

## Villagers near LoC in J-K ecstatic as Indo-Pak ceasefire enters third year

JAMMU, Mar 5:

Mohammad Yousuf Kohli is constructing a new house for his family of six in a forward village near the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district, a dream which he says is fulfilled only because of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan that entered its third year last month.

The border villagers are enjoying peace along the borders by going for normal activities like tending their land and grazing their cattle without the fear of cross-border shelling.

The villagers said they are praying for continuation of the agreement so that the schooling of their children is not affected and benefits of developmental activities reach the last village on the border.

On February 25, 2021, India and Pakistan announced implementation of renewed ceasefire along the borders in Jammu and Kashmir, which came as a major relief to the people living along the LoC and the International Border. India and Pakistan had initially signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003, but Pakistan frequently violated the agreement with over 5,000 violations reported in 2020 - the highest in a single year.

"For the last four years, my

family was thinking of constructing a new house but we were not able to do this as ceasefire violation was a regular scene in our village," Kohli's elder son Ibrar Ahmad, a college student, said at the construction site in his Niaka village which is close to the LoC.

He said even repairing houses damaged due to shelling was a distant dream as venturing out of the house was like going into the death trap.

"No mason or labourer used to come for work in our village. But things have changed now and we are living our lives in a calm atmosphere with everyone busy in their normal routine," he said.

Niaka is the last village on the Indian side in Tarkundi sector of Manjakote tehsil and was witness of intense shelling before February 2021. Two women of the village died when a mortar shell from Pakistan hit their houses in the village in 2017.

Mohammad Nazir (41), another villager, said it was their dream to live a dignified life, where there is no threat of shelling and firing, children attend their school and farmers work in their fields without any threat to their lives.

"In those times, we were not

even able to sleep inside our homes," he said.

Nazir said the Government needs to focus more on the border villages to undertake developmental activities to ensure basic facilities, including potable water, good roads and electricity.

"The residents of Ratti Mitti, Chitti Bakri, Niaka, Chamba, Panjgrian, Peryali and others are economically weaker and are facing a lack of basic amenities, including good schools and health centres, which are just for the namesake," he said.

Farooq Ahmad, a farmer, said silence of guns on the LoC came as a big relief for them and they are moving around, tending their fields and grazing cattle without any tension.

"The ceasefire should last forever. There is nothing like a peaceful atmosphere," he said.

Mohammad Yousif, a social activist, said things have improved to a major extent due to the ceasefire in the last two years and everyone in the area wants this peace pact to continue.

"Only we know the hardships of cross-border shelling. No outsider can even imagine the life in those nightmare days," he said, recounting the horror when people were forced to spend several days inside their houses due to heavy shelling.

"We have struggled to live and are fortunate enough that no bullet or mortar shell brought our death despite dozens of shells falling very close to our houses," he said, pointing that there are no houses in the village without a splinter mark. (PTI)

## India summons Swiss envoy over anti-India posters in Geneva

NEW DELHI, Mar 5:

India on Sunday summoned the Swiss ambassador and lodged a protest over the issue of putting up "unfounded and malicious anti-India" posters in front of the UN building in Geneva, official sources said.

Swiss ambassador to New Delhi Ralf Heckner conveyed to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) that he would convey India's concerns to Bern with all the seriousness it deserves, they said.

Several posters alleging harassment of minorities and women were put up at a square outside the UN building in Geneva coinciding with a session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

"The embassy has conveyed India's concerns to Bern with all the seriousness it deserves," Heckner said in a brief statement.

A purported video of the posters in front of the UN building was also circulating on social media.

"The secretary (West), MEA, today called in the Swiss ambassador and raised the issue of unfounded and malicious anti-India posters in front of the UN building in Geneva," said a source.

"The Swiss Ambassador said that he would convey India's concerns to Bern with all the seriousness it deserves," it said.

The envoy said the posters in Geneva are part of the space provided to all, but in no way endorse the claims, nor reflect the position of the Swiss government, the sources added.

