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Come, visit J&K...

the Floriculture Department shall be developing its own rootstock so that dependence on importing of bulbs is gradually reduced and this would also require support of SKUAST Kashmir.

Extending a warm welcome to tourists visiting Kashmir, the Chief Minister said that the mesmerizing beauty, vibrant colours and soothing fragrance of the blooming tulips would offer visitors a unique and unforgettable experience.

The Chief Minister appealed to tourists from across the country and around the world to visit Jammu & Kashmir during the spring season and experience its unmatched natural beauty.

He further remarked that Jammu and Kashmir is blessed with unparalleled natural splendor and scenic landscapes that continue to attract nature lovers and travellers from different parts of the world. He expressed hope that visitors to the Tulip Garden would not only cherish the beauty of the flowers but would also carry with them a message of peace, harmony and prosperity from the Valley.

The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, recognized as Asia's largest Tulip garden, remains one of the most sought-after spring attractions in Kashmir and is expected to draw thousands of visitors during the ongoing Tulip Festival-2026.

This year, around 18 lakh tulips of over 70 varieties, along-with nearly one lakh other bulbous flowers including daffodils, hyacinths and narcissus, have been planted, adding vibrant colours to the valley's spring landscape.

On the occasion, Chief Minister also released a tourism promotional song titled 'wadi-e-sumbul' produced by Department of Information and Public Relations.

During the event, the Chief Minister inaugurated souvenir point established by the Floriculture Department. He also inaugurated exhibition of Handicrafts and Handloom department and inspected the stalls.

Time for India...

continues, 150 years on, to guide Jammu and Kashmir's society," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the youth must lead the path of principles, building a safer and prosperous Jammu Kashmir.

"Our Youth now bear the duty to embrace his expansive, humane values and contribute to nation-building. As today's Jammu Kashmir embodies Maharaja Ranbir Singh's foresight, this campus must reflect his ideals," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised on building a society technologically potent yet humanely sensitive. He called upon the Youth to enrich not just India but global intellectual and moral consciousness.

"India, driven by human welfare, remains committed to world peace and shared prosperity. The time has come for India to reclaim its place, guiding a challenge-ridden world. We must steadfastly prepare our youth to forge a formidable India- one that shall knit nations in unbreakable unity, kindling in them the noble pursuit of universal peace and human welfare," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that ancient India's journey was never one-sided: one hand held science, the other culture.

"We emphasized personalities blending Brahmagupta's intellect and Buddha's wisdom. This campus must nurture such souls," he further said.

The Lieutenant Governor also assured financial assistance for establishment of Gurukul, Sanskrit Pathshala, or Ved Pathshala in the region.

Dr Karan Singh, former Union Minister; Padma Prof. Vishwamurti Shastri; Prof. Shrinivasa Varakhedi, Vice Chancellor; Central Sanskrit University, Jammu; Dr Kamal Kishor Mishra, Department of Sanskrit University of Calcutta; Prof. R.G. Murali Krishna, Registrar; Central Sanskrit University, Jammu; Prof. Satish Kumar Kapoor, Director; HoDs and faculty of the university, senior officials, prominent citizens and students in large number were present.

Inspections conducted at...

Jamwal also appealed to the public to report cases of overcharging or malpractice, adding that helpline numbers issued by the food and supplies department have been widely publicised.

Teams led by Jamwal inspected several LPG dealers, checking stock registers, booking records and delivery systems. The teams also interacted with customers who had gathered at outlets to collect cylinders directly, bypassing the home delivery mechanism.

"The customers should not visit outlets as cylinders will be delivered to their homes as per established practice. Dealers have been categorically directed to follow the home delivery system in letter and spirit. People should book cylinders through online modes," Jamwal told reporters.

She said that action had been initiated against some dealers found violating norms, while most were operating as per rules.

Jamwal said that the inspections were carried out due to complaints to assess ground realities after numerous complaints of delayed deliveries and mismanagement.

"We received complaints that delivery dates were being repeatedly extended and cylinders were not reaching consumers. Therefore, we conducted field inspections along with officials from the Legal Metrology Department to verify the situation," she said.

At one agency, officials found over 2,200 pending deliveries. "In contrast, two other agencies inspected earlier were functioning properly with no pendency," she added.

According to Jamwal, records showed that 342 consumers received cylinders on Monday and some balance deliveries from previous days were pending. She stressed that deliveries must be made in the order of bookings.

She warned consumers against panic buying and hoarding, noting that some households were attempting to procure multiple cylinders, fearing future shortages.

