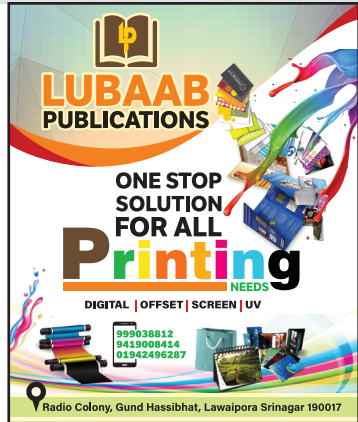


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HEADLINES  
TODAY

Voice To The Voiceless



# Pahalgam Terror Attack Was Assault on India's Soul: LG Manoj Sinha

"Didn't Sleep Properly Till Perpetrators Were Eliminated"

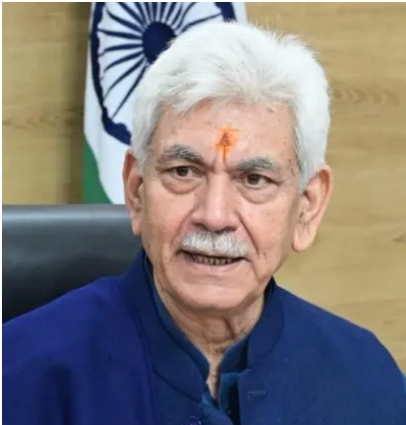
■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 09:** Revealing that he couldn't get proper sleep till three terrorists involved in April 22 Pahalgam terror attack were eliminated by the security forces, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Saturday reiterated that attack on tourists at Baisaran Valley that left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead, was assault on India's soul.

In an interview to national TV channel, LG Sinha, said, "I could not sleep after April 22. It was an attack on India's soul. It was only after the three killers

were eliminated that I got a sound sleep."

Asked why there was not a single policeman present in Baisaran Valley, where tourists were enjoying picnic with pizza sellers around, LG Sinha replied, "The person who provided ziplining and other leasures to tourists in Baisaran was a private player. Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation had not granted him any permission. He did not inform the administration and police that he had started this. For four years, there was peace and calm throughout Kashmir Valley, and several small tourist spots



had sprung up."

On Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's remark that the Lieutenant Governor's failure in providing security to tourists put the nation on the brink of war, LG said, "If he has said this, I welcome it. But he must also say that for decades, Pakistan used to bring out a "strike calendar" for the Valley, and schools, colleges and markets used to remain closed for 132 days in a year. There were frequent incidents of stone pelting, and security personnel were being killed."

On Akhilesh Yadav's question

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## ECI De-Registers Three Little-Known Parties of J&K

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 09:** In a significant development, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has deregistered three obscure political parties from Jammu & Kashmir.

According to an official order, the poll

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## 2 Soldiers Killed, 2 Injured As Kulgam Encounter Enters 9th day

LG Sinha, CM Omar Pay Tributes to The Fallen Soldiers

■ HT News Network

**KULGAM, AUG 09:** Two Army soldiers were killed and as many injured in an ongoing encounter with terrorists in the dense forests of Akhal in South Kashmir's Kulgam district, which entered its ninth day on Saturday.

They said that the soldiers were killed during a heavy exchange of fire

late Friday night in the forest area, where terrorists remain holed up in the upper reaches. "Terrorists hurled a grenade at forces, resulting in the death of two soldiers and injuries to two more," they said.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), the Chinara Corps paid tribute to the fallen soldiers, stating: "Chinara Corps honours the supreme sacrifice of the Bravehearts, L/Nk Pritpal Singh and

Sep Harminder Singh, in the line of duty for the Nation. Their courage and dedication will forever inspire us. #IndianArmy expresses deepest condolences and stands in solidarity with the bereaved families. Operation continues."

Sources said loud explosions and heavy gunfire echoed from the forest area throughout the night. Security

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## Chhari Mubarak Carried To Amarnath Cave Shrine For Prayers

■ United News of India

**SRINAGAR, AUG 9:** Chhari Mubarak, the saffron-robed holy mace of Lord Shiva, was Saturday carried to the Amarnath holy cave shrine for traditional prayers and rituals, marking the ceremonial conclusion of the annual pilgrimage, officials said.

They said that after a night's halt, the Chhari Mubarak left Panchtarani camp in the morning on the occasion of 'Sharavan Purnima'. Traditional 'puja' and rituals

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### FOOD CATASTROPHE:

## Need For Mass Awareness On Food Hygiene As Unsafe Food is Carcinogenic: Warn Health Experts

■ HT News Desk / KNO

**SRINAGAR, AUG 09 :** In wake of large quantities of adulterated and rotten meat being seized from different parts of Kashmir in recent days, health experts have issued strong warnings about the serious risks, such food poses to

public health.

Speaking to the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Experts said improper handling, unhygienic storage, and the use of harmful chemicals to mask spoilage could be silently fueling a health crisis in the valley.

Dr Mohammad Salim Khan,

Head of the Department of Community Medicine at GMC Srinagar, told KNO that improper handling of meat and poultry can have devastating consequences.