It is learnt that similar posters were put up in the past as well during sessions of the UNHRC. (PTI)

## Shift ITI College Udhampur to Gole Market Old Hospital

At present the District Hospital Udhampur is catering the demand of needed masses of wide spread mountainous Districts like Udhampur, Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, Kathua, Samba, Reasi etc. etc. as it is well connected with the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and Dhar road whereon the accidents are a common feature. Consequently, the rush at District Hospital is ever-increasing. But due to paucity of land the much required expansion of this medical institute is not possible.

It is pertinent to mention here that the present ITI College Udhampur is situated just adjacent to District Hospital Complex Udhampur. In view of the modern education/training system of ITI the present premises of ITI Udhampur is not sufficient for the needed expansions and up-gradations of multiple nature.

Hence it is suggested that the said ITI College may be shifted to the Old Hospital building located in the heart of Udhampur city at Gole Market. The double storey building on a large sized piece of land at Gole Market Udhampur is lying vacant presently. When the Old Hospital here was shifted to the present District Hospital Complex the Old Hospital premises functioned as Government Women College, Udhampur for a few years. Thereafter, the Polytechnic College was housed here for some time. Now the Polytechnic College also stands shifted to its own campus at Village Chakhar. There is ample scope of needed up-gradation and expansion for ITI College Udhampur.

It is also significant to add here joyfully that the Government of J&K is opening a Medical College at Udhampur and at the initial stage has decided to start the medical classes at District Hospital Udhampur. If the present ITI College premises is merged with District Hospital Udhampur there could be huge space and scope for all types of much required medical facilities for the huge masses of the above named districts as well as road accident victims of the above highways. The Lt. Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir Manoj Sinha's kind attention is drawn towards the very noble cause.

Apart from this the large sized old Jail premises, presently Fire and Emergency Service Station, adjacent to Police Station Udhampur is another suitable location to keenly consider for the ITI's shift. This spot too is in the centre of Udhampur city.

**Swatantra Dev Kotwal (Advocate)**  
District Court Complex, Udhampur

## Instal street lights in Swarn Vihar

It is once again requested to JMC authorities and concerned corporator to replace some non-functional street lights in Swarn Vihar. All most all streets have one or two lamps fused, and need to be replaced by new ones. This has become even more necessary as during summer time insects and snakes make their presence on roads and lanes. Besides, it becomes difficult to venture outside homes in pitch darkness.

Hope, the matter is taken into consideration by the authorities.  
**Sushil Kumar**  
Swarn Vihar, Jammu

## Halaran Higher Sec sans staff

Halaran is located about 60 kilometres from District Doda and about 15 kilometres from Kahara. Government High school of Halaran was upgraded to Higher secondary school in the year 2008. It was a great gift given by the Government to the people of Halaran and adjoining areas. But to our surprise this important higher secondary school has been given a step-motherly treatment by the Department of education with respect to staff members. It has always been without teaching staff right from its establishment. At present out of 26 sanctioned posts of teaching faculty only 7 posts are filled. It is unfortunate that at present only two lecturers each of Chemistry and urdu are there in this Higher secondary school.

There are no faculty members of important subjects like English, physics, Mathematics, Botany, Zoology, Computer science, Political Science, Hindi, Economics, Sociology, Islamic studies etc. It is pertinent to mention that our wards are unable to

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choose subjects like Environmental science, History and Physical Education in 11th and 12th as these subjects are not sanctioned in this school.

We the inhabitants of Halaran, Kencha, Sichil, Budhi, Joura request the present administration in general and education department in particular to look into this matter at an earliest so that the future of our children is not destroyed. Hopefully immediate action will be taken and our children will get complete teaching staff in the coming session.

**Anil Kumar (Sarpanch Jaura)**  
Halaran Joda

## Replace old water pipes in Lane-I Anand Nagar

We the inhabitants of Lane-I, Anand Nagar Bohri Jammu (Ward No. 41) want to draw the attention of LG Administration towards scarcity of water in our colony.

