory function was held at the Agriculture Complex, Lalmandi, Srinagar.

The training program, which commenced on March 13, 2026, was inaugurated by Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah. It was designed to promote beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood option and to equip participants, both existing and aspiring beekeepers, with modern, scientific techniques in apiculture.

The sessions covered critical topics including colony management, disease prevention and control, advanced honey extraction methods, value addition to hive products, and strategies to enhance pollination services for improved yields in horticultural and oilseed crops. The program formed part of the department's broader initiative to strengthen beekeeping practices across the Kashmir Valley, thereby boosting honey production, supporting rural employ-

ment, and contributing to agricultural sustainability through better pollination. During the valedictory ceremony, Joint Director Inputs, Sohan Singh distributed certificates of participation among the enthusiastic beekeepers who successfully completed the training. Participants shared their feedback, expressing gratitude to the Directorate of Agriculture



Kashmir for organizing such an informative and practical program. They highlighted how the sessions provided valuable insights into scientific methods that would help them improve hive productivity, manage colonies more effectively, and increase their income through enhanced beekeeping practices. The concluding event underscored the department's commitment to capacity building and empowering local beekeepers with knowledge aligned with contemporary apicultural advancements.

## J&K Police honors martyrs families on Eid-ul-Fitr in Shopian

■ KDNEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, March 19: On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, J&K Police in Shopian paid homage to the sacrifices of Police Martyrs by visiting their families and sharing in moments of joy and solidarity. Senior officers and police personnel visited the homes of the martyrs, distributing sweets and gifts and conveying their unwavering support to the bereaved families. In recognition of the supreme sacrifices made in the line of duty, J&K Police assured the families that the department remains steadfast in its support in every aspect of life. This heartfelt initiative, undertaken as a gesture of gratitude and respect, reaffirms the force's commitment to the values of service and sacrifice.

# GMC Srinagar sets benchmark with NABL Accreditation for Biochemistry Lab

■ KDNEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, MARCH 19: In a major development, the Biochemistry Diagnostic Laboratory, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar & Associated SMHS Hospital has secured accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) in accordance with the international standard ISO 15189:2022. NABL, a constituent board of the Quality Council of India, certifies laboratories for quality and technical competence, ensuring accurate and reliable diagnostic services. The accreditation, granted for a period of four years till 2030 covers an extensive scope of routine and advanced biochem-

ical and immunological investigations, including blood glucose, electrolytes, renal function tests, Liver Function Tests (LFT), Kidney Function Tests (KFT), glyated hemoglobin(HbA1c), lipid profile, thyroid function tests, enzyme assays, advanced hormone assays, tumor (cancer) markers, and other specialized parameters, all validated as per international standards. Prof. Iffat Hassan, Principal/Dean, Govt Medical College Srinagar appreciated the efforts of the faculty and laboratory staff of the department of Biochemistry and emphasized continued commitment to high-quality diagnostic services. Head, Department of Biochemistry, Prof. Sabiya Majid stated that this is the first large Government sector laboratory in the

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir to achieve NABL accreditation of this scale and it reflects the dedicated teamwork of faculty and technical staff, making the laboratory a path-breaker in delivering quality diagnostic services in the region. The Biochemistry Lab is a state-of-the-art fully automated facility equipped with advanced machinery, testing equipment, and robotic intervention, enabling it to conduct approximately 30 lakh tests annually with accuracy and efficiency. The lab's quality management system and technical competence were key factors in securing the accreditation. GMC Srinagar reaffirms its commitment to maintaining and expanding its NABL-accredited scope in line with global best practices.

## Six M.Sc. Biotechnology Students of Central university Jammu Qualify CSIR-UGC NET December 2025 Examination



■ KDNEWS SERVICE

Jammu, March 19, 2026: Six students from the M.Sc. Biotechnology programme, Central University of Jammu have brought laurels to the institution by successfully qualifying the highly competitive CSIR-UGC National Eligibility Test (NET) held in December 2025. The successful students include Ms. Ankita Sharma (JRF), Ms. Siya Sharma (NET), Ms. Ruchika Sharma (NET), Ms. Ritika Sharma (NET), Ms. Prachi Sharma (NET) from the 2023-2025 session, and Ms. Sanskriti (JRF) from the 2024-2026 session. All are students of the Department of Biotechnology and Bioengineering, also known as the Centre for Molecular Biology. The CSIR-UGC NET is a prestigious national-level examination that determines eligibility for Assistant Professor and awards the Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), enabling candidates to pursue advanced research and Ph.D. programmes in premier institutions across India. The outstanding performance of these

students reflects their academic excellence, consistent dedication, and strong conceptual understanding in the life sciences. Their achievement also highlights the supportive academic environment and rigorous training provided by the Department of Biotechnology and Bioengineering, which has consistently promoted analytical thinking and research-oriented learning. Congratulating the students, Director of the Centre for Molecular Biology, Dr. Narendra K. Bairwa, Dean of the School of Life Sciences, Prof. Sunil Dhar, and faculty members praised their hard work and perseverance. They expressed confidence that this accomplishment will open new avenues in research and academia for the students and inspire others to achieve similar milestones. Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, also lauded the achievement and attributed the success to the students' dedication, discipline, and effective mentorship by the faculty. He extended his best wishes to all NET and JRF qualifiers for their future academic and research endeavors.

## NIELIT organises Mega Job Fair at Jammu under Digital J&K Project of MeITY

■ KDNEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, MARCH 19: The National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) Jammu on Wednesday organised a Mega Job Fair at Convention Centre, Canal Road here under the Digital J&K Project sponsored by Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY). During the fair, more than 500 vacancies across technical and marketing roles were offered for youth through the participation of over 20 reputed companies from IT services, electronics manufacturing, and allied industries. Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director & Officer In-charge, NIELIT Jammu, Rajneesh Raina highlighted the importance of the fair in bridging the gap between industry requirements and skilled youth, while express-



ing gratitude to his dedicated team, trainers, and the hospitality and protocols department for their ground and background support in making the event a success. Joint Director and Event Coordinator, Sarita Kaur in her address underlined the trust and enthusiasm shown by companies and candidates in the fair. Placement Officer, Kanchan Koul noted that the initiative ensured transparent and merit-based recruitment, while as CGC Coordinator, Gopal Sharan observed that

the Career Guidance & Counselling tie-up with NIELIT will strengthen industry-academia collaboration, ensuring structured guidance and placement support for students. The event drew a large turnout of graduates, diploma holders, and skilled youth from across the Union Territory, reinforcing NIELIT Jammu's role in strengthening the skill ecosystem and aligning with the Government of India's vision of digital empowerment and inclusive growth.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE			
Open Tender Notice No. - OP-03-GSU-FZR-2025-26		Date: 17.03.2026	
Dy. CE/GSU/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India Invites Open Tender (E-Tenders) against below titled tender and available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> with closing date 09.04.2026 up to 11:30 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and Time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Tenderers are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through payment modes available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand Draft, Banker Cheque, Deposit Receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information log on to <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>			
Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System	
Open Tender	Gati Shakti Unit	Two Packet System	
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time	
17.03.2026	26.03.2026	09.04.2026/ 11:30 Hrs.	
SN	Tender Number	Details of Tender	
1	OP-03-GSU-FZR-2025-26 Date: 09/04/2026	Development of a second entry and renovation of platforms 1 and 2 and other miscellaneous work at KKP railway station under ABSS left over works.	
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Validity of Offer
	13,38,12,205.29	26,76,200.00	90 Days
			Period of Completion
			7 Months
Note: 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender.			
			919/26
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of the General Public that my Name & DOB in my Driving License Bearing Registration No. JK0320110013843 has been wrongly entered as Zahar Ahmad Wani S/O Mohd Khalil Wani R/O Wani Mohalla Sallar Anantnag & DOB is 02-03-1986 while my correct Name & DOB as per Aadhar Card is Zahoor Ahmad Wani S/O Mohammad Khalil Wani R/O Wani Mohalla Bunpora Sallar Srigufwara Anantnag. Now I want the same to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard He/She may file his /her objection in the Office of the ARTO Anantnag, within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. Zahoor Ahmad Wani S/O Mohammad Khalil Wani R/O Wani Mohalla Bunpora Sallar Srigufwara Anantnag JNA7780878931

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of the General Public that my Name in my Aadhar Card has been wrongly entered as Rafiq Banoo while my correct Name as per School record is Rifat Ara. Now I want the same to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard He/She may file his /her objection in the Office of the General Manager Ranbir Government Press Jammu, within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. Rifat Ara C/O Altaf Ahmad Wani R/O Jummoh Aishmuqam Pahalgam Seerkanilgund Anantnag JNA7780878931

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for the information of the General Public that my Name in my Aadhar Card has been wrongly entered as Samreena Jan while my correct Name as per School record is Samreena Banoo. Now I want the same to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard He/She may file his /her objection in the Office of the General Manager Ranbir Government Press Jammu, within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. Samreena Banoo D/O Mohmad Ibrahim Lone R/O Wajoor Aishmuqam Pahalgam Seerkanilgund Anantnag JNA7780878931

## EDITORIAL

Eid Beyond Celebration  
Remembering the Forgotten Souls

As the crescent moon heralds the arrival of Eid-ul-Fitr, homes across Kashmir will glow with warmth, gratitude, and festivity. After a month of fasting, reflection, and spiritual renewal, Eid is not merely a celebration—it is a profound reminder of compassion, charity, and collective responsibility. Yet, amid the aroma of festive delicacies and the joy of new clothes, there remains a silent segment of our society that risks being overlooked: the orphans, widows, and the destitute.