"As per government guidelines, in urban areas a new booking cannot be made within 25 days of the last delivery, and in rural areas the gap is 45 days," she said, urging people not to visit agencies physically unless necessary.

CB registers case...

district. According to officials, the total land involved in these cases measures approximately 327 Kanal and 9 Marla.

The compensation amount claimed or reportedly awarded in these cases is estimated to be around Rs 8.57 crore, which has raised serious concerns about misuse of public funds.

"The matter involves a significant amount of public money and possible manipulation of official records. Therefore, a detailed investigation is necessary to identify the role of officials and other individuals involved," the official said.

Based on the contents of the communication and preliminary findings, the Crime Branch has registered a First Information Report (FIR) under sections 420, 465, 468 and 120-B of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) along with Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act at the Police Station of the Crime Branch (Economic Offences Wing) in Jammu.

To ensure a comprehensive investigation, the Crime Branch has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the matter in detail.

Officials said the SIT will examine revenue records, compensation documents and other related material to determine how the alleged manipulation took place and to identify all persons responsible for the irregularities.

"The investigation will be conducted thoroughly and impartially. Any official or individual found involved in manipulation of records or fraudulent compensation claims will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the law," the Crime Branch official stated. Authorities have indicated that further details will emerge as the investigation progresses.

Man arrested for...

is ongoing, and additional details, including the motive and any possible accomplices, are being examined as part of the probe.

Abdullah had a narrow escape on Wednesday night when the accused opened fire at him from behind while he was leaving a marriage function at Greater Kailash on the outskirts of Jammu. He was arrested and was produced in Court following which he was sent to 5-day police remand earlier.

The Police are examining the 63-year-old Jamwal's background, including his personal, social and possible organisational links, to ascertain the motive behind the firing incident, they said. According to the officials, the Police are examining all angles including his recent activities and movements before the attack.

Jamwal was reportedly accompanying the wedding procession to the venue, being a close relative of the groom's family.

Abdullah was among the participants who turned up to bless the newly-wed couple on the invitation of a party colleague whose daughter was getting married.

Two killed, 29...

Locals and police rushed to the scene and launched a rescue operation. Eleven injured persons were shifted to Sub-District Hospital Akhnoor, while 18 others were taken to Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital Jammu for treatment, they said. GMC Principal Dr Ashutosh Gupta said two persons were brought dead. The injured admitted to the hospital are stable and none appear to be in critical condi-

tion. Police have taken cognisance of the incident and further investigation is underway, officials said.

The injured have been identified as Sarishta Devi, 60, resident of Jhiri Kalyanpur; Ramesh Chander, 55, resident of Rakh Muthi, Jourian; Shivani Sharma, 24, resident of Rakh Muthi; Jatru, 80; Nirmala Devi, 70, resident of Bakshi Nagar; Jammu; Krishan Lal, 62, resident of Gurha Brahmaana; Babita Devi, 45, resident of Dub Karamdin, Kana Chak; Ashu Devi, 36, resident of Barola Maira, Mandhrian; Sudesh Kumari, 60, resident of Barola; Sonia Devi, 23, resident of Jourian; Rameshwar Sharma, 75, resident of Bakshi Nagar; Jammu; Anju Bala, resident of unknown address; Rubina, 15, resident of Jourian Taroti; Rakesh Kumari, 51, resident of Jourian; Sonia Devi, daughter of Madan Lal, resident of Sohal; Akshay Kumar, 7, resident of Pahrivala; Sunita, resident of Taroti, Jourian; Janvi Devi, 8, resident of Taroti; Arya Pawa, 5, resident of Taroti; Parshotam Lal, resident of Jourian; Anil Kumar, 24, resident of Naiwalla; Babita Sharma, 34, resident of Mallah Dhok Khalsa; Nanu Sharma, 4, resident of Mallah Dhok Khalsa; Sachin Sharma, 24, resident of Jadh; Kuldeep Singh, 60, resident of Mathura Chak, Hiranagar; Kathua; Anju Bala, 55, resident of Mathura Chak, Hiranagar; Kathua; and Anita Sharma, 37, resident of New Basti, Khour.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has condoled the loss of lives in a tragic bus accident at Kot Garhi in Akhnoor. In a condolence message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "Pained by the loss of precious lives in the tragic bus accident in Akhnoor. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families in this hour of grief. Praying for a speedy recovery of the injured."

Dr Minu Mahajan...

(Rtd. Principal), as Chairperson, Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examination for a further period of two years w.e.f. March 19, 2026 or until she attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier;" read S.O 70 Notification issued by M Raju, Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department.

