



## Stop Exporting Terror into J&K : LG Manoj Sinha to Pakistan

Separatism, terrorism have no future in J&K; Conflict entrepreneurs won't be allowed to raise their heads again

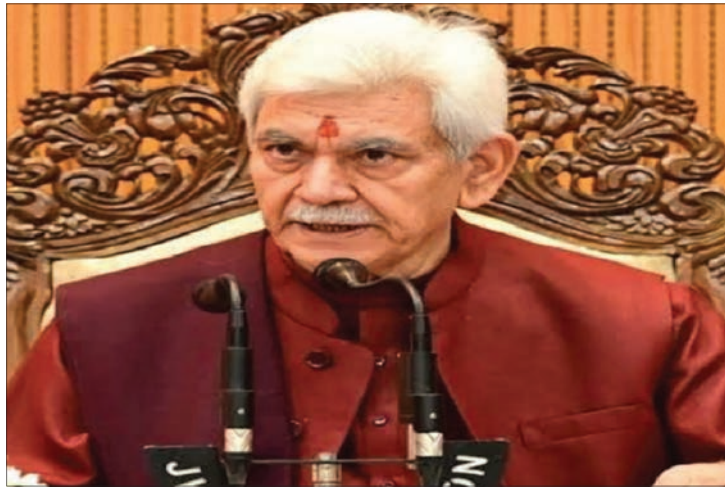
■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 19: Asking Pakistan to stop exporting violence, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that separatism and terrorism have no future in J&K. Talking to reporters after addressing a Sufi Conference "Noor-e-Sama" here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—) said, "It (Pakistan) is struggling with its internal problems. It is not even able to take care of civil rights. It should stop exporting terrorism."

He extended his felicitations to the Sufi Scholars, members of Sufi Score Limited, Save Youth Save Future Foundation and everyone associated with organizing a Sufi Conference "Noor-e-Sama" in Srinagar.

He said that "conflict entrepreneurs" won't be allowed to raise their heads again

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



### Lieutenant Governor addresses Sufi Conference at Srinagar

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 19:: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today addressed the Sufi Conference "Noor-e-Sama" at Srinagar.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations to the Sufi Scholars, members of Sufi Score Limited, Save Youth Save Future Foundation and every

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## CM Omar Abdullah reviews progress of EoDB for compliance reduction, Sets targets for reform implementation

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a high-level meeting at the Civil Secretariat to review the progress on Compliance Reduction and Deregulation under the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) framework aimed at making the regulatory environment more conducive for businesses.

Chief Minister reiterated Government's commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment and streamlining regulatory frameworks across various sectors.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## PM to distribute over 51,000 job letters virtually including J&K

### 15th Rozgar Mela on April 26

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will distribute over 51,000 appointment letters at the 'Rozgar Mela' on April 26 at 46 locations across the country including Jammu and Kashmir and address the fresh recruits virtually.

Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO),



Incharge DoPT, Dr Jitendra Singh will moderate the 'Rozgar Mela' from New Delhi.

Official sources told the Excel-

sior that the appointees in the Rozgar Mela belong to different departments but the majority has been recruited in Revenue, Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) and Home.

The Rozgar Mela will be held at a total of 46 locations including the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

While the Prime Minister will distribute appointment letters and address the new recruits virtually, the Union Ministers and Chief Ministers of some States/Union

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## CM Omar Abdullah calls for joint efforts of Centre and J&K Govt to shape a better future

Jointly inaugurates multi-storeyed parking facility with Union MOS Dr Jitendra at Kathua

■ HT News Network



KATHUA, APRIL 19: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today reiterated that the progress and development of Jammu and Kashmir lies in cooperation between the J&K Government and the Central Government.

The Chief Minister made these remarks while jointly inaugurating a new multi-storeyed Municipal Parking Complex in Kathua, alongside Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh and local representatives.

The event was also attended by the Chairperson of the District Development Council, MLAs of Kathua, Jaserota, Hiranagar and Bani constituencies, Commissioner Secretary of Housing & Urban Development, Deputy Commissioner Kathua and other senior officials.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## ACB Files Two FIRs in Gagribal Land Grab, HokerSar Dredging Scam

■ HT News Network



SRINAGAR, APR 19: Two separate FIRs have been registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau in Srinagar over illegal constructions and financial fraud involving government officials and private entities.

While addressing a press conference, SSP ACB Srinagar Javid Hassan Bhat said the first case was registered following a complaint from the Intizamia Committee of Masjid Shareef Gagribal, alleging illegal construction by Iftikhar Sadiq, son of Rafiq Sadiq, on nearly 12 kanals of custodian land at Gagribal.

Verification revealed that Sadiq constructed five multi-storey hostel buildings in violation of J&K Building By-Laws 2011, in criminal conspiracy with officials of LAWDA, Town Planning Organisation, and

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Parliamentary panel on MHA to visit J&K from April 26

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 19: A six-day visit by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs to Jammu and Kashmir is scheduled to begin on April 26, and in preparation, the UT administration has appointed 25 Liaison Officers to assist with the visit.

Sources told KNS that the panel from the Ministry of Home Affairs will be in the region from April 26 to May 1, 2025, to undertake a detailed review of various sectors and ongoing developmental initiatives.

In an official order issued by the Jammu and Kashmir government—accessed by KNS—15 officers have been appointed for the Jammu Division and 10 for the Kashmir Division to facilitate and coordinate the

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## JKRLM engages OMPLIS, Kudumbashree NRO to bolster institutional support

CS takes stock of proposals put forth by these national organizations

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 19: In a significant stride towards strengthening the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM), Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, chaired a high level meeting with representatives of renowned national organizations, Kudumbashree National Resource Organiza-



tion (NRO) and Organisation for Management of Poverty and Livelihood Improvement Society (OMPLIS).

The agenda centered around leveraging national expertise for institutional support, training and capacity building of Self Help Groups (SHGs) across the Union Territory.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Heavy Downpour, Snowfall Bring Chill Back to Kashmir Hailstorm wreaks havoc in South Kashmir; Wet spell to continue till Monday

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APR 19: Jammu and Kashmir witnessed intermittent but heavy rainfall since last night bringing the mercury down across the Valley.

The higher reaches experienced fresh snowfall while the hailstorm continued to wreak havoc for the second straight day in South Kashmir.

The local Meteorological department

TURN ON.....PAGE 02



### No flood threat in Kashmir Valley: I&FC

SRINAGAR, APR 19: Irrigation and Flood Control department on Saturday dispelled any immediate flood threat across Kashmir Valley. While Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri directed officials to Respond immediately to distress calls if any.

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

### Kulgam, Shopian admins directed to assess hailstorm damages for compensation of affected families: Sakeena Itoo

SRINAGAR, APR 19 Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo has expressed

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## J&K Marriage Assistance Scheme becomes saviour for underprivileged families

Around 15 thousand cases sanctioned during last fiscal with financial assistance amounting to Rs.75 cr. (approx) transferred to beneficiary accounts

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 19: In a significant initiative aimed at handholding the economically weaker sections of the society by extending assistance vis-à-vis marrying-off their daughters, J&K Government's Marriage Assistance Scheme has turned out to be a blessing for under-



privileged families.

This social assistance scheme, implemented by Department of Social Welfare was launched with the objective of providing support for the marriage to those families who are not able to conduct it due to their poor financial condition. As far as the success of this scheme is concerned, a

TURN ON.....PAGE 02

## Karra Hints at NC-Congress Delhi Huddle; Dismisses Cabinet Expansion Rumors

Says NC- Congress leadership meet on cards to discuss future strategies in accordance with public mandate

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APR 19:: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) President Tariq Hamid Karra on Saturday indicated that Congress and National Conference leaders may soon meet in New Delhi to strategize for strengthening their political alliance in the Union Territory. Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir about his recent meeting with

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Karra clarified that the visit - which included Congress MP and J&K in-charge Sayeed Naseer Husain and CLP leader G.A. Mir - was purely a "courtesy call" and unrelated to cabinet expansion rumors.

"We are considering a Delhi meeting between Congress and NC leadership soon," Karra said. "The agenda will focus solely on consolidating our alliance and planning future strategies in accordance with the public mandate. Cabinet inclusion isn't part of these discussions."

The Congress leader reiterated his party's firm stance on statehood restoration, stating: "Our primary

TURN ON.....PAGE 02







## CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

### ACB

Custodian Department. Permission was initially granted for only three structures, but further approvals were issued in complete violation of regulations.

The buildings, ACB found, did not match approved plans and resembled resorts rather than hostels. Several officials are alleged to have abused their positions for personal gain. FIR No. 08/2025 has been filed at Police Station ACB Srinagar and investigation is underway.

In a separate case, FIR No. 07/2025 was registered based on a joint surprise check into alleged irregularities in the dredging of HokerSar Wetland at Narbal, executed by M/S Reach Dredging Ltd.

The dredging contract was allotted under NIT No.01 of 2018-19 for over Rs 20 crore with the condition that no material would be dumped within the wetland's periphery. However, works were executed on altered parameters without proper disposal measures for excavated material.

The ACB found manipulated specifications, clubbing of transportation leads from 8 km to 18 km, and unjustified payments which resulted in an estimated loss of Rs 2.29 crore to the exchequer, excluding royalty and environmental damage.

Those named include then Executive Engineers Siraj-Ud-Din Shah and Ghulam Ahmad Beigh, and then AEE Irfan Ahmad Reshi, who allegedly colluded with the contractor company. The case has been registered under the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act and relevant RPC sections. (JKNS)

### CM

The meeting was convened as part of the national initiative led by the Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India, in collaboration with key institutions including the PMO, NITI Aayog, DPIIT, and the Ministry of MSME.

The initiative focuses on eliminating redundant regulations, reducing compliance burdens—particularly for MSMEs—promoting digitization and single-window clearances, and decriminalizing business laws wherever necessary.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary Home, Principal Secretary PDD, Commissioner Secretary Industries and Administrative Secretaries of Housing & Urban Development, Forest, Rural Development, Public Works, Labour & Employment, Food Civil Supplies and Law Departments. Officers from Srinagar participated in the meeting via video conferencing.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah instructed all officers to break down the identified action plans—most of which have timelines of five to six months—into smaller, achievable deliverables on a fortnightly basis.

He emphasized the need to track progress closely and examine reasons for any delays.

He further directed that finalized action plans be promptly uploaded on the MIS portal and that implementation should begin without delay.

Stressing the importance of accountability, the Chief Minister laid down a review mechanism under which progress of reforms will be evaluated every two months.

Earlier, Commissioner Secretary Industries & Commerce Vikramjit Singh briefed the meeting on the efforts of the J&K State Task Force, headed by the Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.

The Task Force has identified 23 priority areas covering land use, labour reforms, building regulations, utility permissions, and broader governance practices.

He noted that action plans for each area have been developed in coordination with the concerned departments and include clear timelines and reform measures.

Key areas discussed during the meeting included the introduction of flexible zoning frameworks to allow mixed-use development, simplification and digitization of the land use change (CLU) process, fire service department clearances and rationalization of road width norms for rural industries along with updated building bylaws aimed at minimizing land loss.

### MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE

total number of 14965 cases have been sanctioned in Kashmir division during the year 2024-25 alone with financial assistance granted to beneficiaries amounting to Rs.74,82,50,000.

Among these, the residents of Baramulla District have turned out to be most aware of the scheme, with 2472 beneficiaries availing the benefits of the scheme involving assistance of Rs. 12,36,00,000 followed by Anantnag District with 2293 cases worth Rs. 11,46,50,000.

Ganderbal District has figured at the last among all districts in Kashmir division, with only 592 cases registered during 2024-25 and Rs.2,96,00,000 amount sanctioned to the beneficiaries.

Under this scheme, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) or Priority Household (PPH) Ration Card Holder families are eligible to

apply for financial assistance for marriage.

The financial assistance under the J&K Marriage Assistance Scheme for poor girls from for the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) ration card holder families is Rs.75,000 while for Priority Household (PPH) ration card holders the assistance being provided amounts to Rs 50,000.

This is a DBT Scheme through which the amount of financial assistance is directly transferred in the bank account of the beneficiary, ensuring that economically weaker sections receive support for marriage expenses in a smooth manner.

Girl beneficiaries whose age is 18 years or more with minimum qualification of 8th Pass or Equivalent are eligible to apply.

Eligible girls can apply for assistance at least one month before the date of marriage.

Documents including Date of Birth Certificate, AAY or PPH Ration Card, Adhaar Card and Education Qualification Certificate are needed at the time of applying for financial assistance under the said scheme.

Eligible beneficiaries can apply through Online Application Form available on Jansugam Portal. The intending beneficiaries can also reach the Jammu and Kashmir Social Welfare Department on its Helpline Number- 0191-2542759 and Helpdesk Email :- social-welfare.adm@gmail.com for further details about the scheme.

### MHA

committee's engagements during the tour.

The officers, drawn from multiple departments, have been entrusted with responsibilities to ensure the smooth conduct of the committee's visit. For Jammu Division, key officers include Abhishake Abrol (Additional Secretary, School Education), Harpal Singh, Rachna Sharma (Information Technology), Sheetal Pandita (Rural Development), and Manisha (Directorate of School Education).

For the Kashmir Division, officers such as Owais Mushtaq (Health & Medical Education), Nuzhat Khurshid (Tourism), Ata-ul Munim Tak, Shabnam Rashid (State Taxes), Raeis Ahmad Bhat, Shurjeel Ali Naik, Mir Zahida (IMPA&RD), Najwan Nazki (FCS&CA), Suhail ul Islam (SMC), Sartaj Hussain (Estates), Mantasha Binti Rashid (Rural Sanitation), Ajaz Ahmad Shah, Bashir Ahmad Lone (GM DIC Kulgam), Nasir Mehmood Khan (Tourism), and Syed Nadeem Iqbal Andrabi (Industries & Commerce) have been designated to oversee coordination in their respective departments.

As per the order, all appointed officers are required to report to the Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir respectively on April 23, 2025, for briefing on their duties and responsibilities during the committee's visit.—

### LG

in Jammu and Kashmir again. "The conflict entrepreneurs joined hands with our neighbour three decades ago and promoted terrorism and hatred for their own benefits. Their hands are smeared with the blood of innocents."

LG Sinha said, "These conflict entrepreneurs were running a big business of terror and violence and had turned people of Kashmir into cannon fodder."

He said that during the past few years security forces have worked hard to wipe out terror and conflict entrepreneurs from the scene. "Some conflict entrepreneurs are again trying to raise their head. I assure everyone that they won't be allowed to succeed in their nefarious designs. They will be crushed," he added. LG Sinha, as per, asked people to ensure that the "conflict profiteers" are ousted from the society and they should be punished for "corroborating with the enemies." "I urge the people, especially the young generation to identify and isolate the divisive elements and ensure that such conflict profiteers have no place in the society," he said.

"I am happy that youth of Jammu and Kashmir have understood the conspiracies that were hatched against the people by the neighbouring country and by these conflict profiteers. Youth have rejected them and are giving them a befitting reply," LG Sinha said.

### SOFIISM

one associated with the initiative. "Sufism is the most powerful force for peace and harmony in society. Sufism means a way of life. It is a bond of love with the whole and a loving relationship with God. Sufism is the ultimate art of removing divisions and bringing hearts closer," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that the ultimate aim of Sufism is to foster the awakening in the society and promote compassion and interconnectedness.

"Sufism emphasises inner purification, love, and deep relationship with the divine. The journey on this path has the potential to unite people across backgrounds," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor spoke on the influence of Sufism in bridging social divides, and promoting peace and harmony within the communities.

"Since many centuries Sufism has acted

as a bulwark against extremist ideology and Sufism's narrative has been popular in countering extremist propaganda.

Sufi teachings completely reject any kind of violence, and discrimination. The Sufi teaching is a counterforce to extremist ideology and its mystical traditions through poetry, music and other creative expressions will strengthen counter-radicalisation efforts," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also recalled the invaluable contribution of saints from Jammu Kashmir in strengthening the bond of love, brotherhood, unity and harmony.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that few Conflict Profiteers, on behalf of the neighbouring country, are attempting to radicalize the youth for their own gain.

"I urge the people, especially the young generation to identify and isolate the divisive elements and ensure that such conflict profiteers have no place in the society," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also emphasized on a multi-pronged strategy to promote Sufi literature and Sufi education, and make Sufism popular among the youth to counter radical ideology. Sufi teachings, music, poetry should be conveyed to the youth through videos, podcasts and social media campaigns, he added.

He further called for connecting the youth influencers with the campaign to propagate Sufism and establishing a mentorship program where Sufi scholars guide young people, the Lieutenant Governor said.

Captivating performances by the Sufi Artists celebrating Jammu Kashmir's rich Sufi culture and traditions, remained one of the highlights of the event.