Eid, in its true essence, is incomplete without extending a helping hand to those who bear the weight of loss, poverty, and neglect. In a region like Kashmir, which has endured decades of turmoil and hardship, the number of vulnerable individuals—especially orphaned children and widowed women—is deeply significant. These are not just statistics; they are lives shaped by grief, resilience, and an unspoken longing for inclusion and care.

Orphanages across the Valley house children who deserve more than just shelter and food—they deserve affection, dignity, and a sense of belonging. For them, Eid can either deepen the void of familial absence or become a moment of shared joy if society chooses to embrace them. A simple visit, a shared meal, or even a small gift can transform their experience of this sacred festival.

Similarly, widows—many of whom shoulder the dual burden of emotional loss and financial struggle—often find themselves marginalized. Social isolation and economic hardship make festive occasions particularly challenging. Eid should be a time when communities rally around them, ensuring they are not left to celebrate in silence or sorrow.

The destitute, too, form an integral yet often invisible part of our society. *هؤلاء الناس، الذين يعيشون على هامش الحياة، بحاجة إلى أكثر من مجرد صدقات موسمية.* They require sustained empathy, inclusion, and opportunities to live with dignity. Eid offers a powerful occasion to bridge this gap, to look beyond our immediate circles, and to reaffirm our shared humanity.

Islam places immense emphasis on Zakat and Sadaqah, especially during Eid-ul-Fitr. These are not mere rituals but instruments of social justice designed to reduce inequality and foster compassion. However, the true spirit of giving lies not just in fulfilling an obligation but in doing so with sincerity and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate.

Community leaders, local organizations, and individuals must come together to ensure that no orphanage goes unnoticed, no widow feels abandoned, and no destitute person is left behind. Organized outreach programs, community feasts, and targeted assistance can make a tangible difference. Even small, collective efforts can create ripples of hope and happiness.

Let this Eid be a turning point—a moment where we move beyond symbolic gestures and commit to sustained support for the vulnerable. Let us teach our children that the joy of Eid multiplies when shared, and that true celebration lies in uplifting others.

As we gather with our families, let us remember those who have none. As we enjoy abundance, let us think of those who struggle for basic necessities. And as we offer prayers of gratitude, let us also pray for the strength to act with compassion.

For in the end, Eid is not just about celebration—it is about conscience.

Eid — A Spiritual and  
Social Reflection

■ Khurshheed Ahmad Khurshheed

Eid is one of the most significant festivals celebrated by Muslims around the world. It is commonly associated with new clothes, delicious food, family gatherings, and moments of joy. While these outward expressions of happiness are beautiful and meaningful, the true essence of Eid goes far beyond material celebrations. True Eid is deeply connected with the purity of the heart, sincerity of intentions, and the strength of one's character.

Eid comes after the holy month of Ramadan, a time dedicated to fasting, prayer, self-discipline, and spiritual growth. For an entire month, Muslims strive to control their desires, increase their (acts of worship), and develop a closer connection with Allah. When Eid arrives, it is not just a celebration of the end of fasting, but a reflection of what one has gained during Ramadan. The real question is: have we truly changed? Have we become more patient, kind, and mindful of others? If the answer is yes, then that is the true success—and the real Eid.

True Eid is when the heart becomes pure from negativity and sin. It is when a person feels closer to their Creator and develops humility and gratitude. If someone observes all the rituals of Ramadan but fails to bring any positive change in their behavior, then Eid becomes merely a tradition. On the other hand, if a person becomes more compassionate,



forgiving, and caring, then their Eid is meaningful and real.

Another important aspect of true Eid is sharing happiness with others. Eid is not complete if it is celebrated in isolation or only within one's own comfort. Islam teaches us to care for the less fortunate and ensure that everyone experiences joy. This is why charity, such as Zakat al-Fitr, is an essential part of Eid. It allows those in need to participate in the celebration, reminding us that our happiness should include others. True Eid is when a smile is brought to someone else's face.

Forgiveness is also a central theme of true Eid. Holding grudges, anger, or hatred in the heart takes away the beauty of the occasion. Eid is the perfect time to let go of past conflicts, mend broken relationships, and forgive others sincerely. When we forgive, we not only strengthen our relationships but also bring peace to our

own hearts. This inner peace is one of the greatest blessings of Eid.

Family plays a vital role in making Eid truly special. In today's busy world, people often get caught up in their routines and responsibilities. Eid offers a valuable opportunity to reconnect with loved ones. The warmth of a mother's prayer, the guidance of a father, the laughter of children, and the love shared among siblings create moments that no material possession can replace. True Eid is found in these simple yet meaningful connections.

Moreover, true Eid is reflected in our character. It is not limited to one or two days of celebration but should influence how we live every day. Honesty, kindness, respect, and compassion should become part of our personality. If we carry forward the lessons of Ramadan into our daily lives, then every day can feel like Eid. The festival, in this sense, becomes a continuous state of gratitude and goodness.

In addition, Eid is a time for self-reflection. It encourages us to look within and evaluate our actions, intentions, and relationships. It is a moment to ask ourselves whether we have fulfilled our responsibilities towards Allah and towards other people. This reflection helps us grow as individuals and strengthens our moral and spiritual foundation.

Therefore, true Eid is not defined by external celebrations alone. It is a state of the heart and soul. It is about being grateful, forgiving, generous, and connected to Allah and to people around us. When our hearts are at peace, our intentions are pure, and our actions reflect kindness, that is when we truly experience Eid.

True Eid is when hearts are united, souls are purified, and happiness is shared with everyone.

Khurshheednabi47@gmail.com  
Wagoora Baramulla

International Day of Forests:  
Happiness with Responsibility

■ A. R. Matahanji

Every year on 21 March, the world observes the International Day of Forests, a day proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 to celebrate and raise awareness about the importance of all types of forests. It is a day that reminds humanity of a simple yet profound truth, forests are not merely clusters of trees; they are the lifeline of our planet.

They are the silent providers. They feed us, shelter us, heal us, and sustain us. This truth was beautifully captured centuries ago by the revered saint Sheikh ul Alam (RA), who said:

"Ann posh teli yeli wann posh." (Food will last as long as forests last.)

This year's theme, "Forests and Food," draws attention to a reality often overlooked, forests are deeply intertwined with food security, nutrition, and livelihoods. From fruits, nuts, and medicinal plants to the ecosystems that support agriculture through pollination, soil fertility, and climate regulation, forests are the invisible foundation of human survival.

Yet, despite their unmatched value, forests continue to fall. They fall to unchecked urbanization. They fall to greed disguised as development. They fall to our indifference. And with every tree that disappears, a part of humanity's future is erased.

Forests are not just green landscapes, they are the silent kitchens of the Earth. They provide food directly through fruits, herbs, mushrooms, and wild crops, and indirectly by maintaining ecological balance essential for agriculture. They regulate



rainfall, prevent soil erosion, and protect water sources that nourish fields and farms.

In regions like Kashmir, forests are deeply woven into the cultural and environmental fabric of life. The towering deodars, the whispering chinars, and the dense alpine woods are not merely scenic treasures, they are guardians of biodiversity and protectors of fragile ecosystems. But today, these guardians are under threat.

Deforestation, pollution, and climate change are weakening the very systems that sustain life. And perhaps the greatest tragedy is that much of this destruction is preventable.

This year, the significance of 21 March becomes even more profound as it coincides with the joyous occasion of Eid al-Fitr. Eid is a festival of gratitude, compassion,

and sharing, a time when families come together, markets come alive, and communities celebrate unity.

However, amid this celebration, an uncomfortable reality demands attention. The consumption of polythene and plastic is expected to rise dramatically. Shopping bags multiply. Bakery packaging increases. Meat distribution relies heavily on plastic wrapping. Clothing and gift packaging add to the burden.

On a normal day, plastic waste already challenges our environment. On festive occasions like Eid, its usage often triples or even exceeds that, leaving behind a trail of pollution that nature silently absorbs. But nature does not complain. It suffers.

One of the most vulnerable victims of this surge in waste is the majestic Wular Lake,

one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes and a lifeline for countless communities. Every discarded polythene bag, every piece of plastic waste that finds its way into drains and waterways eventually travels towards lakes and rivers. It clogs natural water systems. It suffocates aquatic life. It pollutes drinking water sources. It disrupts ecosystems that have taken centuries to evolve. Wular Lake, already battling environmental degradation, cannot bear this additional burden. And yet, the responsibility does not lie with nature. It lies with us.

Eid teaches values of compassion, gratitude, and responsibility. What greater expression of these values can there be than protecting the Earth that sustains us? Celebration does not have to come at the cost of destruction. Small changes can create a profound impact: Choosing cloth, alternate or reusable bags instead of polythene, reducing unnecessary packaging, properly disposing of waste, encouraging eco-friendly practices within communities, spreading awareness among family and friends. When individuals act responsibly, communities transform. And when communities transform, the environment heals.

There is another quiet sacrifice we often overlook, the paper we use so casually. Paper is born from trees; it is estimated that a single mature tree can produce roughly 8,000-10,000 sheets of paper, and about 17 trees are cut to produce one ton of paper. Every unnecessary print, every wasted page is, in essence, a fragment of a forest lost. In a world already struggling to protect its green cover, mindful use of paper becomes an act of environmental responsibility. Let us write, print, and use only what is truly needed—because saving paper is, in truth, saving trees, and saving trees is saving life itself.