"Unsanitary practices during slaughtering, dressing, packaging, transportation, storage, and distribution can contaminate meat

with harmful bacteria, leading to foodborne illnesses such as food poisoning, diarrhoea, dysentery, and typhoid fever," he said.

He added, "Meat, especially poultry, spoils quickly when exposed to environmental conditions without proper handling and storage. Unfortunately, in

many cases, meat is transported in unhygienic thermocol boxes or kept in the open, rather than in refrigerated vehicles and deep freezers."

Dr Khan stressed that the safe disposal of spoiled meat is equally important. "Improperly

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### HISTORIC MILESTONE:

## First-Ever Freight Train carrying Cement arrives at Anantnag Goods Shed in Kashmir Valley

Arrival of Freight train in Kashmir Valley heralds a new era of logistical and economic growth

■ Mohammad Hanif Khan

**NEW DELHI, AUG 9:** In a historic development for regional connectivity, a freight train has successfully reached Anantnag Goods Shed in the Kashmir Valley for the



first time from Rupnagar, Punjab, marking a significant milestone in connecting the Kashmir region to the national freight network. The

arrival of freight train, carrying cement, is set to accelerate infrastructure projects and improve

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## Massive Haul of Rotten Meat Seized, Destroyed in Jammu

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

**JAMMU, AUG 09:** In a major enforcement action to safeguard public health, the Drugs and Food Control Organisation (DFCO) Jammu on Friday seized and destroyed a large consignment of spoiled non-vegetarian products including 2,700 kilograms of rotten chicken and 1,000 kilograms of decomposed fish.

The operation, carried out under the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA), was led by Deputy Commissioners of Food Safety Division and Food ICIL Jammu Madan Magotra and Pankaj Soni respectively with the support of Food Safety Officers, Legal Metrology officials and Jammu Municipal Corporation.

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### AN APPEAL TO MAKE A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

VMS SPECIALTY  
HOSPITAL (VMSSH)



FROM THIS:



TO THIS:



YOU SUPPORTED US ALL THROUGH

NOW A LITTLE MORE EFFORT & WE WILL OPEN THE DOORS OF THIS HOSPITAL TO OUR CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM HEART DISEASE:

Our vision is clear:

Healthy Children Shape a Healthier Society

The hospital is taking form—paint, tiles, and firefighting systems are in place—

But vital work remains: air conditioning, medical gas pipelines, electrical systems, and partitioning.



JK HOPE AND HEALTH  
FOUNDATION  
TMO16418915@jkb  
0005010100009519

One Last Push To Keep Young  
Hearts Beating: Every Penny  
Supports A Heart Beat

Advt - Comp...

## CS assesses preparedness for implementation of e-Office at Tehsil level

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 9:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today reviewed implementation of e-Office 2.0 at the Tehsil level, aimed at establishing a seamless and paperless governance model across all basic administrative units of Jammu & Kashmir.

The initiative seeks to extend the digital governance to 207 tehsils in the UT.

Present in the meeting were Secretary, IT; CEO, JaKeGA; SIO, NIC and other concerned officers while the Deputy Commissioners participated



virtually.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of the legacy data in these offices. He said

that this data stored in paper files is of paramount importance hence deserves to be protected for the posterity for smooth functioning of these govern-

ment offices.

He directed the Deputy Commissioners to work out a plan for time bound scanning of all the files relevant to the public matters so that there erupts no incoherence while discharging the official functioning in future after switching over to e-Office completely.

He also impressed upon the IT Department to complete the onboarding of remaining users on the e-Office for its rolling out without further delay. He stressed on the capacity building and training of such users for

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# RANA REVIEWS UPGRADATION WORKS AT NISHAT, ALUSTENG WATER FILTRATION PLANTS

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUG 9:** Jal Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana today conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing upgradation works at the Nishat and Alusteng Water Filtration Plants, aimed at enhancing Srinagar's potable water infrastructure and ensuring uninterrupted supply of safe drinking water to residents.

During his visit, the Minister assessed the current status of potable water availability, filtration processes and the progress on under-construction filtration units, including the 3.0 MGD (Million Gallons per Day) plant at Nishat and the 5.5 MGD plant at Alusteng.

The Minister inspected various operational units of the

facilities, including water reservoirs, pump rooms, testing laboratories and storage capacities.

The officials informed the Minister that the plants play a critical role in supplying the treated drinking water to a significant portion of Srinagar's population. They added that the upgradation works are progressing steadily.

Rana emphasized the need to strictly adhere to project timelines and called for immediate procurement of Alum, a vital coagulant used in the water filtration process, to ensure optimal treatment efficiency. He cautioned that any unnecessary delays could undermine the service delivery and erode public trust.

Asking the officials to adopt



modern best practices, the Minister stressed the importance of regular maintenance and efficient management to ensure continuous, high-quality water supply. He reiterated the government's commitment under the leadership of Omar Abdullah to provide safe, clean drinking water to every household in Jammu & Kashmir.

"Access to potable water is

a cornerstone of public health, economic progress, and social well-being. Our administration is committed to invest in modern infrastructure, incorporating advanced filtration technologies and strengthening the operational protocols to guarantee a reliable and safe water supply for both urban and rural areas," the Minister stated.