Shri Justice N. Kotiswar Singh, Judge, Supreme Court of India; Shri Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh; Shri Rajiv Agarwal from Sufi Score Limited; Shri Wajahat Farooq Bhat, Chairman, Save Youth Save Future Foundation, senior officials, Sufi scholars, members of Sufi Score and Save Youth Save Future Foundation, and people from all walks of life were present.

### CM, DR. JITENDRA

Addressing a large public gathering following the inauguration, the Chief Minister said, "From here, I want to convey to the people of Jammu and Kashmir that the progress of Jammu and Kashmir lies in the fact that the J&K government and the central government work together for the better future of Jammu and Kashmir."

He emphasized that providing essential services such as clean drinking water, electricity, better roads, healthcare, and education remains the foremost responsibility of his government.

"I assure the people of Jammu and Kashmir that we will continue to work in collaboration with the Central Government to ensure a better future for our citizens," he added.

Highlighting the importance of continuity in governance, Omar Abdullah stated, "My priority is to complete the projects already underway and to maintain the ongoing momentum of development."

He also acknowledged the announcement of a major project by Dr. Jitendra Singh in memory of former Union Minister Arun Jaitley. "I assure the people of Jammu and Kashmir that my government will extend full support to the Union Government to realise this vision. We will build such world-class infrastructure that one day, instead of watching IPL matches on TV, people will watch them live in Jammu and Kashmir."

Urging citizens to make use of the newly inaugurated facility, he said, "Please use this parking complex—it ensures your vehicle stays clean and safe. Let's all benefit from this modern infrastructure."

### PM

Territories will deliver the job letters physically among youth at 46 locations.

"A total of 51,000 job letters will be given in the Rozgar Mela, which will be 15th since it was started by the Prime Minister with a view to boost employment opportunities," the sources said.

"Rozgar Mela is a step towards fulfillment of the commitment of the Prime Minister to accord highest priority to employment generation. It will provide meaningful opportunities to the youth for their participation in nation building and self-empowerment," they said.

The Prime Minister will address the youth virtually while the Union Ministers and the Chief Ministers will address them physically at the venues where Rozgar Melas will be held.

April 26 Rozgar Mela will cover nearly a dozen departments of the Central Government where they will get jobs. However, majority of jobs are being given in Revenue, DoPT and Home Department including the paramilitary forces.

Modi had launched Rozgar Mela on October 22, 2022 as a step towards fulfillment of the commitment for employment generation in the country.

"Rozgar Mela is acting as catalyst in further employment generation and provides meaningful opportunities to the youth for

their empowerment and participation in National Development directly.

"The new appointees have been inducted into various Central Government Ministries/Departments/Public Sector undertakings (PSUs)/ Autonomous Bodies including Health and Educational institutes, Public Sector Banks and Administration of Union Territories (UTs) etc. Various Ministries and Departments have organized Rozgar Melas at about 45-50 locations across the country in which several lakh newly appointed candidates have received their letters of appointment so far," the sources said.

So far, 14 Rozgar Mela events have been organized at national level and this will be the 15th Rozgar Mela.

"The initiative of Rozgar Mela has enabled various Ministries and Departments as well as Government organizations to fill up their vacancies in Mission Mode. This has helped the Departments and organizations to provide high quality citizen services in Schools, Hospitals, Railway Stations, Police Stations, and Tax Offices etc. This has also benefited our defence and security organizations that will be able to better defend our borders and strategic assets," the sources said.

### CS

The meeting besides Principal Secretary, APD; Principal Secretary, Finance; Secretary, RDD; Secretary, Cooperatives; MD, JKRLM was attended by other concerned officers of the department.

The Chief Secretary acknowledged the transformative role of both the organisations in their respective geographies and invited them to extend their human resources and technical know-how to the UT. He emphasized the need for robust training of JKRLM staff and a strategic realignment of the mission to fully realize its potential in empowering women and alleviating poverty across the rural areas of the UT.

A detailed presentation by OMPLIS shed light on their impactful journey since inception in 1995, outlining how the organization has enabled thousands of women to break free from poverty. Their model, deeply rooted in financial empowerment and collective savings, has generated Rs 73 crore in savings and earned Rs 58 crore in interest for SHG members. Notably, loans amounting Rs 478 crore, along with Rs 4.18 crore as Community Investment Funds (CIF) and Rs 15.28 crore as soft loans, have uplifted over 6,500 families.

In a landmark decision, OMPLIS agreed to adopt one block each in Jammu and Kashmir on a pilot basis. The initiative will support the training programs for the field staff, strengthen Cluster Model Training Centres (CMTCS) and provide mentorship to SHG members to channel their livelihoods towards high impact outcomes.

Kudumbashree NRO, known for its pioneering community-led models across 22 States and UTs, presented a tailored plan to support JKRLM through scalable, market-linked initiatives. Their proposal emphasized on establishing Community-Based Marketing Aggregator Models to bridge SHGs with mainstream markets and e-commerce platforms besides extending support for branding, packaging and digital marketing of farm and non-farm products made by these SHGs.

They further proposed setting up of community-run food service enterprises, inspired by their India Food Court model, to integrate rural livelihoods with tourism and hospitality sectors in J&K.

The overall implementation strategy involves cloud-based, three-tier monitoring system to track outcomes and ensure accountability besides developing 20 model enterprises in the first year and creating a comprehensive operational manual with localized training modules for JKRLM staff and cadres.

The proposals by both the organizations received an encouraging response from the Chief Secretary, who underlined the UT Government's commitment towards building resilient, self-sustained rural communities through structured collaboration and innovation rooted in empowerment, enterprise and experience-driven transformation of this livelihood mission across the UT.

### KARRA

remains unchanged - without statehood, there can be no meaningful governance. This position is non-negotiable."

Karra said that joining the cabinet wasn't contemplated during their meeting with the Chief Minister. "The purpose was twofold: to welcome Naseer Hussain Sahib on his first J&K visit after assuming charge, and to reaffirm our alliance commitment," he said.

The Congress leader claimed that his party would continue being a responsible ally while vigorously pursuing its core political objectives. "Our approach remains principled and issue-based. We're committed to securing Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional rights through political engagement," Karra said—

### WEATHER

(MeT) had issued yellow and orange alerts

for the day, thereby warning of light to moderate snowfall and rains in Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the reports received by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the upper reaches of Jammu and Kashmir including Sithan Top, Tulail and other areas experienced fresh snowfall.

The plains including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, were lashed by the intermittent heavy rainfall. The hailstorm, however, continued to wreak havoc in multiple areas of Kulgam and Shopian districts of southern Kashmir, causing extensive damage to the fruit growers and orchardists.

Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad told that the moderate rain with intense showers accompanied with moderate to severe thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds are expected at many places of J&K till mid-night.

He also advised people to stay indoors, safe shelters & stay away from water bodies, loose structures & landslide prone areas.

The fresh spell of rains have once again recharged the water bodies including the lifeline of Kashmir—river Jhelum, which was flowing below normal maximum of times in the past six months.

According to KNO, the MeT has issued yellow alerts for the next two days till April 21, 2025.

### FLOODS

Div Com Kashmir directed officials to monitor the emergent situation on ground following incessant rains, gusty winds & hailstorm, and activate control rooms for effective assessment & response.

Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri directed Deputy Commissioners & officers while chairing an emergency meeting, here.

Div Com convened an emergency meeting in view of relentless rains to assess the overall situation and the damages caused to crops and structures by winds & hailstorm.

Taking the cognizance of various reports of damage to crops in Shopian district by hailstorm, and other minor damages to structures by wind in other places, Div Com directed concerned Deputy Commissioners to immediately provide relief to the affected persons following proper guidelines.

At the outset, the Irrigation & Flood Control Department shared the data of water level in different water channels & tributaries of Jhelum and dispelled any imminent threat of flood in the valley.

However, to address water logging issues in the city, Bidhuri instructed SMC for deployment & operation of dewatering pumps wherever required.

While reviewing the supply of essential services, he also directed CE KPDCL for immediate restoration of affected lines & repairation of transformers.

He also reviewed availability of essentials including food grains, LPG and Oil in the valley for the convenience of the general public.

To ensure safety of passengers, Div Com directed Traffic Police to issue advisory regarding traffic movement on hazardous or risky roads especially Gurez road, Mughal road, Sinthan Top, Razdan Top and other roads & passes so no one remains stranded.

Div Com also directed the Health Department for smooth functioning of hospitals & other healthcare institutions to render uninterrupted medical services and treatment to patients.

### SAKEENA ITOO

deep concern over the widespread damage caused by recent hailstorm which severely impacted orchards and farmlands in several areas of Kulgam and Shopian districts.

The Minister said that this weather calamity has dealt a significant blow to thousands of orchardists and farmers, many of whom are completely relying on the upcoming harvest season for their livelihood. "Our Government completely stands with the farming community in this difficult time. The loss is not just of produce, but of months of hard work and hope", Sakeena said.

The Minister said that the administrations of affected districts have been mobilized and directed to carry out immediate ground assessments of damages caused and ensure timely compensation is provided.

She further said that relevant departments have been directed to prioritize transparent coordination with local representatives and community leaders to expedite assessment of losses and necessary compensation to affected families.

The Minister reiterated the commitment of Omar Abdullah led government towards uplifting the conditions of orchardists and farmers by smooth implementation of various beneficiary oriented schemes like HADP, RKVY, KCC and others—

The Minister reiterated the commitment of Omar Abdullah led government towards uplifting the conditions of orchardists and farmers by smooth implementation of various beneficiary oriented schemes like HADP, RKVY, KCC and others.





# Div Com Kashmir assesses restoration of essential services

**Directs activation of control rooms, monitoring of situation on ground; instructs immediate response to distress calls**

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 19: Respond immediately to distress calls if any, monitor the emergent situation on ground following incessant rains, gusty winds & hailstorm, and activate control rooms for effective assessment & response, directed Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri to Deputy Commissioners & officers while chairing an emergency meeting, here today.

Div Com convened an emergency meeting in view of relentless rains to assess the overall situation and the damages caused to crops and structures by winds & hailstorm.

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Meanwhile, Director IMD informed meeting of the gradual improvement from late mid-night to afternoon tomorrow.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner SMC; Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, Directors of IMD, Health, Tourism, FCS&CA, VCLCMA, ULB, officers of various departments including Agriculture, Horticulture, School Education, Traffic, Transport, KPDCL, I&FC, PHE, PWD etc.

## Fire Damages Religious Seminary and Homes in Srinagar; Six Firefighters Injured

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Apr 19, : A devastating fire broke out in the Batamaloo area of Srinagar yesterday, damaging two three-storeyed residential houses and a single-storey structure housing the religious seminary "Madras Sal-Sabeel-ul-Saleem." The blaze, reportedly triggered by an electrical short circuit, caused extensive damage to property and left six firefighters injured during the operation.

The fire, which started in the single-storey seminary building, quickly spread to the adjoining residential houses. The attic of the seminary, used for storing rice and other supplies, was severely damaged, along with its roofing, ceiling, bedding, religious books, and clothing. The second floors of the two residential buildings also sustained partial damage, including household goods, furniture, and furnishings.

Six personnel from Fire and Emergency Services Department were injured while battling the flames. Zorawar Singh, in charge of DFO Headquarters, suffered an eye injury. Fireman Waseem Ahmad Ganie sustained fractures to his neck and arm and has been admitted to Bone and Joint Hospital, Srinagar. Four others, Ishfaq Ahmad, Bashir Ahmad, Suhail Raina, and Javeed Ahmad Baba were treated at the scene and later discharged. They are currently under observation at the F&ES medical unit at headquarters.

Police in this regard have registered a case. [KNT]

## DC Srinagar chairs comprehensive meeting of Revenue Officers

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today chaired a meeting of Officers here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review the functioning and progress of revenue related matters.

At the outset, DC took a detailed review of Revenue sector with special focus on scanning and digitalization of massavis and other revenue related record of all villages of the District.

The meeting was appraised that out of 137 revenue villages, data regarding 79 revenue villages has been forwarded to Administrative Department while the data regarding remaining villages will be forwarded after completion of the Scanning and Digitalization process.

On the occasion, the DC directed to constitute Tehsil level Committee to ensure that scanning and digitalization of massavis is completed within a period of 15 days.

Similarly, RDSLR, Central was directed to provide all logistic support for scanning and digitalization of the left out villages.



The DC also asked the Revenue Officers to monitor the process of revenue related activities in respective jurisdiction on periodical basis so that people do not face any inconvenience while availing revenue related services.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar, SDM East, SDM West, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, all Tehsildars and other senior functionaries of the Revenue Department of the District. At the outset, DC took a detailed review of Revenue sector with special focus on scanning and

digitalization of massavis and other revenue related record of all villages of the District.

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## Six Books of Sufi Poet Abdul Rashid Wado 'Majrooh' Launched at Literary Event in Chatabal Srinagar

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR/APRIL:19In a grand literary gathering organized by the Nigeen Cultural Foundation Nigeen Hazratbal in Patli Pora Chatabal Srinagar, six poetry books penned by the renowned Sufi poet Abdul Rashid Wadu, popularly known as "Majrooh," were officially released. The event was presided over by eminent broadcaster and writer Abdul Ahad Farhad and witnessed participation from a galaxy of literary figures.

The event was graced by internationally acclaimed journalist Ashraf Wani as the chief guest and senior journalist Farooq Wani as the guest of honor. Abdul Rashid Wado himself was present during the function, receiving heartfelt accolades from the literary fraternity.

The six poetry compilations launched during the ceremony include Dard Majrooh, Majrooh Diwan, Nidai-e-Majrooh, Sadai Majrooh, Nawai Majrooh, and Majrooh Sodai. The poetic works reflect themes of mysticism, pain, and spiritual depth, staying true to the Sufi and Rishi traditions of Kashmir.



Speaking on the occasion, Farooq Wani emphasized the importance of reviving and promoting the rich Rishi-Sufi heritage of the region. He praised Wado's contribution to keeping the spiritual and poetic traditions alive through his soulful verses.

The event was coordinated by noted journalist, writer, and poet Rasheed Rahil and was attended by several

celebrated literary personalities, including Abdul Rahman Fida, Altaf Hussain Noshahri, Gulfam Barji, Nazir Ahmad Gojwari, Sufi Ghulam Qadir Dar, Showkat Sahil and Ashraf Nisar.

The ceremony concluded with a call for continued efforts to preserve and celebrate the literary and spiritual ethos of Kashmir.

## Hakeem Yaseen seeks urgent Govt action as hailstorm wrecks orchards in Kashmir

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, April 19: President of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) and former Minister, Hakeem Muhammad Yaseen, on Saturday expressed deep grief and concern over the extensive damage caused to fruit orchards due to a severe hailstorm in various parts of Kashmir, including several areas of Budgam district such as Khansahib.

In a statement issued here, Hakeem Yaseen said that the untimely hailstorm has dealt a heavy blow to horticulturists in Khansahib, Burewa and other areas of the district, who were already grappling with economic challenges. "The losses suffered by the orchardists are substantial, and the government must immediately send special teams to assess the ground situation and evaluate the extent of damage," he said.

He urged the administration to ensure that affected farmers and orchardists are provided adequate compensation within a fixed timeframe so they can recover from this setback.

In addition to immediate relief measures, Hakeem Yaseen also called on the government to consider a complete waiver of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans for the affected growers, stating that such a step is crucial to ease their financial burden during this difficult time. "The government must act swiftly and sensitively to support the backbone of our rural economy. Horticulture is not just a livelihood but a way of life for thousands in Kashmir," he added.

## CRPF Jawan Injured After Tree Falls on Bunker Near Amar Singh Club Srinagar

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, Apr 19: A CRPF personnel was injured on Saturday after a tree fell on a bunker and gate near Amar Singh Club in Srinagar.

Official Sources told news agency JKNS that the tree, which was uprooted due to strong winds, crashed onto the CRPF installation, resulting in injuries to one jawan. He was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Authorities have taken note of the incident and launched clearance operations in the area.

## Commissioner SMC inspects Dewatering Operations in Srinagar

■ HT News Network



SRINAGAR, APRIL 19: In a decisive move to address waterlogging caused by heavy rainfall, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Owais Ahmed conducted a thorough inspection of dewatering operations across key areas of Srinagar. Accompanied by the Superintending Engineer (SE) Drainage Circle, Executive Engineers, and senior officials, the Commissioner reviewed the effectiveness of current drainage management measures to ensure swift and efficient water removal. During the inspection, Dr. Owais personally examined vulnerable hotspots and evaluated the operational strategies employed by field teams. He inspected permanent dewatering stations and assessed the deployment and functioning of advanced Mobile Pumping Units, which play a crucial role in controlling urban flooding. In addition, the Commissioner monitored the dewatering system through the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system—an advanced technology that enables real-time monitoring and management of drainage infrastructure. This integration aims to optimize water removal processes and prevent urban waterlogging during adverse weather conditions.