Patwari convicted in...

investigation, the agency filed a chargesheet before the competent court on February 2, 2013. The case was subsequently taken up for judicial trial.

On March 16, 2026, the court delivered its judgment, sentencing the accused to two years of simple imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 10,000 under Section 5(2) read with Section 5(1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act. He was also sentenced to one year of simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 5,000 under Section 161 RPC.

"The conviction is a reflection of the Anti-Corruption Bureau's sustained efforts to curb corruption and ensure transparency and accountability in public service," the ACB official added.

Meanwhile, in another case, the ACB Udhampur-Reasi wing has filed a chargesheet before the Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Udhampur in FIR No. 33/2017 registered at the then Police Station Vigilance Organisation Jammu (now ACB). The chargesheet has been filed under Section 5(1)(d) read with Section 5(2) of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act, Svt. 2006, and Section 120-B of the Ranbir Penal Code against Mohd Saleem Banday, the then Patwari Halqa Mand, Tikri, Udhampur, who is presently posted as Girdawar Halqa Judda in Tehsil Arnas, District Reasi.

According to ACB officials, the case was registered on the basis of a verification conducted into allegations that the accused, along with the then Naib Tehsildar Tikri Faqir Chand (now deceased), had illegally attested Mutation No. 2338 dated August 9, 2006 under Section 6 of the Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976.

The mutation pertained to Khasra No. 871 Min measuring one kanal, through which ownership rights were conferred in favour of Chuni Lal, son of Inder Dass, resident of Mand, for one kanal (Gair Mumkin Dukan), and in favour of Subash Chander, Kuldeep Kumar and Mohan Lal, sons of Parmanand, residents of Mand, Tehsil and District Udhampur, for six marlas (Gair Mumkin Dukan).

During verification, ACB found that Section 6 of the Agrarian Reforms Act is applicable only to dwelling houses occupied by a tiller and not to commercial establishments such as shops. "The accused public servants, in connivance with the beneficiaries, abused their official position for ulterior motives and conferred undue benefits by illegally attesting the mutation in violation of established rules," the ACB official said.

The investigation revealed that the mutation was processed despite the fact that the provisions of Section 6 of the Agrarian Reforms Act were neither applicable nor operative in the said case, thereby facilitating illegal transfer of ownership rights.

Officials further stated that Mohd Saleem Banday was recently arrested by ACB in another trap case registered as FIR No. 04/2026 at Police Station ACB Udhampur-Reasi, Jammu, and is presently lodged in judicial custody. Another case, FIR No. 06/2013, has also been registered against him at the then Police Station Vigilance Organisation Jammu (now ACB), which is currently under investigation.

"The Anti-Corruption Bureau remains committed to taking strict action against corrupt practices in government offices and will continue to pursue such cases to ensure that those involved in abuse of official position are brought to justice," the ACB official said.

CB files charge...

and Parveen Kumar. As the case is more than a decade old, it was investigated by several Investigating Officers over time. Finally, Inspector Nisar Ahmed completed the investigation and presented the charge-sheet before the competent court for judicial determination.

SSP SCW Crime Branch Jammu, Sanjay Parihar, appealed to the general public to remain cautious and avoid falling prey to fraudulent schemes offering unrealistically low interest loans or unusually high returns on investments.

He, however, reiterated the Crime Branch's commitment to bringing fraudsters to justice and protecting the public from financial crimes.

One dead in...

heavy snowfall at the Sinthan Top connecting Kishtwar in Jammu region with south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

"On March 15, information was received that 235 civilians were stranded at Sinthan top due to heavy snowfall and severe weather conditions. Troops of the White Knight Corps were immediately mobilised to launch a swift rescue operation despite the treacherous terrain and relentless snowfall.

"Braving extreme weather and snow-blocked roads, the rescue teams reached Sinthan top and provided the stranded civilians with hot meals, drinking water and shelter. Repair and recovery teams restored the mobility of the stranded vehicles, while passengers from the unrecoverable vehicles were safely evacuated.

"Medical teams rendered assistance and essential medicines to those in need," the White Knight Corps said in a post on X.

"The mission witnessed seamless coordination between the Army, J-K Police and the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation, reaffirming the Army's unwavering commitment to safeguarding lives in the harshest conditions," the post added. Kishtwar Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma, along with SSP Naresh Singh and the commanding officer of the 11 Rashtriya Rifles, supervised the rescue operation, which continued for several hours, the officials said.

Meanwhile, most higher reaches of Kashmir received moderate to heavy snowfall, while the plains were lashed by rains, disrupting vehicular movement in some stretches, officials said.