A moral responsibility towards Nature means a lifeline towards survival. Forests do not ask for recognition. Lakes do not demand gratitude. The Earth does not seek

applause. Yet, they give endlessly. They give oxygen without expecting return. They give water without conditions. They give life without discrimination. But today, they are asking for something simple - protection.

The International Day of Forests is not just a celebration; it is a reminder of our moral responsibility. It calls upon us to rethink our actions, especially during moments of abundance and celebration. Because true celebration is not measured by how much we consume, but by how responsibly we live.

As an ancient Chinese proverb wisely reminds us:

"If you plan for a day, prepare food.  
If you plan for a year, grow crops.  
But if you plan for a lifetime, plant a tree."

These timeless words echo the very essence of this day, that true vision lies not in immediate gain, but in nurturing what sustains generations.

On this sacred confluence of Eid ul Fitr after a soulful Ramadhan and International Day of Forests, I humbly appeal to every individual: Let our celebrations reflect our values. Let our joy not become a burden on the Earth. Let us protect our forests, preserve our water bodies, and reduce our dependence on plastics and polythene. The beauty of Kashmir is not just our pride, it is our responsibility. And the future of Wular Lake lies in the choices we make today.

Let this Eid be not only a celebration of happiness but also a commitment to responsibility. Avoid excessive use of polythene, protect our forests, and safeguard our precious water bodies like Wular Lake. Small conscious actions today can save our environment for generations tomorrow.

"When we protect forests, we protect life itself, for when the Earth breathes, humanity lives."

The Author, hailing from Bandipora, is a writer and can be reached at [saltafirasool@yahoo.com](mailto:saltafirasool@yahoo.com).

# 7 Kinds of Food That Can Help With Obstructive Sleep Apnea

■ Lindsay Curtis

There are many factors that can worsen symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), including weight gain.<sup>1</sup> Eating a healthy diet can help people with OSA manage their weight, but certain kinds of food—including nuts, fatty fish, and more—also contain nutrients that may be able to improve sleep quality and ease OSA symptoms.<sup>234</sup>

**1. Leafy Green Vegetables**  
When someone has OSA, their airway becomes repeatedly blocked while they're sleeping.<sup>5</sup> This causes low oxygen levels and oxidative stress, a state where the body has too many cell-damaging compounds. Together, this can lead to inflammation, which further worsens OSA.<sup>6</sup> Leafy green vegetables are rich in antioxidants and compounds that may be able to help reduce inflammation and swelling in airway tissues.<sup>7</sup> This reduction in inflammation from plant-rich diets could support lead to better sleep for people with OSA.<sup>8</sup> Leafy greens also provide magnesium, a mineral that helps relax muscles and supports better sleep quality.<sup>910</sup> They are also low in calories and high in fiber, a nutrient which supports healthy digestion and weight management, which could improve OSA symptoms.<sup>21112</sup>

Nutrient-rich leafy greens include:<sup>13</sup>

- Spinach
- Kale
- Swiss chard
- Collard greens

**2. Fatty Fish**

Fatty fish are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help reduce inflammation in the body, including the airways.<sup>1415</sup> Studies show that omega-3s can also reduce nighttime wakings and improve overall sleep quality.<sup>16</sup> Beyond just improving sleep quality, consuming enough omega-3s is also crucial for OSA patients' heart health. OSA can put extra stress on the heart and raise the risk of heart disease, but omega-3 has been linked to better heart health outcomes.<sup>1718</sup> Aim to eat fatty fish twice per week, which can include:<sup>19</sup>

- Salmon
- Sardines
- Herring
- Mackerel
- Tuna

**3. Whole Grains**

Whole grains may help people with OSA manage their weight, which can help lessen OSA severity.<sup>2</sup> That's because whole grains are high in fiber, which keeps you full for supports healthy digestion and keeps you feeling full for longer.<sup>20</sup> In addition, whole grains help keep your blood sugar steady, which may support better sleep and limit inflammation, both of which can be helpful for people with OSA.<sup>21222324</sup>



Fiber-rich whole grains include:<sup>25</sup>

- Oats
- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Whole wheat bread and pasta

**4. Nuts**

Almonds, pistachios, walnuts, and other nuts are a good choice for people with OSA because they can help reduce inflammation, support heart health, manage weight, and improve sleep quality.<sup>2627</sup> These benefits can be attributed to nutrients such as:  
**Magnesium:** This mineral helps relax muscles, which helps promote better sleep.<sup>289</sup>  
**Protein and fiber:** Both help you feel full, which can make it easier to maintain a healthy body weight.<sup>293026</sup>  
**Vitamin E:** With antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, vitamin E may be helpful for people with OSA since they often have elevated levels of inflammation and oxidant compounds.<sup>631</sup>  
**Melatonin:** Melatonin helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle, which may help people get more restful, consistent sleep.<sup>3233</sup>

**5. Berries**

Nighttime pauses in breathing caused by OSA can reduce oxygen levels. Over time, this leads to a state of oxidative stress, where there are too many cell-damaging compounds in the body.<sup>34</sup> Oxidative stress can raise the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cognitive issues.<sup>3536</sup>  
However, berries are packed with antioxidants that help reduce this inflammation and fight the compounds (free radicals) that cause oxidative stress. Berries are also high in fiber, which helps you feel full longer and supports healthy weight management.<sup>3730</sup> This is a crucial part of easing OSA symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

Antioxidant and fiber-rich berries include:<sup>38</sup>

- Blueberries
- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Blackberries

**6. Lean Proteins**

Lean proteins contain tryptophan, an amino acid your body uses to make hormones like melatonin, which helps control the sleep-wake cycle.<sup>39</sup> A more regular sleep-wake cycle could improve sleep quality in people with OSA.<sup>40</sup> Plus, research suggests that eating more foods with tryptophan can both improve sleep quality and protect against metabolic health issues such as high blood pressure, increased triglyceride (fats in the blood), and other risk factors for poor heart health.<sup>41</sup> These metabolic health concerns are very common in OSA.<sup>42</sup> Lean, tryptophan-rich protein choices include:<sup>4339</sup>

- Turkey
- Eggs
- Chicken
- Tofu and other soy-based proteins
- Seafood, such as crab and tuna

**7. Low-Fat Dairy**

In a 2018 study, researchers found that participants who had overweight and OSA had less severe symptoms if they reported eating two servings of low-fat dairy every day.<sup>4</sup> Other research suggests that people who eat more dairy have healthier sleep patterns than those who consume small amounts of dairy.<sup>44</sup> This could be due to dairy's anti-inflammatory effects, but more research is needed.<sup>4</sup> To add more low- or no-fat dairy to your diet, look for:<sup>45</sup>

- Skim milk
- Skim yogurt

Cottage cheese

Light cream cheese

**Foods To Avoid With OSA**

While there are many foods that are good choices for people with OSA, others may worsen symptoms. Limiting your intake of the following foods may improve sleep quality:

**Refined carbohydrates:** Foods such as white bread, pastries, sugary cereals, cookies, cakes, and sweetened beverages can cause rapid blood sugar spikes.<sup>46</sup> Late evening blood sugar increases can disrupt your sleep. Plus, over time, regularly eating these foods may contribute to weight gain and increased inflammation, which can worsen OSA symptoms.<sup>4748</sup>

- Alcohol:** Alcohol is thought to worsen sleep apnea, since it relaxes the muscles in the throat, making airway collapse more likely during sleep.<sup>49</sup>

- High-fat meat and dairy:** Multiple studies show that diets high in saturated fats—which include full-fat milk, cream, butter, beef, pork, fried foods, and more—are linked to a greater risk of OSA and more severe OSA symptoms.<sup>47504</sup>

- Bananas:** Bananas may increase mucus production, and some research indicates that phlegm can worsen OSA symptoms.<sup>5152</sup>

- Caffeine late in the day:** Having coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, chocolate, or other sources of caffeine in the afternoon or evening can make it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to what you eat, be mindful of when you're eating if you have OSA—consuming large or heavy meals close to bedtime can increase the risk of acid reflux, which may irritate the airway and disrupt sleep.<sup>54</sup>

Courtesy: Health. Com

## Menopause and Piles: Why hormonal changes increase risk of hemorrhoids and how to prevent them

■ Dr. Pankaj Sharma

Women go through different stages in life, and menopause is one of them. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 50. During this phase, the body goes through many hormonal changes that affect not just periods but overall health, including digestion and metabolism. Because of these changes, many women may develop haemorrhoids (piles). Often, this is ignored as a normal sign of ageing, but it can become painful and serious if not treated.

During menopause, the level of estrogen starts to drop. This hormone plays an important role in keeping the body's systems, including digestion, working smoothly. When estrogen decreases, digestion slows down, which can lead to constipation and this can eventually cause piles.

**Why do piles occur during menopause?**

Piles during menopause can happen due to several reasons such as reduced physical activity, weight gain, low water intake, and a lack of fibre in the diet. At this stage, metabolism slows down, which affects digestion and often leads to constipation. If constipation continues for a long time, it can result in piles. Many women also experience stress, poor sleep, and mood swings during menopause, which can further disturb digestion and bowel movements.

In addition, muscle strength in the body, including the pelvic floor muscles, gradually weakens after menopause. This makes passing stools more difficult, and repeated straining can worsen piles.

**How does constipation lead to piles?**

When a person is constipated, they need to strain during bowel movements. This puts extra pressure on the veins around the anus. Over time, these veins swell and turn into haemorrhoids. Women may feel pain, burning, or even notice bleeding during bowel movements, but these signs are often ignored as part of ageing.

**How to prevent piles?**

Piles are common, but they should not be ignored. If managed early, they can be controlled and the need for surgery can be avoided.