## SANJY-2025: DC Srinagar visits Yatra Transit Camp Pantha Chowk

■ HT News Network

SRINAGAR, APRIL 19: In wake of upcoming annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2025, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat today conducted extensive visit of Yatra Transit Camp, Pantha Chowk to take stock of arrangements being made for the convenience of pilgrims and smooth conduct of yatra. DC also inspected Yatra Bhawan to oversee available facilities and preparations regarding the annual yatra. On the occasion, DC inspected sites identified for setting up different facilities at the venue including Langer, health centre, RFID counter, besides arrangements related to electricity, drinking water, sanitation, parking space etc. On the occasion, he directed for ensuring close coordination among Departments to ensure all the arrangements are put in place well in advance before the commencement of the yatra. Further, he also inspected the spaces where Langars shall be established to serve food to the pilgrims during their stay at the camp.

## Two Killed, One Injured, 40 Sheep Dead as Lightning Strikes in Reasi

■ HT News Network

Reasi, Apr 19: Two persons lost their lives and one was injured after lightning struck Chantu Gali near Dugga in Tehsil Arnas of Reasi district on Saturday evening. An official said that the incident occurred around 8 PM under the jurisdiction of Police Station Arnas. A sudden cloudburst followed by intense lightning hit the area. The incident led to the death of Abdul Rasheed (60), son of Kalu, and Shahnaz Begum (25), wife of Mukhtiyar Ahmed, on the spot. Both were residents of Village Lamsora, Tehsil Bhomag in Reasi, official said. Another woman, Gulzar Begum (55), wife of Abdul Rasheed, sustained injuries in the incident. She too hails from Lamsora village. The injured woman was immediately shifted for medical treatment, official added. In the lightning strike, nearly 40 goats and sheep also perished. Police team from Police Post Dhansal reached the site and necessary formalities were taken up. (JKNS)



EDITORIAL

Bring horticulture sector under crop insurance scheme at earliest

For years together we have been hearing that the horticulture sector is the backbone of the Kashmir economy but over the years very little development has taken place in this all important sector. The biggest irony is that the sector is not covered under the insurance sector and as such the people associated with the sector suffer huge losses as and when some natural calamity happens at any place in the Kashmir valley.

Over the past few days the Kashmir valley has been witnessing inclement weather and there are reports of hailstorm from some of the districts of the valley. The hailstorm has virtually destroyed the fruit crop in these areas and as such demand of compensation has come from the fruit growers of the affected areas. It is quite natural and one can hope that the union territory government will come to their rescue and that too at the earliest.

Minister for health and education Sakeena Itoo has already issued directions to the authorities to carry out assessment of the damages caused to the fruit crops in South Kashmir districts of Kulgam and Shopian. Since the fruits do not come under the crop insurance scheme the fruit growers of the Kashmir valley have been virtually running from pillar to post while seeking compensation for the damages caused to their produce due to some natural calamity. They have been receiving mere assurances from the people at helm with nothing being done on the ground.

The successive governments of Jammu & Kashmir have virtually failed the fruit growers by failing to introduce the crop insurance scheme for the fruits grown in the union territory. If the horticulture sector is the mainstay of the economy of the union territory then the sector should have been developed to the expected levels. The concerned department seems to be bothered about the production aspect of the fruits and the revenue generated out of the same.

The department has failed to carry out reforms so far and the biggest failure has been its inability to bring the sector under the crop insurance scheme. Since Omar Abdullah led Jammu & Kashmir government has promised to bring relief to the common masses it is time to act on the same. Bringing the horticulture sector under the crop insurance scheme would be a great service to the people of the union territory especially, to those who are associated with the sector.

Train to the Valley

SYED SHOWKET

Train services in Kashmir were a dream come true. Kashmiris had only seen Trains outside the state, and the first train was seen by Kashmiris in October 2008. In contrast, Trains in India were first introduced in 1853, starting from Bombay and covering a very short distance. According to the World Economic Forum report of 2019, India scored 4.4 out of 7 in railroad infrastructure quality. Today, the railways connect Kashmir – the crown of India – with Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of the country. In this way, the railway has made our travel and connectivity better, more comfortable, easier, and time-bound.

The Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, the only available connectivity connecting the Valley to the rest of the country, is marked by scars, horrific stories, miseries, and a record of tragic accidents. It has also witnessed significant damage in terms of construction and infrastructure, despite continuous efforts by the government. Nevertheless, this highway has shown remarkable improvement over the years. Despite the tough terrain, harsh climate, and natural disasters, what once took five days – or even weeks – to traverse a decade ago can now be completed in a day or two. This progress is commendable and widely appreciated, as this road serves as a vital bridge between the Valley and the rest of India.

Finally, the long-awaited and distant dream of fast, easy, and comfortable travel from the Valley to Jammu has become a reality. It brings immense happiness and is expected to enhance business, engagement, the economy, and provide a boost to the state exchequer. It is an undeniable fact that a prolonged and arduous period of more than seventy years has finally culminated with the visit of PM Modi. Travelers, both local and foreign, who have traversed the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway from Qazigund to Udhampur, can attest to the grueling, harrowing, and exhausting journey. The meandering and winding road has exacted a heavy toll on the people of Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in numerous fatalities due to accidents and landslides. Furthermore, it has been a significant impediment to commerce. It has proven to be a considerable source of inconvenience and discomfort for the populace of Jammu and Kashmir, with adverse ramifications on their daily lives and trade.

Nevertheless, PM Modi's railway enforcement initiatives have met the people's yearning for improved connectivity, freeing them from the tribulations of the QaziGund-Udhampur highway. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are grateful for the connect-



tivity initiatives that have facilitated travel and stimulated commerce.

The development of any nation depends significantly on its transportation infrastructure, which connects people, fosters trade, and stimulates economic growth. To establish international trade, a country must first develop trade and business within its borders. The availability of connectivity plays a crucial role in the growth of commerce, which is the backbone of any economy. In our country, railways are the most vital contributor to different modes of transportation, and trade promotion and commerce depend heavily on railways.

Tourism is a significant factor that fosters economic growth, and transportation plays a significant role. The better the transportation infrastructure, the more tourists are likely to visit, which can lead to more economic growth for the region.

However, certain regions, such as the Kashmir valley, face significant connectivity issues that hamper trade, commerce, and tourism. The hilly terrain of the region makes road connectivity without train service exhausting. Private transporters charge high fares to travel this long and hilly road, making it economically burdensome. Moreover, weather conditions, such as heavy snowfall and landslides, make travel unpredictable, blocking the road for several days and causing human lives and heavy business losses. These adverse conditions not only hinder trade and commerce but also affect tourism in the valley.

In response to these challenges, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, is set to unveil several railway

initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir to enhance connectivity, promote environmental sustainability, and stimulate the overall economic growth of the region. These initiatives include the inauguration of a new rail route from Banihal to Khari to Sumber to Sangaldan, covering a distance of 48 km.

The Prime Minister will also inaugurate the newly electrified Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan section, stretching over 185.66 km of the ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project. He will also launch the first electric train in the valley and commence train services between Sangaldan and Baramulla stations.

These railway initiatives are significant because they aim to address the connectivity issues that have hindered economic growth in the region. For safety and rescue purposes, the section includes three escape tunnels totalling 30.1 km in length. Additionally, 30 curves covering 23.72 kilometres are integrated into the section to enhance passenger safety and comfort. Advanced features like ballastless tracks and canted turnouts, a first for Indian Railways, have been integrated to improve passenger safety. Completing the electrification of the Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal-Sangaldan section of the Udhampur Srinagar Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project is a significant achievement. Serving 19 railway stations, this section is now equipped with Ballastless Track (BLT), ensuring a smoother ride for passengers. Moreover, this section includes India's longest transportation tunnel, T-50, spanning 12.77 km between Khari and Sumber.

The event will also witness the Prime Minister laying the foundation stones for several key road projects, including two segments of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway totalling 44.22 km, which will connect Jammu to Katra. Additionally, PM Modi will initiate phase two of the four-laning of the Srinagar Ring Road, five packages for the upgrade of the 161-km-long Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri stretch of NH-01, and the construction of Kulgam Bypass and Pulwama Bypass on NH-444.

The development of better road infrastructure will improve the region's connectivity and attract more tourists, create more job opportunities, and stimulate economic growth. Moreover, it will make travel easier, thereby addressing the challenges faced by the region's economic development.

In conclusion, transportation plays a critical role in fostering trade, commerce, and tourism, and its availability is crucial for the growth of any economy. The railway and road initiatives launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Jammu and Kashmir aim to enhance connectivity, promote environmental sustainability, and stimulate economic growth. These initiatives will lead to the creation of more job opportunities, which will ultimately help to improve the standard of living in the region. The people are eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of their long-cherished dream of railway connectivity, hoping it will be realized through Prime Minister Modi.

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The Silent Luminary: Remembering Baqir Sahab



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The renowned Aga family of Kashmir traces its roots to the Budgam district, a region known for its spiritual legacy and cultural depth. The family's noble lineage began with Hakeem Syed Hyder, a revered spiritual healer and guide, who settled in Budgam approximately 150 years ago. Through his wisdom and piety, he became a beacon of hope and enlightenment for the local populace.

His son, Aga Syed Mehdi, carried forward this luminous legacy by pursuing religious studies in the holy city of Najaf, Iraq – a revered center of Shia scholarship. Upon his return, he emerged as a leading religious authority and an emblem of spiritual guidance within the Shia

community of Kashmir.

Today, the spiritual stewardship continues through his descendant, the present-day Aga Sahab, who is recognized as the spiritual leader of the Shias in the region. His leadership embodies the values of knowledge, compassion, and service to humanity – principles deeply rooted in the family's traditions.

In honor of this illustrious lineage, Budgam's main market is named after one of its most distinguished sons – Aga Syed Yusuf Al-Mousavi – a towering religious figure known for his piety, intellect, and dedication to communal harmony. The Aga family's enduring contributions to faith, education, and spirituality remain a cornerstone of Budgam's identity and Kashmir's spiritual heritage.

Among the shining stars of this noble family was Baqir Sahab, a man of immense knowledge, humility, and spiritual depth. He was more than a teacher or scholar – he was a silent reformer whose actions spoke louder than words, and whose presence brought calmness to hearts



around him.

I had the privilege of studying Arabic grammar under his guidance when I had

taken Arabic as an additional subject up to 12th grade. From the very beginning, his calm demeanor, polite con-

duct, and refined character left an everlasting impact on me. Despite being from the Sunni community, he always treated me with immense respect and grace, reflecting the true essence of Islamic brotherhood that transcends sectarian boundaries.

Authors, I've observed, often carry a light-hearted yet profound personality, and Baqir Sahab was no exception. He believed in guiding through written words rather than loud speeches. I never saw him raise his voice – neither during academic discussions nor while delivering Islamic sermons on Fridays or during religious occasions. His tone was always calm, composed, and full of wisdom – enough to touch hearts and move souls.

Baqir Sahab was a man of profound spiritual insight – a preacher (wa'iz), a prolific author (musanif), and a spiritually enlightened personality (roohani shakhsiyat). His sermons carried the fragrance of divine love, and his writings reflected the wisdom of centuries. Rare are such personalities who dedicate

themselves entirely to ilm (knowledge) and tazkiyah (inner purification).

One of his most remarkable – yet underappreciated – contributions was his deep scholarly work on Ijtihad and the poetry of Allama Iqbal. His research displayed a perfect blend of intellectual rigor and spiritual insight. Unfortunately, his work did not receive the recognition it truly deserved. This was not due to its lack of depth or brilliance, but rather a reflection of his ascetic lifestyle (faqeerana mizaj) and his conscious avoidance of publicity or self-promotion. He firmly held onto this principle until his final days.

His reflections on Ijtihad were not abstract theories but timely discussions rooted in practical reality – addressing the need for dynamic interpretation of Islamic thought in modern times. His interpretations of Iqbal's poetry unveiled deeper layers of meaning, linking the poet-philosopher's vision with the spiritual revival of the Ummah, selfhood (khudi), and the yearning for divine

connection.

Despite such profound contributions, Baqir Sahab remained a humble servant of knowledge. He sought neither fame nor position. He remained hidden, yet enlightened; silent, yet influential. His life teaches us that true greatness does not need applause – it only requires sincerity, patience, and a deep connection with the Almighty.

May Allah grant him the highest ranks in Jannah, accept his scholarly efforts as sadaqah jariyah (ongoing charity), and continue to bless the Aga family – the custodians of a rich spiritual and intellectual heritage. Baqir Sahab was not just a person – he was an institution, a light that quietly illuminated the path for many. Though he has left this world, his legacy lives on – in hearts, in thoughts, and in the timeless wisdom he imparted.

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# From Chalkboards To Change-Makers: Redefining Teaching For 21st Century India

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In the modern world, the teaching profession has undergone a profound transformation, emerging as a dynamic and respected field. No longer limited to the traditional role of imparting facts and maintaining order, teachers are now seen as architects of a holistic learning experience. This shift has redefined education, focusing on nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration in students. Teaching today is far removed from the old-fashioned repetitive drill methods, much like contemporary medicine has evolved beyond outdated practices such as bloodletting and leech therapies.

The current educational paradigm emphasises that learning is not restricted to classrooms or textbooks. Instead, it encompasses the home, the community, and even global networks, leveraging advancements in technology to provide students with rich, personalised learning opportunities. Teachers are no longer dispensers of knowledge but facilitators who help students actively construct their own knowledge. Schools, once viewed as mere buildings, are now vibrant centres of lifelong growth and exploration.

In this reimaged system, teachers have taken on the role of mentors, collaborating with students to meet their unique needs. This approach recognises that every learner has distinct interests, abilities, and cultural backgrounds, and it prioritises fostering an inclusive environment. As one of the most diverse nations globally, India relies on educators to build bridges across cultural divides and ensure that all students, regardless of their background, feel valued and empowered.

Historically, teaching involved rigid practices, with educators



following prescribed lessons and methodologies. Students were grouped by age and subjected to uniform assessments, regardless of their individual learning styles or capabilities. Teachers were often constrained by regulations, discouraged from innovation, and expected to focus primarily on maintaining discipline and preparing students for standardised tests. Such limitations left many educators uninspired and students disengaged.

Today, however, this model is giving way to a more dynamic and flexible approach. Teachers now emphasise building meaningful relationships with their students, understanding their personal, social, and emotional contexts. This deeper connection enables educators to guide students in inte-

grating their intellectual growth with their personal development, ultimately preparing them to make informed decisions and contribute positively to society.

Modern educators understand that the essence of teaching lies in inspiring a love of learning. By moving away from lecturing pedagogy, they create active learning environments where students are encouraged to explore, question, and innovate. Teachers act as guides and co-learners, designing activities that engage students in meaningful, real-world challenges.

Project-based learning has become a cornerstone of this approach. Students are no longer passive recipients of information. They are active participants in their education, collaborating on projects that address real-world prob-

lems. This method fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills while aligning learning experiences with students' lives and interests. By involving students in shaping their educational journey, teachers instil a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning.

Technology has been a transformative force in education, redefining how information is accessed and used. In the past, teachers and textbooks were the primary sources of knowledge. Today, information is readily available through digital platforms, shifting the teacher's role from a source of facts to a guide who helps students navigate and critically evaluate the vast amounts of information at their disposal.

This change has allowed educa-

tors to focus more on personalised learning, working closely with individual students or small groups to address their unique needs. Technology also facilitates collaboration between students from different parts of the world, broadening their perspectives and fostering global understanding.

The transformation of teaching has necessitated changes in the structure of schools. Traditional models, where students moved through rigid schedules and age-based grades, will have to be replaced by more flexible arrangements. Schools now need to implement mixed-age classrooms, allowing students to progress at their own pace and spend extended periods with the same teacher. This approach encourages deeper connections and more tai-

lored instruction.

Team teaching, another innovative practice, needs to be adopted in classrooms. By sharing responsibilities, educators can play to their strengths and provide students with a more comprehensive learning experience. This collaborative model not only benefits students but also supports teachers, reducing burnout and fostering professional growth.

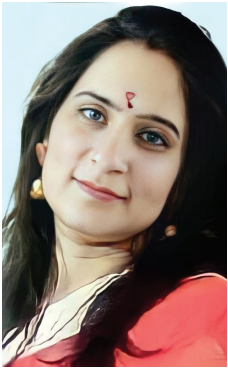
In addition to their classroom responsibilities, teachers need to be increasingly involved in shaping the broader educational landscape. They must be allowed to work alongside policymakers, families, and community members to set meaningful standards for student achievement. Educators can participate in research to explore new teaching methods and mentor their peers, ensuring that the next generation of teachers is well-equipped to face the challenges of modern education.