Several vehicles got stuck following heavy snowfall along the Sinthan Top following which police and army carried out a rescue operation on Sunday night to evacuate 214 stranded tourists and locals, they said.

Officials said the tourist resorts of Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, Doodhpathri in central Kashmir's Budgam district, and Sonamarg in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, received moderate snowfall.

They said the higher reaches, including Pir Ki Gali along the Mughal Road in Shopian district of south Kashmir; Zojilla axis, Gurez in north Kashmir's Bandipora, Sadhna Top in north Kashmir's Kupwara, and Sinthan Top, connecting Anantnag in south Kashmir to Kishtwar in Jammu region, received heavy snowfall.

Sadhna Top has received over 12 inches of fresh snowfall, while Sinthan Top around six inches, they added.

The officials said the snowfall has led to the closure of the vital road links in the valley, including the Gurez-Bandipora road, Sinthan-Kishtwar road, and the Mughal Road, the alternate road connecting the Kashmir Valley with the Jammu region.

They said vehicular movement has also been suspended on the Srinagar-Leh highway due to accumulation of snow at Zojila Pass.

The plains of the valley, including Srinagar, were lashed by rains which continued intermittently till Monday morning.

Srinagar city recorded 15.9 mm of rainfall over the last 24 hours.

Pahalgam tourist resort, which also serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra, received 15.7 mm of rains.

The wet weather has brought down the temperatures across the valley.

Srinagar city recorded the maximum temperature of 11.5 degrees Celsius on Sunday, which was nearly four degrees lower than normal, the officials said.

The other weather stations across the valley also registered below normal

temperatures.

The lower temperatures broke the trend of unusually higher day temperatures prevalent in the valley over the last few weeks.

The Meteorological Department has forecast erratic weather till March 20.

It said there is a possibility of a brief spell of light rain or snow in the higher reaches, at isolated places on Monday and Tuesday.

From March 18-20, the weather will remain generally cloudy with a possibility of intermittent light to moderate rain or snow at many places.

The MeT Office said another wet spells is likely on March 24-25, with light rain, or snow in the higher reaches, at scattered places.

It said there is a possibility of thunder or gusty winds, about 40-50 kmph, at a few places on Monday, and March 18-20.

The weather office has advised farmers to suspend farm operations till March 20.

J&K: 1.60 lakh...

revealed. Jammu district reported the highest number of shifted entries at 6,840, followed by Rajouri with 4,791 and Anantnag with 3,745.

Overall, the total electorate in Jammu and Kashmir stands at 87,42,878, including 44,65,161 male voters, 42,77,568 female voters, and 149 third gender voters, it added.

Officials said several steps are being taken to achieve 100 per cent voter enrolment, particularly among under-registered groups.

These include the special summary revision conducted under the Representation of the People Act, which now allows four qualifying dates in a year - January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1 - for voter registration.

LG, CM greet...

and divine grace. May the Almighty accept our prayers on this blessed night, and continue to guide us on the path of love, unity, and communal harmony."

On the sacred occasion of Shab-e-Qadr (Lailat-ul-Qadr), which is being observed tonight, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah highlighted the immense spiritual significance of the blessed night, which falls in the last ten days of the holy month of Ramadan and is regarded as a night of divine mercy, forgiveness and countless blessings.

He said that Shab-e-Qadr offers an opportunity for believers to engage in prayers, seek forgiveness and strengthen their commitment to the values of compassion, humility and service to humanity.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that the prayers offered on this sacred night would bring peace, prosperity and harmony to Jammu and Kashmir and the entire country.

He urged people to remember the underprivileged and those in need, and to continue upholding the spirit of unity, brotherhood and mutual respect that forms the essence of the holy month.

The Chief Minister prayed for the well-being of the people and wished that the blessings of this holy night bring peace, happiness and progress to every household.

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, in his message, said that the holy night of Shab-e-Qadr holds immense religious and spiritual significance for the Muslim community, as it is a time of deep devotion, reflection and prayers.

He said that on this sacred night, people seek divine blessings from the Almighty and pray for peace, prosperity and well-being of all. "Let us pray for continued harmony, brotherhood and progress in our society," he said.

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs Javed Ahmed Rana; Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo; Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Darand Minister for FCS&CA, IT, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Science and Technology, Satish Sharma also greeted people.

Two JSD SEs adjusted, 2 XEns get additional charge

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Government posted two Superintendent Engineers and accorded additional charge to two Executive Engineers in Jal Shakti Department (JSD).