One of the reasons of scarcity and contaminated water in our area is the leaking pipes. These pipes have been laid some decades back and had been catering to a small population. Though population has increased manifolds since then, but these pipes have not been replaced so far. Now these have become rusted, broken, and are leaking at various places. Oodles of water gets wasted through these pipes, and whatever remains get contaminated. As a result people use this water, and get water borne diseases in turn.

Therefore, it is requested that these pipes be replaced by new GI pipes of bigger width so that water supply is safe and augmented.

It is also requested that water be supplied regularly to the area.

**M K Jotshi**  
President Mohalla  
Welfare Committee, Anand Nagar

## New study suggests herbal drug Neeri KFT can heal ailing kidney

NEW DELHI, Mar 5:

Neeri KFT, an Indian traditional ayurvedic polyherbal formulation, has been found to be effective in regulating the functions of at least six genes variants causing kidney dysfunction, researchers have said ahead of the World Kidney Day on March 9.

Though the herbal drug, manufactured by AIMIL Pharma, is already known for its therapeutic properties, researchers from Jamia Hamdard's Centre of Excellence (CoE) for the first time conducted a trial to investigate nephro-protective action of the drug against genes related to kidney dysfunction using in-silico, in-vitro and in-vivo approaches.

The results were encouraging in all the categories.

The researchers explained that six genes -- CASP, IEL, AKT, ACE-2, AGTR-1 and SOD-1 -- are responsible for regulating the functioning of the kidney. In other words, proteins associated with these genes help in ensuring the health of this vital organ. Any variation in these molecules can complicate or damage the kidney structure.

The study found that the compounds such as gallic acid, caffeic acid and ferulic acid were the major constituents of Neeri KFT, while network pharmacology analysis indicated a strong interaction between polyphenols and the genes involved in the pathophysiology of kidney disease.

Similarly, the in-vivo study showed a significant ameliorative effect of the herbal drug on biochemical markers and antioxidant enzymes and it regulated inflammatory cytokine expression in kidney tissues. Sanchit Sharma from AIMIL Pharma pointed out that the herbal formulation based on time-tested phytoconstituents of extracts of medicinal plants like punarnava, giloy, gokhru, palash and varuna has been developed after intensive scientific research.

The study published in the journal Biomedicine offers a ray of hope to several patients with kidney diseases which are on the rise in the country as in the world.

In fact, the first phase of a pan-India study conducted by the Indian Society of Nephrology has found that of the people suffering from diabetes and blood pressure, at least 30 per cent were detected with chronic kidney disease, a condition which rarely shows any early symptoms and leads to gradual kidney failure. (PTI)

## India's per capita income doubles since 2014-15

NEW DELHI, Mar 5:

India's per capita income in nominal terms doubled to Rs 1,72,000 since 2014-15 when the Narendra Modi-led NDA came to power but uneven income distribution remains a challenge.

As per the National Statistical Office (NSO), the annual per capita (net national income) at current prices is estimated at Rs 1,72,000 in 2022-23, up from Rs 86,647 in 2014-15, suggesting an increase of about 99 per cent.

In real terms (constant prices), the per capita income has increased by about 35 per cent from Rs 72,805 in 2014-15 to Rs 98,118 in 2022-23.

"You are looking at GDP in current prices, but if you account for inflation, the increase is much less," said noted development economist Jayati Ghosh on doubling of per capita income in nominal terms.

She further said distribution is critical.

"Most of this increase has accrued to the top 10 per cent of the population. By contrast, median wages are falling, and possibly even lower in real terms," said the former JNU professor.