The ongoing reinvention of teaching has the potential to revolutionise education, creating schools that are dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of students. By embracing new roles and methodologies, teachers can help build a system where learning is a lifelong journey, driven by curiosity and collaboration.

This transformation takes place. However, it requires the support and trust of all stakeholders, including policymakers, parents, and community leaders. Together, we can ensure that teachers have the resources, freedom, and respect they need to fulfil their vital role in shaping the future. As educators continue to adapt and innovate, they are not only preparing students for academic success but also empowering them to become active, engaged citizens of the world.

The writer is a teacher

## If someone pours water, I will also drink a handful. The cry of silently dying birds



PRIYANKA SAURABH

Heat is no longer just temperature; it has become a tragedy—especially for those whose voices are neither printed in the newspaper nor on TV nor in the trending list of social media. We are talking about those small birds who silently die of thirst in this scorching sun, dry winds, and concrete jungle. "If someone pours water on me, I will also drink a handful of it..."—this line is no longer a soft imagination of a poem; it is a living truth, a helpless call, which rises every afternoon on some roof, on some dry branch, from behind the grill of some hot window.

Cities took away the shade of birds.

We cut down trees, filled ponds, closed balconies with cement, and made the sun hotter with tin roofs. In the name of modernity, we cooled our houses with ACs but forgot to leave a sip of

water for the birds.

The places for birds to make nests are decreasing. Now there are no trees left for them, no shade, nor the traditional culture in which there used to be an earthen bowl filled with water on the parapet of every house.

Birds dying of thirst: Not statistics, but warnings

Many environmental organizations are reporting that the mortality rate of birds is increasing continuously in summer. Especially small birds like sparrows, pigeons, mynas, and bulbuls fall unconscious in the hot afternoons, and if they do not get water on time, they even die. But do their deaths become part of any news? Is any government announcement made on this? Is any "NGO conference" called for them?

If the birds don't survive, neither do we.

Birds are not just an ornament of the skies; they are an integral part of our ecosystem. They control pests, help pollinate, spread seeds, and, most importantly, they keep the music of life going. If birds disappear, this earth will become more desolate—and so will we.

We have to understand that these tiny creatures bring big warnings from nature. When they are dying of thirst, understand that water scarcity is now heading towards us as well.

Be "life-friendly," not "bird-

friendly."

Today, there is a need for us to become a "bird-friendly" society. This is not a big movement; it is just small things. Keep an earthen bowl filled with water on the roof or balcony. Plant trees, especially native trees like neem, peepal, and guava. Tell children about birds—teach kindness, empathy, and connection. Make arrangements for shade and water for animals and birds in summer. Also inspire places like temples, mosques, and gurudwaras to make arrangements for water for birds. This work does not wait for any government. It is in your hands.

A drop of sarcasm: "We will pay the electricity bill but will not provide water to the birds."

We will burn thousands of rupees worth of electricity to run an AC but are stingy about keeping a bowl of water. We will spend crores to build smart cities, but we are not smart enough to spare something for the mute. In our society, 'compassion' has also become an Instagram reel—just a show-off, no impact.

From the roof of the city to the village square—a call

Even in villages, old ponds are drying up, stepwells have broken down, and it has become difficult for animals and birds to get drinking water. There was a time when birds used to come to

drink water on the banks of every well in the village. Today those wells have been sealed with cement. Cities gave "development" to villages, but that development became a disaster for birds.

Climate change: These are affected before the birds.

The first and direct impact of climate change is on mute creatures. Even a slight increase in temperature can be fatal for them. Humans turn on fans, eat ice, and go to the doctor. But where should birds go? Whom should pigeons tell that they are thirsty?

Concluding: Are we really human?

We call ourselves intellectual, sensitive, educated, and developed—but is any civilization really worthy of being called "developed" when it sees its fellow creatures dying and yet remains silent? Every summer gives us a chance to think—this time, can we create a corner on the roof, window, balcony, or courtyard of our house where a small bird can drink a beakful of water?

Maybe there is no need to answer. Just look at a bird next time the sun is overhead...and remember—

"If someone pours water, I will also drink a handful of it..."

Writer is a Research Scholar in Political Science, Poet, freelance journalist, and columnist

## Computer Based Examination Ineliminable in Modern Times

PROF. M A SHAH

There is an urgent need to shift from offline examination to computer-based examination to mitigate and lower the mental stress and strains associated with the old systems. It is a one-time solution to many troubles associated with conducting major examinations and subsequent evaluations systems at present. A little investment over it is justified by the institutes and organizations. Probably the present practice involves spending crores of rupees of J & K and other parts every year for conducting the annual and bi-annual examinations.

Heads of the institutions should act promptly and establish infrastructure for computer-based examinations in their respective institutions. The visionary people in the Government of Jammu and Kashmir need to be complimented for taking steps in making their offices paperless including civil secretariat, during "Darbar Move", which started by Maharaja in 1872, which then was justified, keeping in view the population and means of communications.

The arrival of new technologies including the AI, data sciences, internet of things and nanotechnol-

ogy has steadily digitalized services, taking them to the online form and it was seen during pandemic that various institutions across globe have adapted Learning Management Systems. This teaching, monitoring and evaluation system facilitates a balanced approach toward imparting knowledge and an easy grading of the candidates, saying goodbye to century old stressful paper based examinations.

Computer testing is an alternative to pen and paper and can be conducted online through the use of the internet or a computer-aided facility with a good power backup. It is a time-efficient and effective means of hosting large-scale online examinations concurrently and simultaneously. It enables educational institutions to evaluate candidates' performance quickly irrespective of their geographical location/coordinates. The ubiquitousness of several computer-based examination systems must encourage institutions to shift to online examinations.

These platforms support a host of knowledge and application-based questions, enabling examiners to prepare a questionnaire with multiple question types, which range from MCQs, fill in the blanks, check boxes to short

answers and long answers (nonetheless that need to be evaluated by the teacher separately). National Testing Agencies (NTA) and NPTEL has been doing it meticulously and the private sector need to be appreciated for establishing the infrastructure for such examinations.

On trial basis, we successfully conducted paperless test of B. tech 1st semester Engineering Physics students as per NEP 2020, despite hurdless of connectivity, the examination was concluded smoothly. The automated reports generated is a comprehensive approach to a candidate's performance, with a question-wise and section-wise summary of the attempt, time-taken and the difficulty level faced during examination.

Thus, it is beseeched that all educational institutions should establish infrastructure for sufficient computer systems with 3-tier high speed internet and powerful backups. These places can also be used for taking online classes during exigencies.

(The author is teaching nanotechnology at NIT Srinagar, known for taking new initiatives, holding the Chair, Dean Alumni and International Affairs, can be reached through shahji@nitsri.ac.in.)





# Javed Rana interacts with tribal leaders at Panchayat Bhavan

## Welfare of tribals; govt's top priority : Rana

### HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 19: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today held detailed interaction with prominent citizens of tribal community from different districts at Panchayat Bhavan, Jammu. The meeting was convened to get firsthand appraisal of issues faced by the Tribals from Jammu, Udhampur, Reasi, Kathua and other areas. The tribal community leaders highlighted the pressing issues faced by them and sought intervention of the Minister for resolution. The Minister gave a patient hearing to the issues raised by the delegations and individuals and assured them

that the same will be given due prominence for redressal. Choudhary Basharat Ali from Samba raised the issue of absence of lack of educational facilities for the tribal people. He also demanded provision for slaughter houses and mandis at district level for their livestock in order to get better market prices. Choudhary Dawood from Udhampur raised the issue of water shortage in his area and demanded sustainable solution for water supply. He said the Gujjar basti lacks basic road facilities in his area that puts huge inconvenience to the people. Advocate Mehmood Rizvi raised the issue of improving educational facilities for tribals saying that we need to lay more stress on education.



Shamim Begum DDC Dansal, Jammu raised the issues pertaining to her constituency and submitted a memorandum of demands. Shama Akhter from Sidhra emphasised on the education and said that more efforts should be initiated towards improving access to educa-

tion for upliftment of the people. She added that though the water issues have been solved in her areas but certain areas still remain uncovered. Choudhary Sharief Hussain from Udhampur also raised certain developmental issues pertaining to his area. Mushtaq Ahmad Khatana raised

the issue of basic health facilities in the tribal areas. Razaq Choudhary from Jammu demanded full implementation of Forest Rights Act saying that most of the issues of tribals will be resolved. Similarly, other individuals also raised issues pertaining to their areas and demanded an early resolution. The Minister, while listening to the issues, issued directions to the concerned officers to resolve these issues in a time bound manner. Rana assured the participants that the government is fully committed to the overall development of tribal population, prioritizing their welfare. He emphasized that the rights of tribals, as guaranteed under the Constitution, shall be enforced and pro-

tected. Rana reaffirmed that improving the lives of Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC) and other downtrodden sections of society is top priority of the government led by Omar Abdullah. He also sought details from the concerned officers about the landless families in the district and said the same should be submitted to the tribal department. Regarding the easing of tribal movement, Rana said that the government will provide facility at all routes and ease the process for permission during migration. He said that the government is particular about the development of tribal routes and significant steps have been taken in this regard.

## Dr Tasaduk completes eight years of medical writing

### HT News Network

Srinagar, Apr, 19: Medico cum health columnist Dr Tasaduk Hussain Itoo has completed eight years of his medical writing. Hailing from Poshkeri Village of South Kashmir's Anantnag district, Dr Tasaduk a passionate medical doctor by profession, is also an educator, researcher, health columnist and has been writing more precisely on health issues. Issuing a press statement today, Dr Tasaduk said that there is a large pool of talented medical writers here who write greatly with highly intellectualized research and thought process – which they should continue with



passion, zeal, enthusiasm and keep on learning and growing. "Having a lot of potential in medical writing cum research, there is a

need to bring ourselves to the forefront, explore our potential at all levels (state, national and international) and channelize our talent to invest in research with a purpose of service to humanity" he said. Dr Itoo further advised that writers should put their efforts best and write with a positive purpose in order to create a positive impact and transformation in the society through their writings. Talking about health education through writings, Dr Itoo said that public health awareness and education is crucial need of the times and as doctors we should put our efforts best in fostering and imparting health education among the masses.

## Altaf Bukhari chairs party review meeting in Jammu

### HT News Network

Jammu, April 19 Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Saturday criticised political parties for misleading voters through false promises and emotional slogans during the assembly elections. He said that despite several months having passed since the formation of the government, most critical public issues and grievances remain unaddressed. Apni Party President made these remarks today while addressing the party's review meeting in Jammu. The meeting, aimed at reviewing the performance of the party leaders and cadre, was attended by prominent leaders and senior workers from the

Jammu province. According to a press release issued here, a range of public issues and several party matters were discussed during this crucial meeting. The participants shared their grassroots-level feedback from their respective areas and offered their opinions and ideas to enhance the party's performance. Speaking on the occasion, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari blamed political parties for misleading the voters during the elections. He said, "The political parties, which deceived the public with false promises and emotional slogans during the elections, are now fully exposed. Months after the formation of the government, pressing public issues remain unaddressed. Whether

it is the rising unemployment, the plight of daily wage workers, detainees, or other problems, there has been no action taken to these issues." He asserted that Apni Party remains committed to highlighting public issues and grievances to ensure their redressal. He said, "Apni Party has a role to stand by the people and raise its voice for the redressal of their issues. We are committed to highlighting public issues and grievances vigorously so that these issues are addressed. We are a party of the people, and we will always stand by them." Apni Party leader urged his colleagues to gear up for upcoming panchayat, ULB polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

## OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY SRINAGAR

### NOTIFICATION

Under the directions of Hon'ble Executive Chairman, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) endorsed by Hon'ble Executive Chairman and Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority regarding holding of 2nd National Lok Adalats throughout India in the year 2025 on specified dates, District Legal Services Authority Srinagar is going to hold 2<sup>nd</sup> National Lok Adalat of the year 2025 at District Court Complex Srinagar on 10-05-2025 for the following types of cases (pre-Litigation and post Litigation Cases).

#### Pre -Litigation

- 1 Bank Recovery matters.
- 2 Labour disputes cases.
- 3 Electricity and Water bills (excluding non-Compoundable).
- 4 Other (Criminal Compoundable, Matrimonial, other civil disputes etc).

#### Pending in Courts

- 1 Criminal Compoundable offence.
- 2 NI Act cases under Section 138.
- 3 Bank Recovery matters.
- 4 MACT cases.
- 5 Labour disputes cases.
- 6 Electricity and Water bills (excluding non-Compoundable).
- 7 Matrimonial cases (Except Divorce matters)
- 8 Land Acquisition cases.
- 9 Other civil cases (rent, easementary rights, injunctions suit, specific performance suit) etc.

Therefore, it is notified that all concerned parties /advocates who desire to get their cases/ disputes/claims settled through this 2<sup>nd</sup> National Lok Adalat may approach District Legal Services Authority Srinagar/ concerned courts by or before 01/05/2025, so that their cases/claims/disputes can be settled amicably through this National Lok Adalat.

DIPK-573/25

Date: Apr 19 2025

Sd/  
SECRETARY  
District Legal Services Authority Srinagar

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Number plate of My Motor cycle bearing registration no JK04C 4416. Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/ She contact with (ARTO) BUDGAM within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained .

Name.....ABDUL MAJID SOFI  
S/O ..ABDUL AZIZ SOFI  
R/O ..WARA SANGAM  
Distt ...BUDGAM

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public through the medium of notice that i mohammad ramzan sheikh s/o lassa sheikh r/o kripal pora sarie i was born on 01-01-1950 now i want to obtain dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of d o b certificate he she the context of bdo singpora with in period of seven days

## ازعدالت ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ماگام

مضمون: فیضان عاتق ولد عاتق حسین نما رانک ماگام بابت تاریخ پیدائش  
31-10-2007

اشتہار بغرض آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاملہ مندر بہ عنوان الصدر کے نسبت درخواست سال / سالہ کی دفتر حذا میں زیر سماعت ہے سال / سالہ کی تاریخ پیدائش یہ ملکیت مطابق کاڈ 31-10-2007 ہے اس بارے میں اگر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر دفتر حذا میں پیش کریں یہ عداقتم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

### ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ماگام

## ازعدالت ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ماگام

مضمون: منظور احمد اراقراء احمد تابد احمد اولادان عبدالاحد اراسانک مجید آباد بابت تاریخ پیدائش

اشتہار بغرض آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاملہ مندر بہ عنوان الصدر کے نسبت درخواست سال / سالہ کی دفتر حذا میں زیر سماعت ہے سال / سالہ کی تاریخ پیدائش یہ ملکیت مطابق کاڈ 12-10-2019 / 29-01-2018 / 06-06-2016 ہے اس بارے میں اگر کسی بھی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر دفتر حذا میں پیش کریں یہ عداقتم ہونے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

### ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درج اول ماگام

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is inform to all general public notice that i rukiya qurashie w/o aijaz ahmad qurashie R/o diver yakman pora that my son Hayat qurashie is born on 10-01-2023 now i want to obtain dob certificate if any body have any objection regarding issuance of dob He she the context of bdo singpora with in period of seven days.

Yours faith fully  
Rukiya qurashie  
W/o aijaz ahmad qurashie  
Diver yakman pora

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA )/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of TABASUM SAJAD D/O SAJAD HUSSAIN BOKRA R/O BANDI BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 01/12/2013 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

## Driving Institutional Quality: IUST Conducts Workshop on NAAC Reassessment under BAF

### HT News Network

Awantipora, April 18: In line with its commitment to institutional excellence and quality enhancement, the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) held a workshop to prepare for the upcoming NAAC reassessment under the Binary Accreditation Framework (BAF). Organized by the Directorate of Internal Quality Assurance (DIQA), the workshop brought together academic heads from across the University to strategize for the reassessment due in late 2025. DIQA Director Dr. Peer Bilal Ahmad, provided a comprehensive roadmap focused on institutional strengths, actionable insights, and sustainable quality practices. Dr. Farooq Hussain Bhat, Deputy Director, DIQA, highlighted the critical role of academic leadership in advancing the University's quality goals. The workshop fostered constructive dialogue, collective introspection, and departmental alignment with the BAF criteria. Participants expressed strong support for the DIQA-led initiative and reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing IUST's accreditation outcomes.

## Awareness Programme on RNTCP Held at DH Bandipora

### HT News Network

Bandipora, April 19: An awareness programme on the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) was held at District Hospital Bandipora to educate healthcare workers about the tuberculosis prevention and treatment strategies. Speaking on the occasion, Medical Superintendent DH Bandipora, Dr. Masrat Iqbal Wani, highlighted the objectives of the programme and emphasized the importance of timely diagnosis and adherence to treatment under the RNTCP scheme.