**To prevent piles:**

- Eat a diet rich in fibre (like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains)
- Drink enough water throughout the day
- Stay physically active with regular exercise or yoga
- Use over-the-counter creams, ointments, or suppositories to reduce itching and discomfort.
- Avoid long periods of sitting on the toilet and stay active to reduce pressure.
- Taking these simple steps can help maintain good digestion and reduce the risk of piles during menopause.

Courtesy: Health Site

# Mumbai Foot & Ankle Conference 2026 Concludes Successfully with Dual Conferences, Global Faculty and Advanced Training

■ KD NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, March XX, 2026: Moonot Healthcare Foundation successfully concluded two parallel academic programs, today. The conferences emerged as a premier platform for advancing knowledge and skills in foot and ankle care, bringing together leading orthopedic surgeons, physiotherapists, and healthcare professionals from across India and abroad.

This year's edition was unique as it hosted two parallel conferences—the 2nd edition of Mumbai Foot & Ankle Conference 2026 dedicated to orthopaedic surgeons and the 1st ever Mumbai Foot & Ankle Rehabilitation Conference 2026 designed specifically for physiotherapists. The Mumbai Foot & Ankle Rehabilitation Conference 2026 created history by hosting the first-ever cadaveric foot and ankle workshop of its kind, marking a landmark moment in the evolution of physiotherapy education and interdisciplinary learning.

Adding to the academic significance, Dr. Pradeep Moonot, Organising President of the conference curated a coffee table book 'The Arch' comprising research paper compilations by established surgeons, which was formally released by Mr. Navneet Moonot, MD & CEO, HDFC AMC, who also addressed the gathering and appreciated the initiative.

The event witnessed participation from over 250 delegates and 50 distinguished speakers, including nationally and internationally renowned experts, opinion leaders, and prominent physiotherapists associated with the Indian Cricket Team and other elite sports institutions.



This highly specialized workshop offered hands-on training in both basic and advanced techniques in Minimally Invasive Surgery and Advanced Trauma Management in foot and ankle conditions. Conducted in association with MGM Medical College, the Indian Foot and Ankle Society, and the Bombay Orthopedic Society, the workshop delivered an immersive, first-of-its-kind learning experience that effectively bridged the gap between surgical intervention and rehabilitation practices.

Dr. Pradeep Moonot, Organising President of the conference, said, "The vision behind hosting dual conferences was to create a truly integrated learning platform for both surgeons and physiotherapists, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach to foot and ankle care. The overwhelming response from delegates and the participation of globally respected faculty members reaffirm the growing importance of sub-specialization in this field. The cadaveric workshop, in particular, was a landmark ini-

tiative, especially for physiotherapists, as it provided them with a rare opportunity to understand surgical anatomy and techniques first-hand. Additionally, the release of the coffee table book reflects our commitment to academic excellence and knowledge dissemination within the medical community." Other major highlights of the conferences included an extensive scientific program, comprising expert-led lectures, panel discussions, and case-based deliberations. Eminent nation-

al and international faculty shared insights on the latest advancements in foot and ankle surgery, innovative treatment modalities, sports injury management, deformity correction, and rehabilitation protocols. The presence of globally recognized experts ensured a rich exchange of ideas, enabling participants to stay abreast of cutting-edge developments and best practices in the field.

Dr. Shilpa Moonot, Organising Secretary of the conference, added, "This conference has successfully created a dynamic environment for learning, collaboration, and innovation. The inclusion of the Rehabilitation Conference alongside the surgical conference highlights the critical role physiotherapists play in ensuring optimal patient outcomes. We witnessed insightful discussions, evidence-based learning, and meaningful interactions among experts from diverse backgrounds. The participation of physiotherapists associated with elite sports teams further enriched the sessions with real-world perspectives. Such initiatives are essential to building a cohesive ecosystem that prioritizes patient-centric care and continuous professional development."

With strong academic content, hands-on training, and participation from leading experts across disciplines, the Mumbai Foot & Ankle Conference 2026 has firmly established itself as a significant milestone in the field of foot and ankle medicine. The successful conclusion of both conferences highlights the entire organising team, sponsors, faculty's commitment to fostering innovation, collaboration, and excellence in patient care, setting a new benchmark for future editions.

# Eid Shopping Spurs ₹8,300 Cr Transaction Surge in J&K; Digital Payments Dominate

## UPI leads festive spending boom with over 4 crore transactions; nearly 6 crore deals recorded in just four days

### ■ KD NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Mar 19: The festive run-up to Eid-ul-Fitr triggered a massive surge in banking activity across Jammu and Kashmir, with digital transactions witnessing unprecedented growth as consumers increasingly embraced cashless payment modes for their purchases.

According to official data released by Jammu and Kashmir Bank, non-branch banking transactions across the Union

Territory between March 16 and March 19 amounted to an impressive 8,393.88 crore, spanning a total of nearly 5.94 crore transactions. The figures reflect heightened economic activity during one of the busiest shopping periods of the year.

The data underscores a clear and accelerating shift towards digital payment platforms, with Unified Payments Interface (UPI) emerging as the most preferred mode among consumers. During the four-day period, UPI transactions alone

accounted for over 4 crore transactions, with a cumulative value of approximately 3,125 crore, highlighting its dominance in everyday retail payments.

Mobile-based banking services also recorded substantial traction. The bank's mPay platform facilitated more than 1.70 crore transactions, amounting to 2,991.70 crore, indicating strong adoption of app-based banking solutions across both urban and semi-urban areas. Officials anticipate that transaction volumes may

rise even further as Eid approaches, driven by last-minute shopping and increased consumer spending.

Despite the overwhelming shift towards digital platforms, traditional cash transactions continued to play a complementary role. ATM withdrawals during the same period stood at over 15.5 lakh transactions, with a total value of 658.57 crore, suggesting that cash remains relevant, particularly for smaller purchases and in areas with

limited digital infrastructure. High-value transactions conducted through e-banking channels also contributed significantly, with 1,466 crore recorded across over 83,000 transactions. Meanwhile, kiosk banking services—crucial for extending financial access in remote and underserved areas—facilitated more than 65,000 transactions worth 152.61 crore.

The surge in transactions reflects not only festive consumption but also the steady

digital transformation of the region's financial ecosystem. Over the past few years, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a marked increase in digital banking adoption, driven by improved connectivity, growing smartphone penetration, and sustained efforts to promote financial inclusion.

While several banking institutions operate in the region, Jammu and Kashmir Bank continues to hold a dominant position, with an extensive network

and strong customer base across both rural and urban areas. Its performance during the Eid period highlights its central role in facilitating economic activity and adapting to evolving consumer preferences.

As the holy month of Ramadan draws to a close, officials expect transaction volumes to peak further, reinforcing the trend of digital-first financial behaviour and underlining the region's transition towards a more technology-driven economy.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Youth Must Anchor

country's most developed regions.

On the auspicious occasion, the Lieutenant Governor invoked the blessings of Maa Sharika, praying for the health, prosperity, and well-being of all citizens. Interacting warmly with devotees, he extended his greetings for the New Year, expressing hope that it would usher in renewed optimism, opportunities, and collective progress.

Reflecting on the spiritual significance of the festival, he described the worship of Maa Durga and Maa Sharika as a profound acknowledgment of the primordial source of energy that sustains the universe. Drawing from ancient scriptures, including the Rigveda, he highlighted the concept of the infinite strength of the divine mother, stating that sincere devotion enables seekers to attain deeper insights into life and existence.

The Lieutenant Governor further elaborated on the spiritual essence of Navreh and Navratri, describing them as symbolic of an inner journey marked by discipline, reflection, and transformation. He observed that the nine days of fasting and prayer associated with Navratri serve as a path for self-purification, enabling individuals to achieve a higher level of consciousness and personal growth.

He also spoke about the four stages of devotion outlined in traditional practices—listening attentively to prayers, reflecting deeply upon them, internalizing their essence, and ultimately reaching a state of 'samadhi,' where the distinction between the devotee and the divine dissolves. He expressed hope that devotees would strive to experience these stages in their spiritual journeys.

During the Navreh, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated Padma Shri awardee Brij Lal Bhat in recognition of his contributions. The event witnessed the participation of prominent members of the Kashmiri Pandit community, including office bearers of the Sabha, senior officials, and distinguished citizens from various walks of life, reflecting the cultural and spiritual significance of the occasion.

### India Must Achieve

a pressing need to build an ecosystem where India is not only manufacturing drones but is also self-sufficient in every critical component that goes into their making," he said.

Highlighting the importance of strategic independence, the Defence Minister asserted that indigenous capabilities would significantly enhance India's defence preparedness while reducing vulnerabilities associated with foreign dependence. He emphasized that in an era marked by geopolitical uncertainties, the ability to design and produce advanced defence technologies domestically is a key determinant of national strength.

The conclave brought together senior officials, policymakers, and top executives from leading domestic defence manufacturing firms, along with representatives from defence public sector undertakings. The platform served as an opportunity for stakeholders to deliberate on strengthening India's defence industrial base and accelerating innovation in cutting-edge technologies.

Touching upon broader technological trends, the Defence Minister pointed to the growing influence of artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, and simulation technologies in transforming manufacturing processes worldwide. He observed that these advancements are not only enhancing efficiency and precision but are also redefining the nature of industrial production and defence capabilities.

"In today's rapidly changing technological landscape, innovations such as artificial intelligence and robotics are revolutionizing manufacturing systems globally. Simulation technologies are further expanding the scope for innovation, enabling better design, testing, and deployment of complex systems," he said.