According to the order issued by Shaleen Kabra, Financial Commissioner (ACS), Jal Shakti Department, Kulwant Singh, I/c Superintendent Engineer, awaiting orders of posting, has been posted at PHE Mech. Rural Circle- Jammu; Raise Maqbool Masoodi, I/c Superintendent Engineer, awaiting orders of posting, has been posted at PHE Mech. Circle (South) Srinagar; Sudesh Sharma, I/c Executive Engineer; PHE Mech. North Division Jammu, shall also hold the additional charge of the vacant post of PHE Mech Rural Division Jammu; and Gowhar Nazir Qureshi, I/c Executive Engineer, Mech. Irrigation Division, Shadipora shall also hold the additional charge of the vacant post of PHE Mech. Division North Sopore.

J&K Govt rolls out PM-RAHAT scheme to save road accident victims

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government has launched the PM-Road Accident Victims Hospitalization and Assured Treatment (PM-RAHAT) Scheme, aiming to provide timely medical aid to the road accident victims.

According to an official communique received in this regard from Transport Department, the initiative ensures cashless treatment up to Rs 1.5 lakh per victim in over 140 designated hospitals during the critical "Golden Hour", covering up to 7 days from the accident date, thereby ensuring immediate medical care and significantly improving the chances of survival.

All the concerned departments including the Transport, Health, Police and district administration shall work in close coordination for effective implementation of the scheme besides ensuring prompt response in case of road accidents.

The government has urged the public to report road accidents to the nearest police station or control room, helping the victims reach the designated hospitals quickly so that timely treatment can be provided under the scheme.

The good Samaritans, a Rah-Veer, assisting the accident victims will receive Rs 25,000 and a Certificate of Appreciation. In case more than one person assists in rescuing the victim, the award amount shall be shared equally among them. In addition, 10 National Level Awards of ₹1,00,000 each will be given annually to the most deserving Rah-Veers.

The scheme will facilitate immediate medical care to the road accident victims and improve their chances of survival.

Khajur Singh Thakur, Ali Shaida from J&K among 24 authors to receive Sahitya Akademi Award

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Eminent Dogri writer Khajur Singh Thakur and Kashmiri poet Ali Shaida have been selected for the Sahitya Akademi Award 2025 for their outstanding contribution to Dogri and Kashmiri languages literature.

Dogri writer Khajur Singh Thakur has been honoured for his poetry collection Thakur Satsayie, a compilation of couplets reflecting the richness of Dogri literary tradition whereas poet Ali Shaida received the award in the Kashmiri language category for his poetry collection "Najdavaneky Pot Aalav".

The prestigious award will be presented by the Sahitya Akademi at a ceremony scheduled on March 31, 2026, in New Delhi. The award carries a copper plaque, a traditional shawl and a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000.

A total of 24 authors in as many languages who will receive the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2025, the National Academy of Letters announced on Monday.

The announcement has come months after the academy cancelled a scheduled press conference in December 2025 to declare the awards.

"Sahitya Akademi is happy to announce today its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards in 24 Indian languages recognised by it. 8 books of poetry, 4 novels, 6 books of short stories, 2 essays, 1 literary criticism, 1 autobiography and 2 memoirs have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025," it said in a statement.

The awardees will receive a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and an amount of Rs 1 lakh at a ceremony on March 31, the academy said.

Other awardees include English author and former ambassador Navtej Sarna and Hindi writer Mamta Kalia, Prasun Bandyopadhyay for "Shrestha Kabita" in Bengali, Yogesh Vaidya for "Bhattkhadaki" in Gujarati, Amresh Nugadoni for "Dada Seerisu Tande" in Kannada, N Prabhakaran for "Maayamanushyar" in Malayalam, Raju Baviskar for "Kalyanilya Resha" in Marathi, Jinder for "Safety Kit" in Punjabi, Jitender Kumar Soni for "Barkhama" in Rajasthani and Sa Tamilselvan for "Thamiz Sirukathaiyin Thadangaal" in Tamil.

Pritpal Singh Betab for "Safar Jari Hai" in Urdu, Nandini Sidha Reddy for "Animesha" in Telugu, Bhagwan Atlani for "Waghoo" in Sindhi, Sumitra Soren for "Mid Birna Chenne Saon Inag Sagai" in Santali, Mahamahopadhyay Sahu Bhadrashdas for "Prasthanacaustayee Brahmaghosah" in Sanskrit, Girijakumar Baliyar Singh for "Padapurana" in Odia, Prakash Bhattarai for "Nepali Paramparik Sanskriti Ra Sahyata Ko Dukuti" in Nepali and Haobam Nalini for "Kanglamdriba Eephtut" in Manipuri are also among the recipients of the award.