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA )/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of ANNUM SALEEM D/O MOHAMMAD SALEEM JAINDER R/O BANDI BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 15/08 /2020 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained .

Executive Magistrate  
1st KREERI

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA )/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of RIYAZ AHMAD BOKRA / O GH MOHD BOKRA R/O BANDI BALA Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 01/03 /1990 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR KREERI (Executive Magistrate 1st Class)

Subject: Issuance of Registration Orders in respect of delayed Birth/ Death certificate.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar Births and Deaths (Block Development Officer WAGOORA )/ chokedar has submitted case file pertaining to Birth of SHAMEEMA BEGUM D/OGH MOHD BHAT R/O CHANDKOTE Tehsil KREERI Distt. Baramulla having verified the date of Birth as 01/04 /1975 and event has been shown to be occurred at HOME for issuance of delay order .In this connection . if anyone have any objection to the issuance of delay order of Birth certificate shall present his/her claim this office within 07 days, after that no objection shall be entertained

Executive Magistrate  
1st Class KREERI







# Mission YUVA: Training/Orientation programme for Yuva DOOTs held at Bandipora

## DC urges Yuva DOOTs to effectively execute Mission YUVA

### HT News Network

BANDIPORA, APRIL 19: For effective and efficient implementation of MISSION YUVA and as part of the training and capacity-building initiative under Mission YUVA, a day-long orientation and training program was conducted today for Yuva DOOTs at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Bandipora. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri emphasized the importance of empowering youth at the grassroots to foster entrepreneurship and promote self-employment opportunities. He stressed its basic

objective of guiding potential entrepreneurs and urged the YUVA DOOTs to approach the task with dedication. The training aimed to help assigned Yuva DOOTs understand their roles and responsibilities and how these DOOTs can effectively support and guide aspiring entrepreneurs in the district and to equip Yuva DOOTs with the necessary skills and knowledge to connect with and support potential entrepreneurs in their respective panchayats. Speaking at the event, DC highlighted the importance of empowering youth at the grassroots level. He said that the main objective of Mission YUVA is to identify potential entrepreneurs and support the govern-



ment in job creation. "This mission shows youth the right path and helps them grow in the field they're passionate about," he said.

He also urged the Yuva DOOTs to attend the training sincerely and implement the knowledge in the field with dedication. He stressed

that good coordination among banks, EDI, Employment, and Industries departments is crucial for the successful execution of the mission. DC shared that a detailed baseline survey was recently carried out by investigators and supervisors to identify potential entrepreneurs across the district. "The survey gave us a better understanding of the youth's aspirations. Now that we know who to focus on, it's easier to guide and support them in the right direction so they can become valuable contributors to society," he added. During the session, Project Manager, District Industries Centre (DIC) Bandipora presented a PowerPoint presentation explaining the opera-

tional guidelines and the application process under Mission YUVA. The training featured interactive sessions that encouraged open discussions, enabling the Yuva DOOTs to ask questions, clarify doubts, and share valuable suggestions. With a clear action plan and comprehensive orientation, the DOOTs are now equipped to begin outreach in their respective areas and actively support entrepreneurship development under Mission YUVA. Among others, the event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zaffar Husson Shawl; Assistant Labour Commissioner Bandipora; LDM Bandipora and other concerned officials.

## MLA Shopian visits hail-affected areas

### Urges district administration to immediately assess damages, ensure prompt & adequate relief to the affected farmers

### HT News Network

SHOPIAN, APRIL 19: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Shopian, Advocate Shabir Ahmad Kullay, today visited several hail-affected areas of the Shopian constituency, to assess the extensive damage caused to orchards and crops by the hailstorm. MLA was accompanied by officials from the Horticulture and Revenue Departments. Adv. Kullay visited Manloo, Narapora, Keller, K-Hallan, Gatipora, Mujpathri, Kral Chak, Berthipora, Kanipora Balapora, Wathoo, Shirmal, Tengwani, Tukroo, Pashpora, Mispura, Audora Rampathri, Ahagam, Nazneenpora and many other affected villages. During the tour, MLA interacted with the distressed orchardists, witnessed firsthand the widespread losses, and offered his unwavering support. Expressing deep concern, he stated that the pain and hardship of the growers



at this crucial stage of flowering is a collective loss for the entire region. He urged the district administration to immediately assess the damages and ensure prompt and adequate relief to the affected farmers. He reiterated his commitment to standing shoulder to shoulder with the farming community during these testing times and ensuring that no grower is left unheard or unsupported. Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Shopian, Advocate Shabir Ahmad Kullay, today visited several hail-affected areas of the Shopian constitu-

ency, to assess the extensive damage caused to orchards and crops by the hailstorm. MLA was accompanied by officials from the Horticulture and Revenue Departments. Adv. Kullay visited Manloo, Narapora, Keller, K-Hallan, Gatipora, Mujpathri, Kral Chak, Berthipora, Kanipora Balapora, Wathoo, Shirmal, Tengwani, Tukroo, Pashpora, Mispura, Audora Rampathri, Ahagam, Nazneenpora and many other affected villages. During the tour, MLA interacted with the distressed orchardists, witnessed firsthand.

## DIC Pulwama conducts Awareness/ Outreach programme on Udyam Registration

### HT News Network

PULWAMA, APRIL 19: District Industries Centre (DIC), Pulwama, conducted an awareness-cum-outreach programme on Udyam Registration under the RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance) programme today at Circuit House, Pulwama. The programme was chaired by General Manager, DIC Pulwama, and Officers from various line departments including Lead District Manager, Pulwama; District Coordinator, CSC, Pulwama, as well as representative JKTPO (SPOC)-JK, Functional Managers and other officials from DIC Pulwama were present in the programme. A total of 115 beneficiaries from across the sectors, PM Vishwakarma, PMEGP and Industrial unit holders registered with DIC Pulwama attended the programme. In his inaugural address, General Manager, DIC, Pulwama sensitized participants and stakeholders about the significance of the MSME sector in the economy of Jammu & Kashmir, emphasizing the vital role of Udyam Registration in enabling businesses and industrial establishments to grow in collaboration with the government and its flagship schemes. The process flow and benefits of Udyam Registration were explained to the participants through a detailed PowerPoint presentation that underscored RAMP's role in strengthening the resilience, innovation, and sustainability of MSMEs. Key focus areas included access to financial support, technology upgradation and capacity building initiatives under the RAMP framework.

## Status of land acquisition cases reviewed at Handwara

### HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 19: A review meeting on land acquisition cases was held today chaired by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi (Collector Land Acquisition), here. During the meeting, various issues related to pending land acquisition cases were discussed. ADC expressed concern over the delays, and directed all concerned departments to expedite the resolution process. It was emphasized that joint spot visits by the Revenue Department, R&B, and PMGSY divisions shall be conducted to ensure prompt disposal of long-pending cases. The meeting was attended by Executive Engineers of R&B Division Handwara and PMGSY Division Handwara, Tehsildars of Handwara and Ramhall, and the AEE R&B Division Qalamabad.

## "HDFC Bank Reports Rs 188.3 Billion Q4 Profit, Annual Net Rises to Rs 707.9 Billion"

### HT News Network

Srinagar: HDFC Bank Limited has announced its audited financial results, prepared under Indian GAAP, for the quarter and full year ending March 31, 2025. The Board of Directors approved these results at its meeting in Mumbai on Saturday, April 19, 2025. On a consolidated basis, the Bank reported net revenue of Rs 732.8 billion for the March 2025 quarter. The profit after tax (PAT) stood at Rs 188.3 billion for the quarter, with an adjusted PAT — after factoring out trading and mark-to-market gains, previous year provisions, and tax credits — growing by approximately 10%. For the full financial year, consolidated PAT came in at Rs 707.9 billion. Earnings per share stood at Rs 24.6 for the quarter and Rs 92.8 for the year, while the book value per share as on March 31, 2025, was Rs 681.9. Looking at the Bank's standalone performance, net revenue for the March 2025 quarter was Rs 440.9 billion. This compares to Rs 472.4 billion in the same quarter the previous year, which included a one-time gain of Rs 73.4 billion from the sale of a stake in subsidiary HDFC Credila. Net interest income rose 10.3% year-on-year to Rs 320.7 billion, up from Rs 290.8 billion. The net interest margin stood at 3.54% of total assets and 3.73% of interest-earning assets. After excluding Rs 7 billion in interest from income tax refunds, the core net interest margin was 3.46% and 3.65%, respectively. Non-interest income for the quarter was Rs 120.3 billion. Of this, fee and commission income amounted to Rs 85.3 billion, foreign exchange and derivatives brought in Rs 14.4 billion, trading and mark-to-market gains were Rs 3.9 billion (a sharp drop from Rs 75.9 billion in the same quarter last year due to a one-time gain), and other income, including recoveries and dividends, totaled Rs 16.7 billion. Operating expenses during the March 2025 quarter were Rs 175.6 billion, compared to Rs 179.7 billion a year ago, which included an ex-gratia staff provision of Rs 15 billion.

## Police bids farewell to outgoing Addl. SP Kulgam

### Farooq Rather

Kulgam April 19: Police in Kulgam accorded a farewell to the Addl. SP Kulgam Shri Tanveer Ahmad-JKPS on his transfer. SSP Kulgam Shri Sahil Sarangal-IPS speaking on the occasion praised the outgoing officer for his dedication and commitment to the assigned duties as Addl. SP Kulgam. He congratulated the officer for his new posting, memento was presented to outgoing Addl. SP Kulgam as a token of love. Outgoing Addl. SP Kulgam thanked all the officers and officials of district Police Kulgam for cooperation and support in his tenure and express gratitude to SSP Kulgam for applauding his role.

## SED Kupwara holds awareness program against drug abuse

### HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 19: As part of the nationwide campaign under the "Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan", School Education Department (SED) Kupwara today held a comprehensive program against drug abuse, witnessing enthusiastic participation of students across different schools of the district. This initiative, aimed at spreading awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse and promoting a drug-free society, was organized under the guidance of the District Administration in collaboration with the Department of Education. The campaign saw the active involvement of hundreds of students who participated in a range of awareness activities including rallies, poster-making competitions, debates, and pledge-taking ceremonies. One of the key highlights of the campaign was the large-scale registration of students and volunteers on the official Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan portal. Teachers, parents, and community members were also sensitized and encouraged to support the movement by pledging their support online. The District Nodal Officer, S.M. Iqbal said, "The response from students has been overwhelming. Their active involvement sends a strong message against drug abuse and paves the way for a healthier, more aware generation." Special workshops were also organized in several schools with support from local NGOs and health experts, focusing on the psychological, social, and legal consequences of substance abuse. These interactive sessions aimed to equip students with the knowledge and confidence to say no to drugs and support their peers in doing the same.

## DC Shopian visits hailstorm affected areas to assess damages

### HT News Network

SHOPIAN, APRIL 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta today conducted an extensive tour of various villages of the district which reported damage to fruit orchards particularly, apple, cherry and pears. DC visited Ganowpora, Manloo, Mujpathri, Watho, Shirmal, Poterwal and other adjacent hailstorm hit villages, interacted with affected farmers and locals to take stock of the situation on ground. During his interaction, DC assured farmers of the district administration's full support and emphasized that every effort would be made to ensure timely relief and compensation. He instructed the field officers to finalise immediate damage assessment and submit comprehensive reports detailing loss. The district administration stands with the affected families in this difficult time. "We are commit-



ted to a swift and transparent process of assessment and relief distribution," DC said. Furthermore, the Horticulture department has been directed to assist farmers in post hail damage control and to provide necessary technical guidance to mitigate further losses. DC was accompanied by ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz; CHO, CAO, Tehsildars and other concerned.

# Mission YUVA: Two-day training programme for Yuva DOOTs concludes at Baramulla

### HT News Network

BARAMULLA, APRIL 19: A two-day training programme for 173 newly appointed Yuva DOOTs under the Mission YUVA initiative of the Government of Jammu & Kashmir successfully concluded today at Baramulla. The programme, organized by the District Employment & Counselling Centre (DE&CC), Baramulla, aimed to empower the Yuva DOOTs with the necessary skills and knowledge to serve as effective field-level representatives of the mission. Assistant Director Employment Baramulla, DDM NABARD, Career Counselling Officer, besides Yuva DOOTs attended the training programme. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain, presided over the training sessions, emphasizing the importance of the Yuva DOOTs in addressing youth unemployment and promoting self-employment at the grassroots level. He described them as ambassadors of transformation who will help connect young people with meaningful



livelihood opportunities. Assistant Director Employment provided an overview of Mission YUVA, detailing the survey methodology, stakeholder convergence, and the critical role of data collection and follow-up to ensure success. The Career Counselling Officer

also presented the district's roadmap for implementing the initiative. District Development Manager NABARD, briefed participants on various entrepreneurship support schemes and the importance of financial literacy and institutional linkages. Nodal Officer from JKEDI,

along with the Employment Officer DE&CC, demonstrated the Mission YUVA mobile app and portal, which will help streamline beneficiary registration, scheme eligibility tracking, and real-time status updates. The interactive sessions were well-received, with participants engaging actively and sharing valuable feedback. The two-day training programme concluded today, with participants expressing their gratitude and a renewed commitment to advancing the objectives of Mission YUVA in their respective communities. Assistant Director Employment provided an overview of Mission YUVA, detailing the survey methodology, stakeholder convergence, and the critical role of data collection and follow-up to ensure success. The Career Counselling Officer also presented the district's roadmap for implementing the initiative. District Development Manager NABARD, briefed participants on various entrepreneurship support schemes and the importance of financial literacy.







## IASOWA blends Green Mission with its donation drive at Channi School

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 19: In a heartfelt initiative aimed at fostering environmental consciousness and supporting education, the IAS Officers Wives Association (IASOWA), J&K Chapter, under the able guidance of its Chairperson, Dr. Monika Wali, conducted a plantation drive and distributed stationery, books, and sports items among the students at Government Middle School, Dodhi Gujjar Colony, Channi.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from IASOWA members including Jyoti Chauhan, Anuradha, Sunaina Sharma, and Rohini Yadav. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Monika Wali sensitized the students about pressing environmental concerns, emphasizing the importance of tree plantation, reducing the use of single-use plastics, and maintaining sanitation in their surroundings. She urged the children to adopt eco-friendly habits and cultivate a sense of responsibility towards nature from an early age.

She further advised the students to imbibe moral values and human ethics in their daily lives, urging them to be sincere in their studies, obedient to their parents and teachers, respectful to elders, and compassionate towards others. "These qualities," she said, "will shape you into responsible and successful citizens of tomorrow." The IASOWA members also interacted with the students, inquiring about their aspirations, interests, and hobbies. They motivated the young minds to pursue their goals with determination and passion, assuring them that with dedication, they could achieve great heights.

## Principal Secretary chairs review meet on 'Earthquake Risk Reduction & Management' in J&K

■ HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 19: Principal Secretary, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction, today chaired a review meeting regarding 'Earthquake Risk Reduction and Management' in Jammu and Kashmir' here at Civil Secretariat. Experts and faculty members from various institutes including University of Kashmir, University of Jammu, NIT Srinagar, IIT Jammu, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora and representatives of Administrative Departments like Housing & Urban Development, Health & Medical Education Department, School education, Rural development department, Divisional and District management authorities and SDRF attended the meeting. The meeting had a comprehensive review of preparedness and mitigation efforts undertaken by different departments, district disaster management authorities and response forces. Since UT of Jammu and Kashmir is located in a seismically active region and is susceptible to earthquakes. Most parts of the region fall under Seismic Zone V (very high damage risk zone) and Seismic Zone IV (high damage risk zone). "The government of J&K is committed to mitigate the damage and destruction caused by natural and man-made disasters through sustained and collective efforts by all stakeholders, maintained the Principal Secretary. The Principal Secretary took comprehensive review of preparedness measures for earthquake risk reduction in UT of J&K being adopted by various departments and Agencies.

## GHSS Shopian organises session on AI Tools & Robotics

■ HT News Network

SHOPIAN, APRIL 19: Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Shopian organized an inspiring and knowledge-packed session on AI Tools and Robotics.

The session aimed to equip students with awareness about cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. Muneer Wani, a well-known tech educator and innovator, along with his team, demonstrated the use of AI tools and showcased practical applications of robotics in various fields. The interactive session included live demonstration and discussions that sparked curiosity and engagement among students.

A special segment of the event featured two student innovators, Anzar Amin and Toufeeq Showkat, both patent holders, who shared their inspiring journey of innovation and success. Their stories of perseverance and creativity deeply resonated with the audience, especially their peers, encouraging them to dream big and pursue technological innovations.