Calling upon industry leaders to rise to the challenge, he urged them to prioritize quality, innovation, and indigenization at every stage of production. He emphasized that true self-reliance must extend to the component level, including critical elements such as drone structures, propulsion systems, software, sensors, and energy storage solutions like batteries.

He acknowledged that achieving such comprehensive self-sufficiency is a formidable task, noting that even advanced manufacturing nations often rely on imports for certain high-end components. However, he maintained that India must strive to overcome these challenges through sustained investment in research and development, stronger public-private partnerships, and a long-term strategic vision.

The Defence Minister concluded by reiterating that building a resilient and self-reliant defence manufacturing ecosystem is not merely an economic objective but a strategic imperative, crucial for safeguarding India's sovereignty and ensuring its preparedness in the face of

emerging global threats.

### Eid Shopping Frenzy

traditionally mark the days leading up to Eid.

Shoppers from all walks of life—families, youth, and elderly alike—were seen navigating crowded lanes and bustling shops in search of clothing, footwear, bakery items, and other essentials. The surge in footfall was particularly evident in garment stores, footwear outlets, and confectionery shops, where customers queued up to complete their purchases.

Traders and shopkeepers described the period just before Eid as the most crucial phase of the season, often determining overall business performance. This year, despite weather-related disruptions, the turnout remained strong, with many families venturing out together after waiting for an opportune time to shop.

Local vendors noted that Eid shopping goes beyond routine buying, carrying deep cultural and emotional significance. Preparing for the festival involves ensuring that every detail—from new clothes for children to special delicacies for guests—is in place, making the experience an integral part of the celebration itself.

The festive spirit was palpable across markets, with bakeries witnessing long queues as customers rushed to purchase traditional items, while roadside vendors reported brisk sales of seasonal goods. The sight of parents accompanying children, and groups of young people gathering at popular outlets, further added to the lively ambience.

Although spells of rain caused temporary slowdowns in market activity, shoppers quickly returned during dry intervals, determined to complete their preparations in time. The resilience of buyers and the unwavering festive enthusiasm ensured that the weather had little lasting impact on the overall momentum.

As Eid approaches, the scenes in Kashmir's markets reflect not only economic activity but also a deep-rooted cultural tradition, where collective celebration, community bonding, and the joy of giving remain at the heart of the festival.

### LG Sinha Pays

offering prayers and seeking blessings for peace, prosperity, and the well-being of all citizens. Sharing his message, he emphasized the spiritual importance of the occasion and extended his शुभकामनाएँ to people on the beginning of Navratri.

The annual pilgrimage is being conducted under stringent security and administrative arrangements. Officials said that a multi-layered security grid has been put in place, involving personnel from the police, paramilitary forces, and the Army. Advanced surveillance systems, including CCTV monitoring and integrated control mechanisms, are being used to ensure the safety and smooth movement of pilgrims.

In addition to security measures, the administration and the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board have implemented enhanced crowd management strategies. These include RFID-based tracking of pilgrims, regulated movement along the track from Katra to the Bhawan, and expanded registration facilities to handle the surge in yatri numbers efficiently.

Essential services have also been significantly upgraded to cater to the increased footfall. Adequate arrangements for sanitation, drinking water, food distribution, and medical assistance have been ensured along the route, providing convenience and comfort to devotees undertaking the journey.

The shrine complex and its surroundings have been beautifully adorned with decorative lighting and floral arrangements, adding to the festive ambience. Continuous devotional music and chants have created an atmosphere of deep spirituality, enriching the experience for pilgrims as they proceed towards the sanctum for darshan.

Meanwhile, similar scenes of devotion were witnessed at other prominent temples across the region. At Bahu Fort, long queues of devotees were seen at the Bawe Wali Mata temple from early morning, highlighting the widespread religious enthusiasm marking the beginning of Navratri.

As the festival unfolds, authorities remain on high alert to ensure seamless arrangements, anticipating a steady influx of pilgrims and reaffirming the region's rich spiritual and cultural heritage.

### Major International

of Rangreth on the outskirts of Srinagar. This location, officials said, served as the central node of the racket's activities.

A coordinated crackdown was subsequently carried out across multiple locations in Srinagar on Wednesday. During the raids, seven suspects were apprehended, and authorities seized a wide array of devices, including 13 mobile phones, nine laptops, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) systems, SIM cards, networking hardware, and digital storage

media.

Preliminary examination of the seized material has revealed substantial incriminating evidence pointing to a well-organised and technologically advanced criminal enterprise. Investigators believe that the arrested individuals are part of a larger cybercrime syndicate with linkages extending beyond Jammu and Kashmir, possibly spanning multiple states and countries.

According to officials, a significant portion of the network was specifically designed to target victims in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The accused allegedly employed advanced communication-masking technologies, impersonation tactics, and psychological manipulation to deceive unsuspecting individuals.

Elaborating on the modus operandi, officials said the group had established an unregistered and covert call centre infrastructure using VoIP-based systems. This allowed them to generate international virtual numbers and conceal their actual location through server routing and spoofing techniques, thereby appearing as legitimate service providers to their targets.

Victims were lured through phishing advertisements placed online, including on search engines and fake websites designed to resemble legitimate platforms such as Yahoo Mail. Once a user clicked on these advertisements, they were directed to toll-free numbers controlled by the fraudsters. The callers, posing as technical support agents or service providers, would then convince victims that their devices or bank accounts had been compromised.

Under the pretext of resolving these fabricated issues or avoiding penalties, victims were manipulated into sharing sensitive personal and financial information. In many cases, they were persuaded to transfer money for so-called technical support services.

Officials revealed that the proceeds of the fraud were routed through a complex financial network involving mule bank accounts, digital wallets, and cryptocurrency channels. The money was subsequently converted into digital assets such as Tether (USDT) and layered through multiple transactions to obscure its origin and evade detection.

Notably, the entire operation was conducted digitally, with no reliance on cash transactions, underscoring the advanced and clandestine nature of the racket. Initial estimates suggest that the fraudulent transactions run into several crores of rupees.

A formal case has been registered under relevant sections pertaining to cheating, criminal conspiracy, and provisions of the Information Technology Act. Authorities have launched further investigations to uncover the full extent of the network, including its national and international linkages.

Officials said follow-up raids are underway to apprehend additional suspects, while forensic analysis of the seized electronic devices is in progress. Efforts are also being made to identify victims and trace the flow of illicit funds across jurisdictions.

The bust highlights the growing sophistication of cybercrime networks and underscores the need for heightened vigilance, both among law enforcement agencies and the public, in an increasingly digital world.

### Testing Time

including discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Crown Prince of Kuwait, as part of broader efforts to de-escalate tensions and ensure uninterrupted cooperation on critical issues.

"It has indeed been a testing time, not only for India but for the global community at large," Jaiswal said, emphasizing that sustained dialogue and diplomatic coordination remain central to navigating the crisis. He added that India's proactive engagement has already yielded tangible outcomes, citing the safe passage of two Indian LPG vessels through the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz—a key artery for global oil and gas shipments.

Officials underscored that India is maintaining close communication with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that its energy supply chains remain secure and resilient despite the volatility in the region. Given India's heavy dependence on energy imports from West Asia, any disruption in maritime routes or regional stability carries significant economic implications.

At the same time, the government is prioritizing the safety and well-being of the large Indian diaspora residing across West Asian countries. Jaiswal affirmed that Indian missions in the region are actively monitoring the situation on the ground and are prepared to extend all necessary assistance to nationals if required.

Additional Secretary (Gulf) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Aseem R Mahajan, reiterated that the government is closely tracking

developments across the Gulf and wider West Asia region. He emphasized that coordinated inter-agency efforts are underway to respond swiftly to any emerging challenges.

Officials stressed that India's approach remains anchored in diplomacy, dialogue, and strategic balance, with a clear focus on protecting national interests while contributing to broader regional stability. As tensions continue to unfold, New Delhi's calibrated response reflects both caution and commitment to navigating one of the most volatile geopolitical situations in recent times.

### Heavy Snowfall Cripples

monitoring the situation. Officials stated that snow clearance operations will commence once weather conditions stabilize and visibility improves to safe levels.

In north Kashmir, the Bandipora-Gurez road via Razdan Pass has also been closed following fresh snowfall. The nearly 85-kilometre route, which serves as a crucial link to the remote Gurez Valley, has been rendered unsafe due to slippery conditions at Razdan Top. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Gurez confirmed that the decision to suspend traffic was taken in the interest of commuter safety.

Similarly, the Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri Road, commonly known as the SSG Road, has been temporarily shut due to heavy snow accumulation along the Zojila corridor. The historic Mughal Road, connecting the Kashmir Valley with the Jammu region via Peer Ki Gali, has also been closed after fresh snowfall blanketed the high-altitude pass, making it treacherous for vehicles.

Additionally, the Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road remains closed following orders from the district administration, with officials citing unsafe driving conditions and the risk posed by continuous snowfall in the region.

Meanwhile, traffic movement on the vital Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44), the only all-weather road linking the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country, remained slow and regulated. Officials reported congestion and delays along several stretches, particularly between Marog and Kishtwari Pathar, where traffic is being managed on a single-lane basis due to road narrowing and the breakdown of heavy motor vehicles.

Authorities have issued advisories urging commuters to exercise caution, avoid unnecessary travel, and strictly adhere to lane discipline. Travellers have also been advised to undertake journeys during daylight hours and check the latest traffic and weather updates before setting out.