As per the NSO data, the per capita income dipped during the Covid period, both in real and nominal terms. However, it has picked up in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Former director of premier

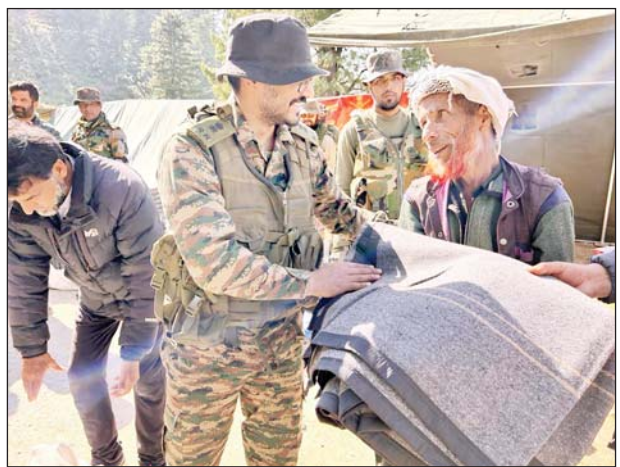
economic research institute NIPFP Pinaki Chakraborty said as per the World Development Indicator data base, average growth of India's per-capita income in real term for the period from 2014 to 2019 was 5.6 per cent per annum.

"This growth is significant. We have seen improvements in income related to health, education, and economic and social mobility. Covid impacted us badly. However, we have seen significant economic recovery after Covid.

"Sustaining per-capita income growth at 5 to 6 per cent per annum with appropriate redistributive policies will help sustain this momentum. We also have to factor in unevenness in growth within the country. Balanced regional development will act as a catalyst for higher growth," he said.

The Modi Government has taken several pro-poor initiatives, and is trying to ensure benefits of Government schemes reach the needy people directly. The measures include a mega financial inclusion drive like opening Jan Dhan accounts and MUDRA loan scheme; focus on digitisation; and free distribution of ration under Right to Food programme.

Nagesh Kumar, Director, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID), said per capita incomes have increased in real terms and they do reflect rising prosperity. (PTI)



Indian Army providing blankets to landslide affected families in Duskar area of Ramban district on Sunday.

## Army organises mobile med camp for landslide affected families

Excelsior Correspondent

RAMBAN, Mar 5: Indian Army along with NGO Goonj organised a mobile medical camp and also distributed ration and blankets among the flood affected families here at Duskar area of the District on Sunday.

A press statement said that the medical camp was aimed at reaching out to the poor people in the isolated region of the District and providing the people living there with the medical advice free-of-cost.

Besides free health check-up, medicines, blankets and ration

was also distributed among the families displaced due to a landslide that hit the region earlier, said the statement.

"More than 80 people got benefited from the camp, an Army official said.

Meanwhile, the local were educated about the importance of hygiene and sanitation and its role in prevention of various diseases especially during natural calamities.

The locals appreciated the Army for organising the camp and hoped that similar camps would be held in their village in future.

## Baru presses for early blacktopping of Hazuribag Road

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 5: Senior BJP leader and councillor Sanjay Kumar Baru accompanied by officials of JMC, UEED and PWD departments toured ward number 41 to pinpoint the proposed development works of ward for the financial year 2023-24.

Baru said the construction work of 1350 m deep drain with cost of 4.5 crores from Dewan Breweries Bohri Chowk via Hazuri Bagh up to Santra Morh Nallah will be completed next week. He said that with the completion of this project, the local residents will be eased in their day to day activities.

During the tour, Baru pressed the officials of the PWD and UEED department to do black topping on the Bohri-Hazuribagh

road on priority, which was affected due to the construction of the deep drain from Bohri Chowk to KC Hazuribag.

Speaking on the occasion, Sanjay Baru said that the development in Jammu City on the micro level has always been on the agenda of the BJP and Union Government which is run by the mission of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas". As advocated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP activists are dedicatedly taking developmental tasks to the doorsteps of the common masses, he added.

UEED JE Anoop Singh, BMA president Nischal Sawhney, general secretary Pyare Lal Mawa, Sanjeev Sharma, Daloo Gupta, Sikander, Kali Bhagat, local BJP leaders, and prominent citizens were present on the occasion.