The session concluded with the address by Vice Principal of the school who emphasized the importance of fostering innovation and technical knowledge among students to prepare them for the future. A special segment of the event featured two student innovators, Anzar Amin and Toufeeq Showkat, both patent holders, who shared their inspiring journey of innovation and success. Their stories of perseverance and creativity deeply resonated with the audience, especially their peers, encouraging them to dream big and pursue technological innovations.

# Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan: Distt admin Pulwama intensifies IEC campaign

## Awareness sessions & cultural events conducted to combat drug menace

■ HT News Network

PULWAMA, APRIL 19: As part of its intensified Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign under the UT-wide flagship initiative Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Pulwama in collaboration with the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), J&K, today organised a mega awareness programme at Town Hall Pulwama. This event marked one of the five major programmes conducted today across various municipal areas of the district. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from officials of Social Welfare, Health, Urban Local Bodies and other departments, along with representatives from Women Self Help Groups (SHGs), members of civil



society, social workers and the general public. During the event, a panel of experts and resource persons from multiple departments conducted interactive sessions, sensitising attendees about the alarming consequences of drug abuse. Medical professionals from the Health Department highlighted the root causes of addiction, including depression, peer pressure, curiosity, family trauma and feelings of inferiority. They stressed the importance of timely intervention, emotional support and rehabilitation in combating the crisis. Resource persons from the Social Welfare Department provided detailed insights into the district's strategic action plan to curb drug addiction. One of the major highlights of the event was a cultural performance presented by the Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K.

## DDC Reasi reviews functioning of District Ayush Society, stresses strengthening infrastructure and public outreach

■ HT News Network

REASI, APRIL 19: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Reasi, Nidhi Malik, who also serves as the Chairperson of the District Ayush Society, convened a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning and progress of Ayush-related programs and services in the district.

During the meeting, District Nodal Officer for AYUSH, Kamal Kishore presented a detailed overview of the existing infrastructure and operations of Ayush facilities across Reasi. The review aimed to enhance the delivery of traditional healthcare services and promote holistic wellness among the district's population. DDC Reasi directed the



Nodal Officer to identify suitable land for establishing Ayush dispensaries in coordination with the Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) and Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR). She also called for a review of room availability within the District Hospital for potential use by Ayush services.

DDC Ms. Malik emphasized the need to increase public

awareness about yoga sessions to encourage broader participation. She also instructed officials to conduct a joint inspection of the CHCK Katra building with the Block Development Officer (BDO) and the contractor to ensure timely completion and functionality of the remaining construction work.

To streamline planning and execution, the DDC direct-

ed the Ayush Nodal Officer to formulate a comprehensive action plan for upcoming activities. She stressed the importance of obtaining prior approvals and ensuring inter-departmental coordination for successful implementation. Additionally, she called for the compilation of performance data from Ayush centres to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

The review marks a significant step towards strengthening Ayush services in Reasi and ensuring the benefits of traditional healthcare systems reach the grassroots level.

The meeting was attended by the ADC Rakesh Kumar, ACD Pardeep Kumar, CEO, CDPO Reasi and other concerned officers were present.

## Awareness programme on RNTCP held at DH Bandipora

■ HT News Network

BANDIPORA, APRIL 19: An awareness programme on the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) was held today at District Hospital (DH) Bandipora to educate healthcare workers about the tuberculosis prevention and treatment strategies.

Speaking on the occasion, Medical Superintendent DH Bandipora highlighted the objectives of the programme and emphasized the importance of timely diagnosis and adherence to treatment under the RNTCP scheme. He called for collective efforts to eliminate TB from the district.

On the occasion, AYUSH Medical Officers threw light on the role of AYUSH medicines in boosting immunity and supporting TB care. They also discussed integrative approaches to patient management through traditional medicine.

Among others, the programme witnessed participation from hospital staff and health workers. On the occasion, AYUSH Medical Officers threw light on the role of AYUSH medicines in boosting immunity and supporting TB care. They also discussed integrative approaches to patient management through traditional medicine. Among others, the programme witnessed participation from hospital staff and health workers.

## 2nd UTRC meeting held at District Court Complex Anantnag

■ HT News Network

ANANTNAG, APRIL 19: The second quarterly meeting of the Undertrial Review Committee (UTRC) was convened today at the District Court Complex, Anantnag under the chairmanship of Tahir Khurshid Raina, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Anantnag/ Principal District & Sessions Judge, Anantnag.

The meeting witnessed the participation of ex-officio UTRC members including Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid, Senior Superintendent of Police Anantnag, Dr. G.V. Sandeep Chakraborty, Superintendent of Police Hqs Anantnag, Sajad Ahmad, Superintendent District Jail, In-charge Subsidiary Jail, Public Prosecutor, Chief Medical Officer Anantnag, Chief LADC along with two Deputy

Legal Aid Defense Counsels (LADCs).

The meeting, coordinated by Fozia Paul, Secretary, DLSA Anantnag, was convened in accordance with the directives of the Hon'ble Supreme

Court of India and the guidelines issued by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), with the objective of reviewing cases of undertrial prisoners falling within the defined 16 categories of eligible inmates. Following a detailed examination, four undertrial prisoners were identified as eligible for legal intervention and release under the prescribed framework.

The Committee undertook a comprehensive case-by-case review, assessing aspects such as duration of detention, bail eligibility, legal provisions, and availability of sureties. Pursuant to these deliberations, directions were issued to the concerned authorities.

## SED Kupwara holds awareness program on drug abuse

■ HT News Network

KUPWARA, APRIL 19: As part of the nationwide campaign under the 'Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan', School Education Department (SED) Kupwara today held a comprehensive program on drug abuse.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of students from across different schools of the district.

This initiative, aimed at spreading awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse and promoting a drug-free society, was organized under the guidance of the District Administration in collaboration with the Department of Education.

The campaign saw the active involvement of hundreds of students who participated in a range of awareness activities including rallies, poster-making competitions, debates,

and pledge-taking ceremonies.

One of the key highlights of the campaign was the large-scale registration of students and volunteers on the official Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan portal. Teachers, parents, and community members were also sensitized and encouraged to support the movement by pledging their support online.

Special workshops were also organized in several schools with support from local NGOs and health experts, focusing on the psychological, social, and legal consequences of substance abuse. These interactive sessions aimed to equip students with the knowledge and confidence to say no to drugs and support their peers in doing the same. Special workshops were also organized in several schools with support from local NGOs and health experts, focusing on the psychological, social,

# DDC Chairman distributes Rs 13 Lakh compensation among NOKs of Road Accident Victims at Doda

■ HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 19: In a significant public welfare act, District Development Council (DDC) Chairman Doda Dhananther Singh Kotwal today gave away compensation cheques worth Rs 13 Lakh to the Next of the Kin (NOK) of road accident victims. The financial support has been provided under the J&K Road Accident Victim Fund. The distribution took place in the office chamber of Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh in the presence of Vice Chairperson DDC Sangeeta Rani, ARTO Tasleem Wani and other concerned officials. A total of Rs 1 lakh each was given to the legal heirs of 13 deceased road accident victims. The initiative reflects the government's commitment to provide timely



financial assistance to families affected by the tragic road mishaps and to help ease their hardships in the aftermath of losing

a loved one. The support aims not only to offer immediate relief but also to acknowledge the loss and suffering endured by the

victims' families.

The families who received the compensation cheques included Mohammad Yaseen (Pora Paine Bhalessa), Sanjeet Bharti (Kandote), Mohammad Yaqoob (Trithlu Gandoh), Abdul Rashid Butt (Dhara), Ravinder Singh Manhas (Pernote Thathri), Purba Devi and Beli Ram (Indralla Thathri), Mukhtiyar Ahmed, Riyaz Ahmed Butt, Nurain Fatima, Mohd Rafi (all from Phagsoo), Iyrina Begum (Gunti Thathri), and Ilham Fatima (Phagsoo).

The District Administration Doda reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that relief reaches all eligible beneficiaries in a prompt and transparent manner. The initiative is part of the broader vision to safeguard and support citizens, especially in times of personal and family tragedies caused by road accidents.





# District Committee reviews implementation of Road Safety Plan in Poonch District

HT News Network

POONCH, APRIL 19: Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal chaired the meeting of District Level Road Safety Committee (DLRSC) meeting today in the Meeting Hall of the DC Office complex. The session focused on a comprehensive review of road safety measures within the district. Attendees included ADC Tahir Mustafa Malik; Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, District Informatics Officer NIC, Executive Engineers PWD Poonch, Surankote and Mendhar, Executive Engineer PMGSY, Executive Engineer IFC, Assistant Regional Transport Officer, DySP, Traffic Officials, BRO Officials and other concerned officers. The committee extensively discussed the implementation of the Road Safety Action Plan, the Road Safety Act, and critical infrastructure enhancements such as the installation of signage boards, traffic signaling, and crash barriers at identified black spots on hilly roads.



DC Kundal inquired in detail about accident data, including fatality reports and high-incident locations, emphasizing the

need for a grid-mapped analysis of accident-prone areas. He urged the authorities to intensify efforts in curbing traffic

rule violations and to enforce strict penalties against offenders. The Deputy Commissioner also called for extensive awareness campaigns across the district and within educational institutions, urging the Traffic, Motor Vehicle Department and other stakeholders to take an active role. Furthermore, DC Kundal reviewed the progress of tasks assigned to various departments in previous Road Safety Committee meetings. He directed the installation of necessary signage, the use of speed radar guns, and improvements to road conditions in high-incident areas. In a stern directive, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the ARTO to compile a list of tractors operating within the district and issue notices regarding strict actions against any illegal mining activities or misuse reported. The meeting concluded with a strong commitment to reducing traffic accidents and ensuring the safety of the general public in Poonch.

## Orientation training for Yuva DOOTs concludes at Doda

HT News Network



DODA, APRIL 19: A day-long training-cum-orientation programme for Yuva DOOTs under Mission YUVA, successfully concluded today at MCC hall of District Employment and Counselling Centre. The programme aimed at capacity building of the Yuva DOOTs to empower them with the skills and knowledge required to support and motivate potential entrepreneurs at the grassroots level. These trained youth volunteers will serve as key motivators within their respective panchayats to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship among the local youth. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Doda, Anil Kumar Thakur, presided over the event as the chief guest. In his address, he emphasized the importance of youth empowerment and the pivotal role Yuva DOOTs can play in fostering entrepreneurship at the village level. During the training, participants received comprehensive guidance on their roles and responsibilities, including awareness generation, beneficiary mobilization, and facilitation of government self-employment schemes. The training session emphasized the importance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for monitoring the effectiveness of the initiative, ensuring that the Yuva DOOTs remain result-oriented in their approach. At the outset, AD Employment presented detailed insights from the baseline survey conducted earlier to identify youth with entrepreneurial potential. The session helped Yuva DOOTs understand the scope of their intervention and align their efforts accordingly.

## Inspiring Journey of Drabu Spices Banihal (DSB): PMFME scheme shows Young Entrepreneur Zubair the path to success

HT News Network

RAMBAN, APRIL 19: In a remarkable journey of determination and entrepreneurship, Zubair Ahmed Drabu from Banihal has successfully established Drabu Spices Banihal (DSB), a business unit specializing in the grinding, packaging and marketing of spices at Dooliga, Banihal. His venture has been formalized under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme, implemented by the Department of Horticulture Planning and Marketing. Zubair's story is one of resilience and perseverance. After losing his father in 2006 and mother in 2017, he single-handedly took on the responsibility of raising his two younger sisters, managing their education and marriage while simultaneously striving to build his own livelihood. Starting at a micro level in 2019, he engaged in the marketing of dry fruits and locally produced agro-



based products, gradually shaping his entrepreneurial vision. With training, financial assistance, logistical support, and continuous handholding from the department, Zubair Ahmed Drabu transformed his previously unorganized home-based business into a structured and thriving enterprise. He thanked the District Administration Ramban, particularly Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, for proactively implementing various employment and job-oriented schemes, helping young entrepreneurs like

him overcome the challenges of unemployment. He highlighted the immense support provided by the administration & Department of Horticulture (P&M) Ramban including specialized training at SKUAST-Jammu, participation in the International Exhibition at Pragati Maidan, Delhi, and a buyer-seller meet in Hyderabad, which he described as game changers that exposed him to new business opportunities and market linkages. Under the PMFME scheme, the Department of Horticulture (P&M) facilitated a loan of 8.70 lakh

from J&K Bank, with a 35% back-ended subsidy, enabling him to expand operations. Currently, DSB Spices has an impressive production capacity of 60-70 quintals of spices per month, creating employment opportunities for five local youths, thus contributing to the socio-economic growth of the region. The initiative has garnered widespread appreciation from the local community, which hails Zubair Ahmed Drabu as an inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs, encouraging them to explore self-employment avenues rather than relying solely on limited government job opportunities. Looking ahead, Zubair aims to scale up his business across Jammu and Kashmir and other states, hoping for continued support from the district administration. He advised the youth to become employers rather than employees by tapping into local agro-based and high-demand market products, leveraging the opportunities provided under government schemes.

## Mission Yuva: 174 Yuva DOOTs imparted Training in Kishtwar

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, APRIL 19: The second and concluding session of the YUVA DOOT training under the ambitious Mission YUVA initiative was successfully held today in the Conference Hall, DC Office Complex. Over the course of last two days—a total of 174 Yuva DOOTs were trained and equipped to take forward the mission's objectives across the district. The event was spearheaded by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADDC/ADC), Pawan Kotwal. The ADC underscored the critical role of YUVA DOOTs as grassroots catalysts in promoting youth entrepreneurship and enhancing livelihood opportunities in the region. Emphasizing the long-term impact of empowering youth, the ADC described the initiative as a pivotal step towards self-reliance, inclusive development, and economic resilience in Kishtwar. The program aimed at preparing the YUVA DOOTs—designated



ambassadors of Mission YUVA—with essential knowledge about government schemes, eligibility frameworks, and operational procedures. These trained volunteers will assist in facilitating outreach, onboarding, and mentorship of aspiring young entrepreneurs. Subject experts and departmental resource persons conducted comprehensive sessions, covering everything from registration protocols to effective community engagement strategies. The training also included a live demonstration of the YUVA App, offering hands-on experience with the digital interface for registration and real-time monitoring.

## Doda Admin bans sale of 'Cool Lip' tobacco product in the district

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 19: In a decisive step to safeguard public health, particularly among school-going children, the Additional District Magistrate Doda Anil Kumar Thakur imposed an immediate ban on the storage, sale, display and distribution of the tobacco based product "Cool Lip" in the district. The decision follows rising concerns over the increasing availability of the product to minors, especially around educational institutions. Cool Lip, which contains filtered tobacco, has been found in shops near schools, raising serious oral health and addiction-related risks. The ban order cites clause 2.3.4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011, which prohibits the use of tobacco and nicotine as ingredients in any food product, as well as earlier prohibitory measures issued under SRO 68 dated 6 March 2013 in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. "In view of the increased use of Cool Lip by school-going children and its potential health implications, it is deemed necessary to prohibit this item in Doda District," the order reads. The Additional District Magistrate in exercise of the powers vested under Section 163 of BNSS, 2023 has enforced the ban with immediate effect and until further orders. The Senior Superintendent of Police, Chief Education Officer, All Tehsildar/Naib Tehsildar and designated Food Safety Officer shall ensure the strict enforcement of this order.

## JMC Commissioner visits Trikuta Nagar to address Civic issues

HT News Network



JAMMU, APRIL 19: Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Dr. Devansh Yadav paid a visit to Trikuta Nagar today to address pressing civic issues projected by the local Welfare Society. During the visit, members of the Welfare Society met with the Commissioner and highlighted the local issues seeking measures for proper drainage of rainwater to prevent water-logging in the area, particularly during the monsoon season. They also raised concerns related to cleanliness and non-functional street lights. Responding to the grievances, Dr. Yadav assured the residents that their genuine issues would be addressed on priority. He issued on-the-spot directions to officials of the concerned departments to take immediate action for resolving the drainage, sanitation, and lighting problems. The visit reflects JMC's commitment to responsive governance and improving civic amenities for all residents. Among others, various senior officers of ZC accompanied the Commissioner during the tour.