Officials reiterated that the restoration of traffic on the affected routes will depend entirely on improvement in weather conditions and the successful clearance of snow. With forecasts indicating continued instability in weather patterns, the administration remains on high alert, closely coordinating efforts to ensure timely restoration of connectivity while prioritizing public safety.

### LPG Bookings Near

panic-driven demand has helped restore some balance in the system. She emphasized that the government has been prioritizing domestic consumers to ensure uninterrupted access to cooking fuel.

Despite these improvements, Sharma cautioned that the overall LPG supply scenario remains "worrisome," particularly due to continued constraints on imports. She clarified that while there have been no reported dry-outs at LPG distributorships across the country, commercial consumers—including hotels, restaurants, and small businesses—are currently receiving only about 20 per cent of their usual supply.

To mitigate the shortfall, domestic LPG production has been ramped up significantly, recording an increase of over 40 per cent in the past two weeks. Public sector oil marketing companies have also intensified their operations, maintaining delivery levels comparable to pre-conflict periods. On March 18, for instance, approximately 54.91 lakh cylinders were delivered against bookings exceeding 56 lakh.

Officials further noted that oil companies have introduced additional shifts and logistical adjustments to keep pace with demand. During the peak of panic buying on March 13 and 14, deliveries surged to 62.5 lakh and 60 lakh cylinders respectively, demonstrating the system's capacity to respond under pressure.

The government has placed the entire LPG supply chain under close monitoring, ensuring that domestic deliveries continue without interruption. Authorities have also strengthened transparency and efficiency measures, with online bookings now accounting for 94 per cent of total requests. Additionally, the Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) system—an OTP-based verification mechanism—has expanded

its coverage to 83 per cent, helping ensure that cylinders reach genuine consumers.

As part of a broader strategy to ease pressure on LPG supplies, consumers in urban areas are being encouraged to transition to piped natural gas (PNG), which offers a continuous and reliable alternative without the need for cylinder refills. Over the past two weeks, approximately 1.25 lakh new connections—across domestic, commercial, and industrial categories—have been issued.

Meanwhile, enforcement agencies have intensified efforts to curb black marketing and hoarding. Raids and inspections are being conducted across multiple states, resulting in the seizure of illegally diverted cylinders and the registration of cases against violators. The Union government has also directed state administrations to take stringent action to prevent any malpractice in the distribution system.

To further address the supply crunch, alternate fuels such as kerosene are being promoted in certain areas, while commercial LPG stocks have been strategically allocated to states based on priority requirements.

Officials reiterated that while the immediate crisis has been contained to an extent, the evolving geopolitical situation in West Asia continues to pose uncertainties. The government, they said, remains committed to ensuring energy security and maintaining uninterrupted supply to households while navigating the challenges posed by the global crisis.

### Govt Classifies Energy

the strait. The war has effectively shut the strait, impacting India's energy supplies.

While the disruption in crude oil has been partially offset through alternative sources, such as Russia, West Africa, the US and Latin America, gas and LPG supplies to industrial and commercial users have been curtailed because of the deficit in supplies from Gulf nations.

The ministry's order aims to create a centralised, real-time data framework to enable faster response to supply disruptions, prioritisation of critical sectors such as power, fertilisers and household LPG, and more informed procurement decisions.

Officials said the initiative will strengthen India's ability to monitor supply chains, manage inventories and reduce exposure to geopolitical shocks.

Industry players will be required to upgrade data reporting systems to ensure compliance as the regulatory framework tightens.

Energy security, officials indicated, will increasingly depend not just on sourcing but on real-time visibility across the supply chain.

The ministry issued the order deriving powers under the Essential Commodities Act OF 1955 that empowers the Central Government to require any person holding in stock, producing, importing, exporting or dealing in any essential commodity to furnish such information relating to production, supply, distribution, stocks or utilisation.

The Central government, it said, considers it necessary in the public interest to establish a centralised institutional mechanism for the systematic collection, compilation and analysis of such information for effective monitoring of the petroleum and natural gas supply chain.

"Every entity engaged in the production, processing, refining, storage, transportation, import, export, marketing, distribution or consumption of petroleum products or natural gas... shall furnish to PPAC, information relating to production, imports, exports, stocks, storage, allocation, transportation, supply, consumption and utilisation of petroleum products or natural gas, aggregated or disaggregated by geography, time or consumers as may be specified," the order said.

This would apply to crude oil producers and importers, oil refining companies, oil marketing companies, petroleum storage and terminal operators, natural gas producers, LNG importers and LNG terminal operators, natural gas pipeline operators, gas marketers and City Gas Distribution entities, petrochemical plants using natural gas or petroleum products as feedstock, and any public sector or private sector entity engaged in activities forming part of the petroleum or natural gas supply chain.

On the manner of furnishing information, the order said, "The information shall be furnished in such form, manner, electronic platform and periodicity as may be specified by the Central government or by PPAC and may include daily, weekly, monthly or other periodic returns." "The obligation to furnish information under this order shall apply notwithstanding anything contained in any contract, agreement, commercial arrangement or confidentiality obligation and no entity shall refuse to furnish information required under this notification on the ground that such information is commercially sensitive or proprietary," it added.

# Satish Sharma leads intensive market checking drive across Jammu

## Reiterates zero tolerance for black marketing, hoarding, overcharging

■ KDNEWSERVICE

JAMMU, MARCH 19: In a decisive move to safeguard consumer interests and ensure uninterrupted supply of essential commodities, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), IT, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma today led an extensive and high-intensity market checking drive across multiple locations from Katra to Jammu, focusing particularly on the distribution and availability of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Demonstrating proactive governance and on-ground monitoring, the Minister conducted surprise inspections at several LPG godowns, distribution outlets, and retail points. He thoroughly reviewed stock positions, distribution records, booking and delivery systems, and compliance with prescribed norms. He also interacted with consumers, delivery personnel, and distributors to get first-hand feedback regarding availability, pricing, and service delivery. During the inspections, Satish Sharma issued a stern warning against black marketing, hoard-



ing, overcharging, and any attempts to create artificial scarcity of LPG. He made it unequivocally clear that the government will adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards such malpractices. "There will be no atonement for those found indulging in black marketing or exploiting consumers. Anyone violating the law, be it an LPG distributor, delivery

agent or any intermediary, will face strict legal action without exception," the Minister asserted. Reiterating the government's commitment to transparency, accountability, and consumer protection, the Minister emphasized that ensuring the availability of LPG at regulated prices remains a top priority. He assured the public that there is

adequate stock of LPG and that the government is closely monitoring the supply chain to prevent any disruption.

Satish Sharma further directed the concerned officers of the FCS&CA department to intensify market checking drives across all districts, maintain strict vigilance, and take immediate punitive action against violators. He stressed the need for a robust monitoring mechanism, including regular inspections and real-time reporting, to curb any malpractice effectively. He instructed them to ensure continuous enforcement of regulations and strengthen coordination with law enforcement agencies to maintain discipline in the markets.

The Minister also called upon the general public to remain vigilant and report any instances of overcharging, hoarding, or denial of service. He assured that prompt action will be taken on all genuine complaints and strict penalties will be imposed on offenders.

Senior officers of the FCS&CA department and district administration accompanied the Minister during the drive.

# Ukraine seeks consular access, MEA says request will follow legal process



NEW DELHI: External Affairs on Thursday said it has received a request for consular access from Kyiv after six Ukrainian nationals were arrested by the National Investigation Agency for allegedly aiding proscribed insurgent groups in India. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the matter is under investigation. "We are aware of the case. This is a legal matter, and the relevant Government of India agencies are currently investigating it. We have received a request for consular access, and this will be addressed in accordance with the legal requirements of the case," he said.

The NIA has accused the six individuals of supporting banned groups by supplying weapons, terror hardware and providing training. Reacting sharply, the Embassy of Ukraine in India expressed "serious concern" over the detentions and flagged reports suggesting the

case may have been triggered by inputs from the Russian side. It called for an "objective and transparent investigation."

"Ukraine firmly rejects any insinuations regarding the possible involvement of the Ukrainian State in supporting terrorist activities. Ukraine faces the consequences of Russian terror daily and takes a principled and uncompromising stance in combating terrorism in all its forms," the embassy said. It stressed that terrorism related allegations must be based on "verified facts" and due process, and signalled readiness to cooperate with Indian authorities under existing bilateral legal frameworks. The development adds a diplomatic layer to what New Delhi has described as a strictly legal case, with investigations continuing.

New Indian Express

# J&K police visits families of police martyrs in Ganderbal, extends Eid greetings with warmth and solidarity

■ KDNEWSERVICE

March 19: In a heartfelt gesture ahead of the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, J&K Police paid respectful visits to the Families of Police Martyrs in Ganderbal, honouring their supreme sacrifices and expressing solidarity with their loved ones.

On this solemn yet celebratory occasion, officers from across the district visited the residences of the martyrs and extended warm Eid greetings to their families. As a mark of respect and remembrance, Eid gifts were distributed among the families, symbolizing the department's unwavering bond and gratitude towards its bravehearts.

While interacting with the family members, the officers conveyed their deep appreciation for the courage and sacrifices made by the martyrs in the line of duty. They reassured the families of continued support and commitment from Ganderbal Police, emphasizing that the sacrifices of these heroes will never be forgotten. The interaction was marked by a sense of emotional connect and mutual respect, as the families shared their experiences and expressed heartfelt gratitude towards the J&K Police for remembering them on such an important occasion.

J&K Police reiterated its commitment to stand by the families of martyrs at all times and to uphold the values of sacrifice, service, and dedication that these brave personnel embodied.