Students posing with chief guest Mayor Rajinder Sharma and others at Jammu on Sunday.

## Kidzee celebrates Annual Day

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 5: Kidzee Rehari Colony branch celebrated its 5th Annual Day at Police Auditorium, here today.

JMC Mayor Rajinder Sharma was the chief guest, while Kuldip Gupta MD was also present during the function.

A cultural programme with the theme on different colours of India was performed by little kids which mesmerized the people present in the function

including the parents of the kids. The chief guest appreciated the management as well as staff and students for such a wonderful programme. He also praised the School for the confidence being built among the kids.

Havi Gupta Principal welcomed the chief guest as well as parents and all the participants.

The vote of thanks was presented by Rasmeet Kour and the programme ended with the National Anthem.

## 100 kg poppy straw seized from truck, 2 smugglers arrested

Excelsior Correspondent

UDHAMPUR, Mar 5: In a major success, Udhampur Police seized 100 kg of poppy straw from a truck at Jakhani Checking Point on the National Highway, under the jurisdiction of Police Station Udhampur.

The truck bearing registration number RJ-07-3981, which was coming from Kashmir Valley towards Udhampur, was intercepted by a Police team, led by SHO Udhampur, Inspector Raghubir Singh, under the supervision of Dy SP Headquarters, Gurmeet Singh.

During checking, Police

recovered 100 kg of poppy straw along with weight of packing material from the truck. Police arrested two inter-State smugglers who were smuggling the poppy straw in the said vehicle.

The arrested persons disclosed their identities as Boota Singh, son of Subegh Singh of Ferozpur, Punjab and Amritpal Singh, son of Kulbir Singh of Ferozpur, Punjab.

In this connection, a case FIR number 122/2023 under relevant sections of law have been registered at Police Station Udhampur and further investigation of the case has been taken up.



Toddlers performing a cultural item during the annual day function at Jammu on Sunday.

## MNKG Montessori celebrates Annual Day

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 5: MNKG Montessori Public High School celebrates its Annual Day and prize distribution function in the School premises, here today.

Prof. Sarla Kohli, former-Principal of GGM Science College was the chief guest. She was received by the School Principal Prof. Gurdip Kour and presented with a bouquet by Prisha Madaan, while Prof. MK Jyoti, Ex-Director, Distance Education, Jammu University was the guest of honour.

The programme started with march past followed by Swagatam dance by Amrita, a nursery student. All the dignitaries lit the lamp. Principal gave a welcome speech by emphasizing the importance of extracurricular activities along with studies for complete development of personality of children.

Various impressive items

and lively colorful dance were performed by the students which was applauded by the audience. A kit on drug addiction presented by fourth and fifth class was an eye opener for the parents to be vigilant enough not to let their children go astray.

The chief guest appreciated the combined effort of the School management, staff and students. She narrated how our society has undergone a tremendous change from a head of family run home to children dominated homes since the last 60 years with different ideologies.

The certificates, awards and medals were given to the students by the chief guest, while chief guest, guest of honour and staff were also presented with mementoes presented by the Chairman Rabinder Singh.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks followed by the National Anthem sung by toddlers.

## 12 Indians stranded in Libya for two months rescued

NEW DELHI, Mar 5:

A joint effort of the National Commission for Minorities, Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian embassy in Tunisia helped rescue 12 Indian workers who were stranded in Libya for the past two months.

They were illegally taken to Libya from Punjab by an agent who promised them lucrative jobs, good salary and a happy life.

A statement released by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) informed that after they were taken to Libya,

they were offered jobs in private companies without any salary and kept as bonded labour. They also alleged that they were brutally beaten and not even offered proper food.

NCM chairperson Iqbal Singh Lalpura received a representation from some local leaders with a request to bring them back as they belong to the minority communities.

Lalpura forwarded the representation to the ministry on February 6 and requested it to initiate action. The embassy of India in Tunisia was also contacted in this regard. (PTI)