## Director Family Welfare reviews activities in Doda District

HT News Network

DODA, APRIL 19: To review the activities related to the Family Welfare Programme, Director Family Welfare MCH & Immunization J&K Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Rather conducted a review meeting during his official visit to Doda. The meeting was attended by Deputy CMO Dr. Sat Lal Manhas, Principal Government ANMT School, District Mass Education & Information Officer (DMEIO), Extension Educators, staff from the ANMT School, Rural Family Welfare Centre staff, Cold Chain Handlers and ASHA Coordinators. At the outset, Dr. Sat Lal Manhas presented a detailed PowerPoint presentation showcasing the indicator-wise progress of various components under the Family Welfare Programme. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Rather reviewed the indicator-wise achievements for the year 2024-25 and held discussions on key agendas. He emphasized the importance of the recently launched JK Sehat Mobile Application, urging all health personnel to not only download the app but also promote its usage up to the grassroots level among health staff. The Director also took stock of the progress in Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Routine Immunization, and the functionality of the Government ANMT School, Doda. He issued necessary directions to intensify IEC (Information, Education & Communication) activities to enhance community awareness and stressed the need for regular supportive supervision by district and block-level teams. Dr. Rather appreciated the commendable efforts of the district health team and encouraged all officials to continue their work with renewed dedication to achieve better health outcomes for the population.

## Poshan Pakhwada event held at Satwari: Participants sensitized about right nutrition, health, hygiene

HT News Network

JAMMU, APRIL 19: As part of 7th Edition of Rashtriya Poshan Pakhwada, a mega event was organised by Office of the Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Satwari. Mission Director, Mission Poshan J&K Kishori Lal Sharma was the Chief Guest. District Programme Officer Poshan Jammu, Pankaj Anand was the Guest of Honour. The event was attended by staff of CDPO Office, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Helpers and beneficiaries of the project including children, Pregnant Women & Lactating mothers.

## Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan: MC hosts awareness programme at Gole Market Udhampur

HT News Network

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 19: Municipal Council Udhampur, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai, today organized an awareness programme here at Gole market as part of the ongoing Information, Education & Communication campaign under the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

The programme was presided over by Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Rajinder Digra. Resource persons from various departments spoke on the social, economic and health-related consequences of drug addiction. The event also featured a yoga session led by students promoting a healthy and balanced lifestyle, a powerful rap performance themed on the



Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan, and a series of cultural presentations aimed at reinforcing the anti-drug message in an engaging and impactful manner. While addressing the participants, the EO underlined the critical role of parents in identifying early warning signs of drug abuse and emphasized the need for vigilant monitoring and timely intervention to safeguard youth from falling into the trap of

addiction. He further informed that the District Administration is conducting a series of awareness campaigns to sensitize the public about the devastating consequences of drug abuse. He appealed to citizens to stay alert and report any drug-related activities to the concerned authorities to ensure timely rehabilitation of the affected individuals.





## Six killed, 20 injured as building collapses in N-E Delhi

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 19 (UND)

A four-storey building collapsed in North-East Delhi's Mustafabad locality under the Dayalpur police station area, killing six people and injuring 20 others on Saturday, police said.

Many people are feared buried in the debris, officials said.

The incident took place around 3 am, and rescue work involving teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Delhi Fire Services and Delhi Police were launched, senior police officer Sandeep Lamba said.

The area is located at Shakti Vihar Gali Number One. The injured have been admitted to GTB Hospital.

Relief and rescue operations are going on, police said.

Clearing debris is limited as the area is too congested, police added.

## Iran condemns deadly U.S. airstrikes on Yemen's fuel port

### AGENCIES

TEHRAN, APR 19 (UND)

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei on Friday strongly condemned the U.S. lethal airstrikes on the Yemeni fuel port of Ras Isa.

He made the remarks in a statement released by the ministry in response to the overnight U.S. airstrikes on the Yemeni port on Thursday, which killed at least 80 people.

Baghaei said the attacks were "a clear instance of the crime of aggression and in flagrant violation of the fundamental principles and regulations of the United Nations Charter and international law."

He stressed that the U.S. "aggressions" against Yemen aligned with its "all-out support for Israel's occupation and genocide" in the occupied Palestinian territories, and would escalate insecurity in the region and threaten international peace and security.

The strikes started late Thursday night. According to Houthi-run al-Masirah TV, the victims included workers and employees of the port, who came under violent U.S. airstrikes while on duty.

The U.S. Central Command has confirmed in a statement that it struck and destroyed Ras Isa on Thursday "to eliminate this source of fuel for" and "degrade the economic source of power" of the Houthis.

In mid-March, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered "decisive and powerful military action" against the Houthis after the group announced plans to resume attacks on Israeli targets, citing Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid to Gaza as the reason.

## 5.7-magnitude earthquake hits Afghanistan

### AGENCIES

KABUL, APR 19 (UND)

A 5.7-magnitude earthquake hit northern Afghanistan's Badakhshan province on Saturday, the U.S. Geological Survey reported. According to the agency, the earthquake jolted the Ashkasham district of the province, at 11:17 a.m. local time, with the epicenter located at 36.24 degrees north latitude and 71.21 degrees east longitude, and a depth of 94.1 km.

No casualties have been reported so far. The tremors were felt in most parts of Afghanistan.

## Quake measuring 5.9 jolts Islamabad, Lahore, KP

### AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, APR 19 (UND)

An earthquake measuring 5.9 jolted parts of Pakistan on Saturday morning, causing panic across major cities including Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and several areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, media reports said.

The tremors, the third in a week, recorded at 11:47am, prompted residents to flee their homes and workplaces in fear, Geo News reported.

According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre, the epicentre of the quake was located near the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border region, with a depth of 94 km at latitude 36.21 N and longitude 71.34 E.

Tremors were reported in various locations, including Lower Dir, Malakand, Bajaur, Nowshera, Dir Bala, Shabqadar, Mohmand, Chitral, Swat, Swabi, Gilgit, and Mardan.

# An honour to speak with PM Modi, look forward to visiting India this year: Elon Musk

### AGENCIES

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, APR 19 (UND)

Tesla CEO Elon Musk said today that it was an honour to speak with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and that he is looking forward to visiting India later this year.

A day after he spoke with PM Modi, the multi-billionaire businessman posted on the X platform that he owns:

"It was an honor to speak with PM Modi.

"I am looking forward to visiting India later this year!"

PM Modi had posted



on X yesterday that the two had discussed the immense potential for collaboration in the areas of technology and innovation".

"Spoke to @elonmusk and talked about various issues, including the topics we covered during

our meeting in Washington DC earlier this year.

"We discussed the immense potential for collaboration in the areas of technology and innovation. India remains committed to advancing our partnerships with the US in these domains."

## Govt warns public against online booking scams targeting pilgrims, tourists

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19 (UND)

The government on Saturday issued warning about online booking frauds, especially those aimed at pilgrims and tourists across the country.

The Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), under the Ministry of Home Affairs, said these scams are being carried out through fake websites, deceptive social media pages, Facebook posts, and paid advertisements on search engines such as Google, an official statement said.

These scams involve setting up of fake but professional-looking websites and social media profiles and WhatsApp accounts that claim to offer services



like helicopter booking for Kedarnath, Chaar Dhaam, guest houses and hotel booking for pilgrims, online cab or taxi service bookings and holiday packages and religious tours.

While making payments through these platforms, unsuspecting individuals often realise that they have been duped only after they receive no confirmation, and the provided contact numbers become unreachable.

The I4C has advised public to remain extremely vigilant and follow

safety measures. These are: Always verify the authenticity of websites before making any payment. Verify before clicking on "sponsored" or unknown links on Google, Facebook, or WhatsApp. Cross-check bookings only through official government portals or trusted travel agencies. Report such websites immediately at the National Cyber-crime Reporting Portal [www.cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.cybercrime.gov.in) or call 1930 in case of any frauds.

Official bookings for Kedarnath helicopter services can be done only at <https://www.heliyatra.ircctc.co.in>. For Somnath Trust's services and guest house bookings, the official website is [https://omnath.org](http://https://omnath.org).

## Army brings mobile connectivity to Ladakh; empowers border villages

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APRIL 19 (UND)

In a transformative stride towards bridging the digital divide and empowering remote communities, the Indian Army has facilitated unprecedented mobile connectivity across the remote and high-altitude areas of Ladakh, including forward locations in eastern and western Ladakh and the Siachen Glacier.

For the first time, troops deployed in some of the world's most inhospitable terrains such as DBO, Galwan, Demchok, Chumar, Batalik, Dras, and the Siachen Glacier now have access to reliable 4G and 5G mobile connectivity, an Indian Army statement said.



This initiative has proved to be a major morale booster for soldiers serving in isolated winter posts at altitudes above 18,000 feet, allowing them to stay connected with their families and loved ones.

The pioneering effort has been made possible

through a collaborative approach under the whole-of-government framework, wherein the Indian Army leveraging its robust optical fibre cable infrastructure has partnered with Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) and the UT Administration of Ladakh.

## Hindu leader killed in Bangladesh, India asks Yunus regime to protect minorities 'without inventing excuses'

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI/DHAKA, APR 19 (UND)

A prominent leader of the Hindu minority community in Bangladesh, Bhabesh Chandra Roy, was abducted and killed in Dinajpur's Biral upazila. India condemned the killing, and said it follows a pattern of "systematic persecution of Hindu minorities under the interim government".

Bhabesh Chandra Roy, 58, vice-president of the Biral unit of the Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad, was a prominent leader of the Hindu community in the area. He was a resident of Basudebpur village under Shatagram Union. His body was



found on Thursday night.

In a strongly-worded statement, India asked the Mohd Yunus-led Interim Government to "live up to its responsibility of protecting all minorities, including Hindus, without inventing excuses or making distinctions".

In a post on X, Ministry of External Affairs spokes-

person Randhir Jaiswal said:

"We have noted with distress the abduction and brutal killing of Shri Bhabesh Chandra Roy, a Hindu minority leader in Bangladesh.

"This killing follows a pattern of systematic persecution of Hindu minorities under the interim government even as the perpetrators of previous such events roam with impunity.

"We condemn this incident and once again remind the interim government to live up to its responsibility of protecting all minorities, including Hindus, without inventing excuses or making distinctions."

## Kharge slams Modi govt over attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 19 (UND)

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday slammed the Modi government over the rising incidents of attacks against religious minorities, particularly Hindus, in Bangladesh and expressed shock over the murder of prominent Hindu Community leader Bhabesh Chandra Roy.

Kharge, on his social media handle X, said, "The brutal murder of Shri Bhabesh Chandra Roy, a prominent leader of the Hindu community, is proof that a smiling Modiji meeting with the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh was a failure." He added that "Religious minorities, especially our Hindu



brothers and sisters, are constantly being persecuted in Bangladesh".

Pointing out to a reply given by the government in the Parliament, the Congress President said, "In the past two months in Bangladesh, 76 attacks were carried out on Hindus in which 23 were killed. Moreover, attacks on other religious minorities are also continuing".

He also slammed a recent controversial statement made by the Chief Advisor of Bangladesh regarding India's North-

Eastern states, calling it "condemnable and disappointing."

The Congress president also alleged that "efforts are underway in Bangladesh to erase the memories of the 1971 Liberation War, which India supported at a great human and economic cost. Such actions are an attempt to weaken the historical and emotional ties that bind our two nations".

Reaffirming India's long-standing commitment to the peace and prosperity of Bangladesh, Kharge said, "Since 1971, India has always worked towards ensuring peace and prosperity for all the people of Bangladesh, recognising it as vital for the stability and progress of the subcontinent".

## Bengal Guv visits violence-hit Murshidabad, promises help to victims

### AGENCIES

KOLKATA, APRIL 19 (UND)

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Saturday visited the family members of Haragobinda Das (71) and his son Chandan Das (41) who were lynched after being dragged out of their Jafrabad home in Murshidabad's Samsher-gunje during Waqf protests last week, official sources said.

The Governor's visit came in the face of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's request to him not to tour the riot-affected areas.

"I talked to the affected family members and assured them that their complaints have been noted with a sympathetic approach. I will take up



their grievances with the state as well as the Central government," Bose told media after emerging from the victims' vandalised home.

He said he has given his Raj Bhavan phone number as well as Peace Room number to the people so that they can contact him whenever they needed.

Besides, security arrangements of the residents of the affected areas have been tightened.

"I want peace to return first, besides safety of the people," Bose, who arrived in the trouble-hit Murshidabad after visiting a relief centre at Baishnabnagar in Malda district on Friday.

## Bilawal Bhutto threatens to end alliance with PML-N govt over canals project

### AGENCIES

KARACHI, APR 19 (UND)

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has threatened to pull the plug on his party's parliamentary backing of the "stubborn" and "tone-deaf" PML-N-led-Shehbaz Sharif government if the controversial canals project is not immediately scrapped.

"The federal government must immediately roll back its controversial

canal project, otherwise the PPP cannot work with you (Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz)," Bhutto said, while addressing a public gathering in the city of Hyderabad, in the country's Sindh province.

The controversial project has become a major issue of contention between political allies PPP and PML-N.

The contentious canal issue is a megaproject inaugurated by Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz



Sharif and the Pakistan Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir in 2023, the News International reported.

As part of the megaproject, a big network of six canals is to be built across the country to irrigate millions of acres of barren

lands in the Cholistan desert. The \$3.3bn (PKR 945 billion rupees) project, called Green Pakistan Initiative (GPI), involves diverting water from the Indus River

However, the initiative has received major flak from officials who said that stakeholders were not consulted, and that diverting water from the already highly depleted river would greatly damage the river system.

According to critics,

the diversion of water upstream from the lower reaches of Sindh will impact the lives of thousands of people, who rely on the Indus River for their livelihoods.

The Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari-led PPP has time and again expressed reservations over the project, with President Asif Ali Zardari cautioning the government that some of its unilateral policies are causing "grave strain" on the federation.

In addition, the ongoing terror attacks in the country, a heavily depleted economy, socio-political instability, and the depleting water in the Indus River has added to the people's woes.

Bilawal Bhutto, former Foreign Minister, noted that projects are being imposed from Islamabad, and added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was "still unwilling to budge, and we are not ready to step back either".



## Blood test could detect Parkinson's disease before symptoms emerge

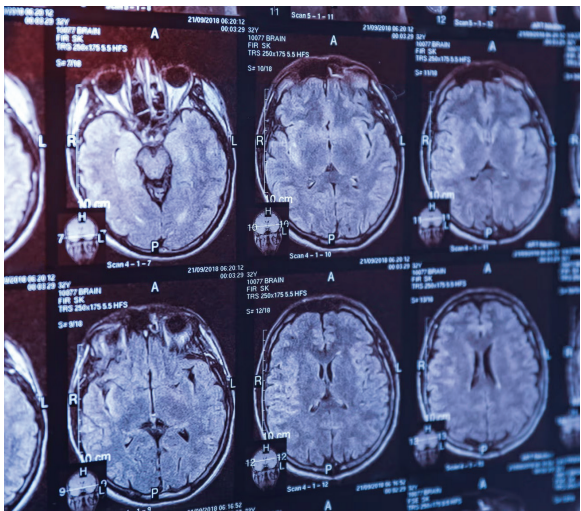
AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Researchers have developed a simple and "cost-effective" blood test capable of detecting Parkinson's disease long before symptoms emerge, according to a study.

About 153,000 people live with Parkinson's in the UK, and scientists who undertook the research said the test could "revolutionise" an early diagnosis of Parkinson's disease, "paving the way for timely interventions and improved patient outcomes".

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition in which nerve cells in the brain are lost over time. This leads to a reduction of the chemical dopamine which plays an important part in controlling movement.

This new test, which the Times reports costs £80, analyses small pieces of



genetic material known as transfer RNA fragments (tRFs) in the blood, focusing on a repetitive RNA sequence that accumulates in Parkinson's patients.

It also looks at a parallel decline in mitochondrial RNA, which deteriorates as the disease progresses. Mitochondria exist inside cells and generate energy. By measuring the ratio

between these biomarkers, researchers said the test "offers a highly accurate, non-invasive, rapid and affordable diagnostic tool, providing hope for early interventions and treatments that could change the course of the disease".

On a scale where a score of 1 indicates a perfect test while 0.5 shows the test is no better than flipping a

coin, the test scored 0.86, the Times reported.

The best clinical tests presently used on patients showing early signs of the disease scored 0.73, according to the study published in the journal Nature Aging.

The test uses the same PCR technology used during the pandemic to confirm Covid cases. It works by amplifying the genetic material being targeted, which allows it to be detected.

"This discovery represents a major advancement in our understanding of Parkinson's disease and offers a simple, minimally invasive blood test as a tool for early diagnosis," said Prof Hermona Soreq of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who supervised the study. "By focusing on tRFs, we've opened a new window into the molecular changes that occur in the earliest stages of the disease."

## Common respiratory condition fuels death risk by 3x in adults up to a year: Study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Adults with respiratory syncytial virus-associated acute respiratory infection (RSV-ARI) are likely to be at a 2.7-fold higher risk of death within one year, warned a study.

RSV-ARI refers to a group of illnesses caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) -- a common and highly contagious virus that primarily affects the respiratory tract.