# 'No LPG distributor is facing dry-out,' says Petroleum Ministry amid nationwide delivery review

New Delhi: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on Thursday stressed that no LPG distributor in the country is currently facing a dry-out situation, with domestic supplies and cylinder deliveries continuing as scheduled.

Speaking at an inter-ministerial briefing on recent developments in West Asia, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said that while the overall regional situation remains a matter of concern, domestic consumer services remain stable and uninterrupted.

"On the issue of LPG, I would like to reiterate that the situation still remains a matter of concern. However, no LPG distributor is facing a dry-out situation at present... LPG supplies and cylinder deliveries for all domestic consumers are continuing as usual," Sharma said. The Ministry reported significant progress in digital transitions, noting that nearly 94% of cylinder bookings are now being made online, while the delivery authentication code system has reached 76% efficiency.

Regarding commercial operations, Sharma noted that supplies were initially completely halted but have since been partially restored. "In the context of commercial LPG, allocation orders have been issued by about 17 state governments, and



commercial LPG supplies have been provided to all states and union territories," she said.

To further stabilise the market, the central government proposed providing 10% additional commercial LPG and urged state governments to cooperate in the expansion of PNG networks. These initiatives have resulted in approximately 1.25 lakh new domestic, commercial, and industrial connections over the last two weeks.

"The Government of India has asked all state governments to extend cooperation in the expansion of PNG networks and has proposed providing 10% additional commercial LPG. Due to all these initiatives and efforts, around 1.25 lakh new domestic, commercial, and industrial connections have been provided in the last two weeks," Sharma noted.

The Ministry also confirmed a growing shift toward alternative

fuels, as more than 5,600 domestic LPG users have shifted to PNG connections in the last three days. Sharma emphasised that the government is making "every possible effort at all levels to ensure LPG is available to domestic consumers" and urged the public to rely only on official information to curb panic. The Centre has also recently issued a directive to state governments to take stringent action against black marketing and hoarding. Sharma stated that control rooms have been established in approximately 31 states and union territories, with district-level monitoring committees active in about 25 regions. Several states have already conducted raids, registered FIRs, and made arrests related to black marketing.

"I request all consumers please do online booking and wait for your turn; there is no need to visit gas agencies unnecessarily," Sharma said. She noted that while panic booking has decreased, queues are still being seen at some distributors.

"People should not pay attention to rumours and should rely only on official information. Panic booking has decreased, but queues are still being seen at distributors. Hence, I request all consumers to book refills online," she added.

New Indian Express

# Dr. Pabitra Kumar Jena Delivered a Keynote Address at Gangadhar Meher University, Odisha



■ KDNEWSERVICE

Srinagar: Dr. Pabitra Kumar Jena, Associate Professor at the School of Economics, Faculty of Management, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, delivered a Keynote address titled "Regional Disparities and Viksit Bharat 2047" at School of Economics, Gangadhar Meher University, Odisha in the Two Days Multidisciplinary National Conference on "Mapping Regional Disparity in India's Development Process" scheduled during 13th -14th Mar, 2026. Dr. Jena elucidated how regional disparities are a major challenge for achieving Viksit Bharat in 2047. He also further explained that in

order to become a \$30 trillion economy by 2047, what strategies should the Government of India frame as policy intervention as a long-term instrument for achieving the dream of Viksit Bharat in the year 2027. Researchers across India from various Universities/Institutions have participated in the Two Days Multidisciplinary National Conference on "Mapping Regional Disparity in India's Development Process. Professor Pragati Kumar, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of SMVDU, Professor Ashutosh Vashishtha, Dean, Faculty of Management, Dr. Roop Lal Sharma, Head, School of Economics, congratulated Dr. Pabitra Kumar Jena and wished him a bright future.

# Workshop on Virtual Labs Conducted at SMVDU in Collaboration with IIT Roorkee

■ KDNEWSERVICE

Jammu: The School of Electronics and Communication Engineering (SoECE) at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Katra, organized a one-day workshop on "Virtual Labs" in collaboration with IIT Roorkee. The workshop aimed at bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical exposure through the use of virtual laboratory platforms. The workshop was conducted by Mr. Chetan Dhiman and Mr. Amit Kumar Sharma, Project Associates from the Virtual Labs initiative at IIT Roorkee. They delivered insightful sessions and conducted hands-on demonstrations of various virtual experiments, highlighting how students can effectively utilize the Virtual Labs platform for enhanced learning. A total of 121 students participated enthusiastically in the workshop. The speakers explained the features of Virtual Labs developed under the National Mission on Education through ICT (NMEICT) initiative of the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

# Central University of Jammu Conducted Mock Drill cum Demonstration on "Fire Fighting and Emergency Response"

■ KDNEWSERVICE

Jammu, 19 March 2026: The Department of National Security Studies, Central University of Jammu under the patronage of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, in collaboration with the Fire & Emergency Services Command, Samba-Kathua, organised a comprehensive Mock Drill cum Demonstration on "Fire Fighting and Emergency Response" at the DDE Building, today. The programme was graced by the presence of Dr. Neeta Rani, Head of the Department of National Security Studies. The event commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Anuradha Choudhary, Assistant Professor and Convener of the programme. In her address, she emphasised the critical importance of practical preparedness for unforeseen fire incidents as a cornerstone of institutional security, alongside academic knowledge. She also highlighted the significance of such initiatives in promoting a "culture of safety" within the university ecosystem and expressed gratitude to the visiting officials for their participation.



The event formally began with a presentation by Sh. Darshan Singh (In-charge, Fire Station Bari Brahmana) and Sh. Jograj Singh (Leading Fireman), who elucidated the basic fundamentals of fire, its various

types, and the preventive measures necessary to mitigate fire incidents. They underscored the importance of awareness among all participants by explaining the role of each instrument used in fire services, as well as essential household tools for fire

safety. The theoretical session concluded with a Q&A session, allowing students and faculty to interact with the fire services staff and share their experiences. Subsequently, following the lecture, a mock drill was conducted outside

the building. The drill was carried out by a dedicated team from the Fire and Emergency Services, including Sh. Darshan Singh (In-charge, Fire Station Bari Brahmana), Sh. Jograj Singh (Leading Fireman), Sh. Ghar Singh (Selection Grade Fireman), Sh. Razaq Hussain (Fireman), and Sh. Vinod Kumar (Fireman Driver). Under their expert supervision, students, faculty, and staff participated in a hands-on demonstration of fire-extinguishing techniques and evacuation protocols. The team demonstrated the operation of various fire extinguishers and shared critical do's and don'ts for emergency scenarios.

The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Dr. R. Sudhakar, Associate Professor and Co-Convener of the programme. Dr. Sudhakar expressed profound gratitude to the Fire & Emergency Services personnel for their professional expertise and thanked the university administration for prioritising the safety of the campus community. The programme was attended by over 126 participants, including faculty members and research scholars.

## Parag: 'Samson irreplaceable like Kohli or Rohit'

■ Espnrcinfo

A starry-eyed 17-year-old when he joined Rajasthan Royals (RR) in 2019, Riyan Parag now finds himself as the franchise's captain for IPL 2026. It is a position previously held by some big names - Shane Warne, Rahul Dravid, Shane Watson, Steven Smith, and most recently Sanju Samson.

With Samson having left them for Chennai Super Kings (CSK), RR are now without their most capped player. Parag has called Samson "irreplaceable", but felt RR were nonetheless well placed for a strong season if they could avoid the missed opportunities in key moments that defined their 2025 season, when a string of narrow defeats led them to a ninth-place finish.

"We can only try to look for players with the same skills [like Samson] and someone who can fill the hole left by him in the batting order," Parag said in Jaipur. "Just like you cannot replace Virat Kohli or Rohit Sharma in any XI, Samson is irreplaceable."

"But will we plan something new? That's what we've been discussing in the build-up. If you see last season, we lost five or six close games, in fact a couple of games were last-ball defeats. This season, if those few games go in our favour, then we won't be asked about our issues



any longer.

"In any 40-over game, there will be a few moments where you have to make right decisions and that's what I'll focus on - like who will bat where, or what to do at the toss - and if we do that well, then this year will be a good one."

Parag is particularly keen to see how Ravindra Jadeja - who began his IPL journey with RR in 2008-09 and returns as part of the Samson trade with Chennai Super Kings (CSK) - fits alongside Ravi Bishnoi in the side's spin plans at their two home grounds in Jaipur and Guwahati.

"The game has changed since 2008, so having Jadeja back in RR colours doesn't give us an advantage from that particular perspective [of him having played for the team before]," Parag said. "But the main advantage of having someone like Jadeja is that he has played all the seasons, and that experience he brings will be very useful as we

try to win those small moments. He is the most experienced IPL player in our squad now.

"Jadeja had a superb economy [rate] in Chennai all these years and Jaipur and Guwahati are wickets that are slow and sticky respectively. And we also have Bishnoi.

"The combination of Bishnoi and Jadeja makes us world-class, top class. I don't think better combinations are possible than having both of these spinners start for us. The two of them bowling together can help us win from any situation."

Vaibhav Suryavanshi left GT, RR and everyone watching stunned, Rajasthan Royals vs Gujarat Titans, IPL 2025, Jaipur, April 28, 2025

On Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, the prodigy who turns 15 next week and who arrives with significant expectations after a breakout IPL season and a strong run with India Under-19s, Parag emphasised the need to shield him

from the noise. Sooryavanshi, Parag said, is set to open alongside Yashviji Jaiswal in the post-Samson era.