The study presented at the Congress of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID Global 2025) in Austria, is based on an analysis of data from 5,289 adults (over 18 years) diagnosed with RSV-ARI between 2011 and 2022 in Denmark. They were compared to 15,867 matched controls from the general population and followed up to a year after RSV-ARI onset. "One of the most striking



findings from this study was the prolonged and significant impact of RSV-ARI," said lead study author, Maria Joao Fonseca, a researcher.

"Even after the acute phase, patients continued to experience worse outcomes compared to the general population. This underscores just how serious and enduring the

effects of RSV-ARI can be," she added.

While the impact of RSV on infants and young children is well-documented, it can also lead to serious complications in adults, including pneumonia and chronic respiratory disease.

The findings underscore the significant, yet often under-recognised,

long-term health and economic burden of RSV-ARI in adults, particularly among those with underlying conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma.

In addition to the increased risk of death, the study showed that adults with RSV also experience exacerbations of COPD and asthma, with increases in hospitalisation and intensive care unit.

"Exacerbations of COPD and asthma were the most common adverse clinical outcomes. These pre-existing conditions are already challenging in themselves, and RSV-ARI exacerbates their severity," Fonseca said, noting that the condition also raised healthcare costs.

She urged healthcare to pay "closer attention to patients with these underlying conditions to prevent further, potentially life-threatening complications".

## Doctors should lead Fit India Movement, promote wellness, preventive care: Union Minister

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Doctors are torchbearers of the Fit India Movement, said Union Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, asking them to promote wellness and preventive care in the country.

Mandaviya said this at the second graduation ceremony of ESIC Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad, held at Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Auditorium in New Delhi.

Addressing the graduating medical students, Mandaviya emphasised the importance of healthcare professionals in the development of a healthy nation.

"A healthy citizen is the foundation of a healthy society, and hence, a healthy nation," he said.

"Doctors are the torchbearers of the Fit India Movement, playing a critical role in promoting wellness, preventive care, and



healthy habits among the population," he added.

The Union Minister also advised the graduate students on dedication, ethical practice, and service to the community, urging them to continue their journey with passion and integrity.

Further, he reminded them that medals are only milestones, but the true

reward lies in the lives they will touch.

"Even in moments where you don't 'win,' learning itself becomes a form of victory," Mandaviya said.

He also urged the new doctors to serve in rural and underserved areas, understand ground realities, and ensure healthcare remains accessible,

affordable, and ethical.

Launched in August 2019 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Fit India Movement aims to make fitness an integral part of citizens' daily lives by integrating behavioural changes and moving towards a more physically active lifestyle.

Reminding the country's aim to be Viksit Bharat by 2047, Mandaviya noted that "the vision is not just the Prime Minister's dream, it is the shared duty of 140 crore Indians". He also highlighted the central role doctors will play in this transformation. Every consultation and every life saved, he noted, contributes to national productivity and progress.

During the graduation ceremony, a total of 447 students including 100 students each from the 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 batch, and the first batch of 47 postgraduate students graduated.

## New strategy may enable accurate cancer monitoring from blood tests alone

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK

US researchers have found a new method that may help in monitoring cancer from blood tests more easily and accurately.

The study, led by researchers from Weill Cornell Medicine and the New York Genome Center, in the US, showed that the method may be useful for monitoring disease status in patients following treatment.

The method, based on whole-genome sequencing of DNA, also represents an important step toward the goal of routine blood test-based screening for early cancer detection.

"We're now entering an era of low-cost DNA sequencing, and in this study, we took advantage of that to apply whole-genome sequencing techniques that in the past would have been considered wildly impractical," said Dr. Dan Landau, Pro-



fessor of Medicine, at Weill Cornell Medicine.

In the study, published in the journal Nature Methods, the team focussed on an error-correcting method in a low-cost commercial sequencing platform.

The error-correction method makes use of the redundant information in natural two-stranded DNA.

The researchers found it enabled a very high "depth" of coverage -- a measure of the sequencing

data quality -- allowing the team to detect extremely low concentrations of circulating tumour DNA. It also greatly improved the accuracy of the technique.

Blood-test-based "liquid biopsy" technology for early cancer detection and monitoring of cancer burden in patients could revolutionise cancer care, said the researchers.

The team demonstrated the potential of the high-sensitivity, low-error approach by using it to detect and assess very low cancer levels in patients with bladder cancer and melanoma from blood samples alone.

"We were able, for example, to see increases in circulating tumour DNA levels after treatment in patients with cancers that progressed or recurred and declines in those levels in patients whose cancers had full or partial responses," said Dr. Alexandre Cheng, a postdoctoral researcher.

## Study shows Covid infected kids, adolescents more likely to have heart disease

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

While the risk of cardiovascular outcomes following SARS-CoV-2 infection has been reported in adults, a new study showed that children and adolescents are also likely to develop multiple cardiac signs and symptoms.

The evidence of heart disease post-Covid infection in children and adolescents is limited.

The study, led by researchers from the University of Pennsylvania, revealed children and adolescents remained at risk of cardiovascular disease, including higher odds of high blood pressure and heart failure, between one to six months after Covid-19 infection.

The team analysed electronic health records (EHR) data from 19 children's hospitals and health institutions in the US between March 2020 and September 2023.



The study involved 297,920 children and adolescents with Covid infection and 915,402 without infection -- all of them were followed up for at least six months.

The results showed that "children and adolescents with prior SARS-CoV-2 infection are at a statistically significant increased risk of various cardiovascular outcomes"

This includes "hyperten-

sion, ventricular arrhythmias, myocarditis, heart failure, cardiomyopathy, cardiac arrest, thromboembolism, chest pain, and palpitations, compared to uninfected controls," said the researchers in the paper published in the journal Nature Communications.

Notably, the team said that the findings remained consistent among patients with and without child-

hood heart defects (CHDs). However, children with CHD showed a higher risk of atrial fibrillation -- an irregular heartbeat condition.

Further, the study observed a positive association between obesity and increased risks for certain severe cardiovascular outcomes, coupled with lower risks for cardiovascular symptoms, in children and adolescents.

"While these findings were not substantial, they highlight the complexity of obesity-related cardiovascular health in paediatric populations," said the team

"Awareness of the heightened risk of cardiovascular disorders after SARS-CoV-2 infection can lead to timely referrals, diagnostic evaluations, and management to mitigate long-term cardiovascular complications in children and adolescents," they added.

## UK researchers find promising biomarker for early sepsis detection

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

A team of UK researchers has found the potential of interleukin-6 (IL-6) as a powerful diagnostic biomarker for the early detection of sepsis in high-risk patient groups, including neonates, children, and pregnant women.

Sepsis, a life-threatening condition resulting from the immune system's overreaction to infection, remains a leading global cause of mortality, accounting for an estimated 11 million deaths annually.

Young children, especially those under five, and pregnant women are highly vulnerable due to immunological changes and increased susceptibility.

The study analysed serial blood samples from 252 patients (111 paediatric, 72 maternity, and 69 neonatal cases) with suspected sepsis.



The results showed that IL-6 consistently outperformed traditional biomarkers in distinguishing bacterial from non-bacterial infections.

"IL-6 also effectively stratified sepsis severity, distinguishing between mild infection, sepsis, and septic shock, a critical capability for guiding timely and appropriate treatment," the study showed.

The team explained how IL-6 has significant advantages over traditional biomarkers.

"IL-6 secretion rises within one to two hours, peaks at six hours, and decreases by 24 hours, whereas CRP and PCT peak much later at 48 and 24 hours, respectively. This faster, steeper response makes IL-6 a promising biomarker for earlier sepsis detection,"

said lead author Dr. Sean Whelan.

C-reactive protein (CRP) is a protein in the blood that indicates inflammation. PCT refers to Procalcitonin -- a biomarker for bacterial infections.

"Our findings reinforce the potential of IL-6 as a promising biomarker in sepsis diagnosis," Whelan said.

"With wider adoption and in combination with clinical assessment, IL-6 could significantly improve clinical decision-making and support timely, targeted treatment for high-risk patients," the expert added.

The study, presented at the annual Congress of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID Global 2025) in Austria, is the first to evaluate IL-6's diagnostic performance in a real-world cohort across all three populations.





# Dominant PBKS face under pressure RCB at Chandigarh

## AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH, APR 19 (UNI)

Punjab Kings enter their Sunday clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru with momentum and a psychological edge, having secured a five-wicket in a 14 overs a side match due to rain earlier this week.

As the Indian Premier League 2025 enters its business end, the 37th match at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium promises a high-voltage contest between a team on the rise and another grappling with form and consistency.

The win over RCB was Punjab's fifth in seven matches this season, taking them to second place in the points table and reinforcing their play-off credentials. In contrast, Bengaluru have stumbled, losing two of their last three games and slipping into a mid-table scramble. With just four wins so far, RCB's margin for error is narrowing fast.

Under Shreyas Iyer's leadership, Punjab have shed their tag of perennial underachievers. The team has found stability in both departments, with openers Prabhsimran Singh and Priyansh Arya providing strong starts, while the middle order, anchored by Iyer, Josh Inglis and Nehal Wadhera, has ensured depth and adaptability.



Marcus Stoinis and Shashank Singh have contributed in pressure situations, giving the batting lineup both muscle and maturity.

In the bowling department, Punjab have been clinical. Arshdeep Singh and Xavier Bartlett have struck early blows with the new ball, while Marco Jansen and Yuzvendra Chahal have provided crucial breakthroughs in the middle overs. The trio combined for six wickets in the last outing against Bengaluru, restricting them to 95. Punjab will look to repeat the dose on a surface that has favoured teams batting first.

Rajat Patidar and his men face mounting pressure. The last defeat was particularly humbling, with the star-studded lineup failing to withstand disciplined bowling. Despite flashes of

brilliance from Tim David and Josh Hazlewood, Bengaluru's overdependence on Virat Kohli and Philip Salt at the top has left them vulnerable when early wickets fall.

The middle order, comprising Padikkal, Livingstone and Jitesh Sharma, must shoulder more responsibility, while Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Yash Dayal need to find early breakthroughs to keep Punjab in check. Hazlewood's three-wicket haul in the previous game was a rare bright spot in an otherwise faltering campaign.

This will be the fourth IPL fixture at the newly built Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in Mullanpur. All three previous games have seen the team batting first defend successfully. The pitch offers good bounce early on but tends to slow down in the second half,

making chasing difficult under lights.

Weather in Chandigarh is expected to be dry with temperatures hovering around 32-34°C during the match hours. There is no forecast of rain, and humidity levels will be moderate.

With all results at the venue favouring teams batting first, both captains are likely to opt for the same if they win the toss. Punjab, with a stronger bowling attack and recent experience of defending totals, will relish the opportunity.

Punjab go into the match with momentum, depth and home advantage. Bengaluru, in contrast, are desperate for a turnaround. If their top order fails again, Punjab's varied bowling attack could exploit the vulnerabilities. On form and recent history, Punjab hold the edge.

# Wankhede awaits roaring MI, desperate CSK

## AGENCIES

MUMBAI, APR 19 (UNI)

After a sluggish start to their IPL 2025 campaign, Mumbai Indians have bounced back with consecutive victories, while Chennai Super Kings are struggling near the bottom of the points table with just two wins from seven outings.

As the two most successful franchises in IPL history lock horns at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday night, the form disparity between them sets the tone for a high-stakes clash with contrasting ambitions.

Match 38 of the season brings together two storied rivals in vastly different moods. Mumbai, five-time champions, appear to have hit their stride with allround performances against Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad. Their bowlers restricted SRH to 162-5 in the last outing, which MI chased down with four wickets in hand.

Key contributions have come from Suryakumar Yadav, who has amassed 265 runs from seven matches at a strike rate of 151.42, and Tilak Varma, who has struck two fifties in his last three innings. Captain Hardik Pandya is adding finishing firepower with the bat while also chipping in with 11 wickets, despite being slightly expensive.

The return of Jasprit Bumrah has bolstered the pace attack, which has



been expertly complemented by Trent Boult at the death and Mitchell Santner through the middle overs.

Meanwhile, Chennai are facing a critical phase in their season. The five-time champions are reeling from a string of losses, with their only bright spot being a recent win against Lucknow Super Giants that broke a five-match losing streak. The absence of opener Ruturaj Gaikwad due to injury has further compounded their woes.

Promising 20-year-old Shaik Rasheed impressed with a quick-fire 27 against LSG, while Shivam Dube continues to be their most consistent batsman with three valuable contributions in his last three innings. Veteran Mahendra Singh Dhoni showed glimpses of his old self with a finishing cameo (26\* off 11), but the middle order remains fragile.

Chennai's bowling has

been erratic, Khaleel Ahmed and Noor Ahmad have picked up wickets (11 and 12 respectively), but others like Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, and Matheesha Pathirana have struggled either with containment or economy. Unless the bowlers find their rhythm at Wankhede, Chennai could face another uphill task.

The rivalry between Mumbai and Chennai is among the most celebrated in the league. At the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai hold a 7-5 advantage in 12 previous encounters against Chennai. Earlier this season, CSK managed a four-wicket win over MI, but current form heavily tilts the scales in favour of the hosts.

The Wankhede pitch is expected to be batting-friendly, with some assistance for seamers early on. While it has shown variable character this season, ranging from

scores of 116 to 221—teams batting first are likely to aim for 180-190.

Dew could play a significant role in the second innings, which makes the toss crucial. Teams chasing have won 2 out of 3 games here this season, and both captains are expected to opt to bowl first.

Weather will be typically hot and humid, with no rain forecast.

While past encounters between Mumbai and Chennai have always drawn attention, the 2025 edition finds the two giants on diverging paths.

With momentum, home advantage, and a more balanced unit, Mumbai start as clear favourites. Chennai's best hope lie in early wickets and containing Mumbai to a chaseable total, but given the depth of Mumbai's lineup, that will take a near-perfect performance.

The match will commence at 1930 hrs IST.

# Crispin Chettri names 39 probables for AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers

## AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 19 (UNI)

A list of 39 probables for the Indian senior women's team camp was, on Saturday, announced by head coach Crispin Chettri.

The Blue Tigresses are set to play the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from June 23 to July 5. They have been drawn in Group B, where they will face hosts Thailand, Mongolia, Timor Leste, and Iraq.

The senior women's team camp will commence on May 1, at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence in Bengaluru.



List of probables for the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers:

Goalkeepers: Payal Basude, Elangbam Panthoi Chanu, Keisham Melody Chanu, Moirangthem Monalisha Devi.

Defenders: Purnima Kumari, Phanjoubam Nirmala Devi, Martina Thok-

chom, Shubhangi Singh, Sanju, Malati Munda, Toijam Thoibisana Chanu, Sorokhaibam Ranjana Chanu, Ngangbam

Sweety Devi, Viksit Bara, Hemam Shilky Devi.

Midfielders: Kiran Pisd, Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi, Muskan Subba, Lisham

Babina Devi, Karthika Angamuthu, Cindy Remruatpuui Colney, Sangita Basfore, Priyadharshini S, Baby

Sana, Santosh, Anju Tamang.

Forwards: Mousumi Murmu, Malavika P, Sandhiya Ranganathan, Soumya Guguloth, Sulanjana

Raul, Lynda Kom Serto, Rimpa Haldar, Manisha Naik, Renu, Karishma Purushottam Shirvoikar, Sumati Kumari, Manisha Kalyan, Grace Dangmei.

Head Coach: Crispin Chettri

Assistant Coach: Priya PV, Goalkeeper Coach: Dipankar Choudhury.

# BCB facing tough time: Faruque after media rights go unsold

## AGENCIES

SYLHET, APR 19 (UNI)

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed said they are going through a 'tough time' after failing to sell media rights for the Bangladesh-Zimbabwe Test series and thanked the BTV for stepping in to telecast the first Test here starting on Sunday.

The BCB had invited broadcasters to bid for the media rights of the two-Test series between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe on March 19 but no parties showed any interest as the deadline ended on April 7.



The board still tried to negotiate a deal with broadcasters but after failing to garner any interest, it requested state broad-

caster BTV to telecast the match and it obliged, the Daily Star reported.

"I think there is a financial lull in both domestic and international cricket... We are going through a bit of a tough time, it's taking some time after the change in government," Faruque told reporters at an event in Dhaka today.

"BTV will telecast it [Zimbabwe series], we are thankful to them. It was really difficult to get BTV's slot. Special thanks to the honourable secretary who is present here. We communicated with her from the board. Usually, you have to buy a slot

from BTV. We are grateful to her. BTV will telecast it free of cost. At least, the match would reach the people."

Faruque also said that the board is still trying to telecast the match on a private channel, saying, "We are still in talks to get another channel on board. Even if we can't show this match, we will try to do it for the next game."

"There is also the matter of selling the media rights for the next two-and-a-half years. We have prepared a tender for it. We will invite proposals from international companies for it," he added.

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