"As a captain, I will tell him not to do many press conferences, not interact with the media much, just enjoy," Parag said. "[I request the media], don't call his manager to talk to him. Let him play his cricket."

"This year, there will be hype and pressure naturally, but as a captain, I will tell him to let Yashviji Jaiswal take the pressure. Jaiswal is more than capable to handle that. For Vaibhav, the role will be just to go, hit, and not to worry."

Reflecting on his own journey to the captaincy - a significant step for a man still only 24 - Parag said he "appreciated" the difficult years when he was "abused and trolled", crediting those experiences for the version he is today.

"It has been a journey of lots of ups and downs, maybe more downs than ups," Parag said. "I think I have seen it all as a teenager. Whatever a teenager can go through with, I think I have gone through that. But I am really proud of myself that I got out of it. Really thankful to Rajasthan that they backed me. They understood the cricketer that I was."

Kumar Sangakkara, back as RR's head coach, said the franchise had focused on "upscaling" its skill base through the

auction and trade windows. The addition of allrounders such as Jadeja, Sam Curran and Donovan Ferreira, he said, has expanded the team's tactical flexibility compared to 2025.

Captains Riyan Parag and Pat Cummins at the toss, Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Rajasthan Royals, IPL 2025, Hyderabad, March 23, 2025

Riyan Parag has stepped in to lead Rajasthan Royals in the past, and now has the job full time-BCCI

"When you have allrounders that allow you 'X' amount of overs, then it allows you to change your line-up as well, and that advantage is huge. It [having the number of allrounders RR do] will give us an advantage in terms of getting those initial things right."

"But most importantly, it will come down to those big moments. IPL games are won in big moments with small decisions taken right. And execution has to be at the right level. And that's what we are aiming to do."

On the decision to appoint Parag, Sangakkara stressed that it went beyond sentiment around a homegrown player.

"Riyan has seen a lot, gone through a lot," Sangakkara said. "And the most striking thing for me was how reflective and mature he's become. Riyan Parag, the cricketer, I have always admired. And when we wanted to select a captain, it was important for us to explore all options.

## Sam Curran set to miss IPL 2026 with suspected injury



■ Espnrcinfo

Rajasthan Royals (RR) have hit a hurdle before the start of their IPL 2026 campaign as England allrounder Sam Curran is set to miss the season at his new franchise with a suspected groin issue.

Curran last played on March 5 in the 2026 T20 World Cup, where England lost to eventual champions India in the semi-final.

Curran, 27, was set to play for RR for the first time after the franchise bought him via a trade with Chennai Super Kings (CSK) last November. Curran and India allrounder Ravindra Jadeja were traded by CSK to RR in exchange for India wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson, who recently emerged as the Player of the Tournament at the T20 World Cup.

RR would have been the third franchise Curran would

have represented in the IPL after having started his career at Punjab Kings (PBKS) in 2019. Curran then played for CSK in 2020 and 2021, before returning to PBKS in 2023 as the league's most expensive player at INR 18.5 crore, and playing for them again in 2024. Curran was bought back by CSK for INR 2.4 crore for IPL 2025, which he finished with 114 runs and only one wicket in five games.

There is no confirmation yet on who RR are likely to bring in as Curran's replacement but the franchise is learned to have explored a few options. Apart from Jadeja, RR also have another allrounder in Donovan Ferreira, a power-hitter who can bowl quickish offspin. Just like Jadeja and Curran, Ferreira, too, was bought by RR via a trade at his base price of INR 1 crore from Delhi Capitals.

## New Zealand and South Africa jostle for series lead in high-scoring Auckland

■ Espnrcinfo

Batting hasn't been easy so far during this five-match T20I series between New Zealand and South Africa. In the first T20I in Mount Maunganui, the hosts were bundled out for 91. In the second in Hamilton, the visitors folded for 107 in a chase of 176. But things are likely to change in Auckland.

Eden Park is famous for its unusual dimensions. The straight boundaries are so small that they don't meet the ICC requirements (minimum 59.43 metres from the centre of the pitch). But as an existing venue prior to those requirements being brought in, it is exempt. In the words of Lockie Ferguson, "the crowd feels like they are right on your back".

The playing area itself is in the shape of a rectangle, which makes field placement tricky. Wasim Akram, who made his Test debut here, once said if you want a fielder at fine leg, you ask him to go to midwicket.

All those things make it a batting-friendly venue. Of all the New Zealand grounds, it has the highest scoring rate - 10.19 - in the first innings of a T20I. Overall, among the venues that have hosted at least five T20Is, only SuperSport Park in Centurion (10.59) and the Wanderers in Johannesburg (10.41) have higher first-innings scoring rates.

South Africa have played two T20Is in Auckland and won both. However, they have not played an international match here since 2017, which means none of their squad members has the experience of playing here.



Theoretically, that should give New Zealand an advantage as the visiting teams may take time to adjust to the dimensions. But that is not the case. In fact, New Zealand have their worst win-loss T20I record at a venue in Auckland, with 12 wins and 19 losses, including Super Over results.

Devon Conway spent the entire 2026 T20 World Cup on the bench. At this moment, he doesn't have the gears to bat in the ultra-aggressive manner Tim Seifert and Finn Allen do. But his more traditional approach helped him tackle the difficult conditions in Hamilton and score 60 off 49 balls, the only half-century of the series so far. New Zealand will expect a similar score from him in Auckland but at a faster rate.

Wiaan Mulder opened the innings in the second T20I, something he had never done previously in international cricket. In all T20 cricket, he had done so only six times in 140 outings and never since July 2023. The move backfired and Mulder scored a laboured 16 off 20 balls, 14 of which were dots. Given South Africa have Tony de Zorzi in the side,

it may be better to open with him and let Mulder bat down the order.

New Zealand could field an unchanged XI. New Zealand (probable): 1 Devon Conway, 2 Tom Latham (wk), 3 Tim Robinson, 4 Nick Kelly, 5 Josh Clarkson, 6 James Neesham, 7 Mitchell Santner (capt), 8 Cole McConehcie, 9 Kyle Jamieson, 10 Ben Sears, 11 Lockie Ferguson

Unless South Africa want to rest one of their seamers, they too may go in with the same XI. However, they could change their batting order with de Zorzi replacing Mulder at the top of the order.

South Africa (probable): 1 Tony de Zorzi, 2 Connor Esterhuizen (wk), 3 Ruben Hermann, 4 Jason Smith, 5 Dian Forrester, 6 Wiaan Mulder, 7 George Linde, 8 Gerald Coetzee, 9 Keshav Maharaj (capt), 10 Ngobani Mokoena, 11 Ottneil Baartman

In November 2025, when Eden Park last hosted a T20I, West Indies almost chased down New Zealand's 207 for 5. Friday's game could be similarly high-scoring. The weather is expected to be cloudy but there is no forecast for rain.

## ECB play down Dukes supply-chain fears ahead of county season

The ECB insists that the English domestic season will get underway with the requisite number of Dukes balls available to the 18 counties, despite a reported supply-chain issue triggered by the ongoing conflict between the USA, Israel and Iran.

According to a report in the Daily Mail, the County Championship season - which gets underway on April 3 - will begin with roughly half the usual number of balls available to

the counties. That figure, the report added, is usually between 4,000 and 5,000 per year for the professional game.

Dilip Jajodia, the owner of British Cricket Balls Ltd, which manufacture Dukes, told the Mail that freight rates from the subcontinent - where each ball is individually hand-stitched - had risen from \$5 to \$15 per kilogram in light of the conflict, and that English cricket was consequently facing a

"major crisis".

"We've got plenty of stuff in the factories in the subcontinent ready to go, but the airlines are not taking the freight, because there's a logjam," Jajodia explained.

Jajodia added that his company, based in Walthamstow, East London, would have to ration their supply to the counties by providing 50 percent of their usual stocks for the start of the season.

### رمضان المبارک

نقش اوقات سحر و افطار

بابت رمضان المبارک ۱۴۴۷ھ

تاریخ	رمضان المبارک	اختتام سحری	وقت افطار
19	1	05:49 AM	06:21 PM
20	2	05:48 AM	06:22 PM
21	3	05:47 AM	06:23 PM
22	4	05:46 AM	06:24 PM
23	5	05:45 AM	06:24 PM
24	6	05:44 AM	06:25 PM
25	7	05:42 AM	06:26 PM
26	8	05:41 AM	06:27 PM
27	9	05:40 AM	06:28 PM
28	10	05:39 AM	06:29 PM
01 MAR	11	05:38 AM	06:30 PM
02	12	05:37 AM	06:31 PM
03	13	05:36 AM	06:32 PM
04	14	05:34 AM	06:33 PM
05	15	05:34 AM	06:33 PM

FOR FOLLOWING PLACES

LOCATION	PLEASE ADD
URI	3 MINUTES
BARAMULLA	1 MINUTE
BANDIPORA	2 MINUTES
TANGMARG	1 MINUTE
SOPORE	1 MINUTE

LOCATION	PLEASE MINUS
ANANTNAG	2 MINUTES
PULWAMA	1 MINUTE
PAHALGAM	3 MINUTES
TRAL	2 MINUTES
KULGAM	1 MINUTE

**DUA FOR SEHRI**

وَبِصَوْمِ غَدٍ نُوَيْتُ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

I intend to keep the fast for tomorrow in the month of Ramadan

**DUA FOR IFTAAR**

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي لَكَ صُمْتُ وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ وَأَعْلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَأَعْلَى رِزْقِكَ أَطَّرْتُ

O Allah! I fasted for You and I believe in You and I put my trust in You and I break my fast with Your sustenance

## Kashmir Despatch