While inspecting the reservoirs, Rana highlighted the region's natural wealth in water resources and underscored the collective responsibility to safeguard them.

"The Valley is blessed with abundant water reserves. It is our shared duty as government, local bodies and citizens alike to protect these resources from pollution, overuse and neglect," he said.

Appreciating the efforts of the Jal Shakti Department, he called for stringent hygiene around treatment facilities. He urged the officials to prevent any potential sources of contamination near water treatment plants. He further emphasised efficient water management practices and reaffirmed the government's resolve to provide clean water to every household.

The Minister was accompanied by the Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti Kashmir, Superintending Engineer, Hydraulic Circle Srinagar, Executive Engineers and other senior officials.

The Chief Engineer briefed the Minister on the current progress and assured timely completion of the upgradation works.

## Master Parent-Teacher meetings held at Ganderbal

■ HT News Desk

**GANDERBAL, AUG 09:** In a significant step towards strengthening the bond between schools and the community, Master Parent-Teacher Meetings were organised today in all Higher Secondary Schools/ Cluster Head institutions across District Ganderbal.

The events brought together cluster schools, parents, alumni, respected citizens, officers from



the District Administration, higher authorities, and public representatives. These gatherings provided a common platform to discuss students' academic progress, share feedback, and enhance collaborative efforts for improving the quality of education.

Organised under the directives of the Director School Education Kashmir, the meetings witnessed an atmosphere of enthusiasm and unity, with participation resembling a festive celebration. The initiative highlighted the importance of community engagement in nurturing educational excellence and ensuring holistic development of students.

## Committee on Government Assurances holds meet at Srinagar, reviews progress on assurances of Health department

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUG 09:** The Committee on Government Assurances of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today held a meeting at Assembly Complex here to review the progress on fulfilment of assurances pertaining to Health department.

The meeting was chaired by the Committee Chairman, Sajad Gani Lone and attended by members including Ch. Mohammad Akram, Javaid Ahmad Mirchal, Iftikar Ahmad, Mian Mehar Ali, Mohan Lal, Sunil Bahardwaj and Shagun Parihar.

Secretary Health and Medical Education, Director Health Services Jammu/Kashmir and



other senior officers of Health and Medical Education department were also present in the meeting.

Speaking during the meeting, the Chairman impressed upon the officers that assurances given by the Ministers on floor of the house during budget Session must be fulfilled immediately. He underscored the significance of the Committee's role in holding the government accountable and ensuring transparency in governance.

The Chairman directed the officers to hold regular consultations with all stakeholders so that all the assurances made in the House are constantly tracked and fulfilled.

## Tiranga Rally Organised at AMGDC Kilam in Collaboration with Tehsil Office Devsar

■ Farooq Rather

**KULGAM, AUG 9:** In a vibrant display of patriotism and unity, a grand Tiranga Rally was organised today by the Tehsil Office Devsar in collaboration with Altaf Memorial Government Degree College (AMGDC) Kilam, in response to a communication received from the District Administration Kulgam vide Ref No. DCK/PA/2025-26/1561-1661.

The rally commenced from the premises of AMGDC Kilam, passed through the main market, and culminated at the college gate, with the entire route echoing with slogans of "Har Ghar Tiranga, Ghar Ghar Tiranga". The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from hundreds of students, faculty members of the college, school staff, Anganwadi workers and helpers (ICDS officials) of Kilam Zone, officials from the Tehsil Office Devsar, and members of the local police.

Prominent dignitaries present on the occasion included the Tehsildar Devsar Rakib Ahmad (JKAS) the Incharge Principal of GDC Kilam



Dr. Shabir Ahmad Pader, along with other senior officials and local leaders who actively took part in the rally, encouraging youth and citizens to embrace the national spirit.

Participants proudly held the Indian tricolour high, marching with great enthusiasm and fervour to mark the occasion and promote the mes-

sage of national integration and pride ahead of Independence Day 2025.

Speaking on the occasion, the officials highlighted the importance of such events in instilling a sense of national pride among the younger generation. The event concluded peacefully, leaving behind a strong message of unity and patriotism.

## Mass Parent-Teacher Meetings Held in the Schools Across District Kupwara

■ Javaid Bhat

**KUPWARA, AUG 9:** Schools across District Kupwara today hosted Mass Parent-Teacher Meetings, drawing overwhelming participation from parents, SMDC members, Officers, civil Society and school staff. Notably, BHSS Kukroosa witnessed enthusiastic involvement, serving as a vibrant hub for discussions on academic progress, infrastructure development, and strategies to enhance student welfare.

Parents and community representatives shared valuable suggestions aimed at strengthening the teaching-learning environment and promoting holistic education in the district.

Quoting the words of eminent educationist Gh. Rasool Khan, the gatherings were reminded that, "Education is not merely the filling of minds with facts, but the lighting of a fire that inspires lifelong learning." Similarly, the



## Ashok Koul addresses 'Har Ghar Tiranga' workshop at Nowgam Railway Station

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 09:** Under the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, the Chanapora Constituency of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) J&K today organised a special workshop at Nowgam Railway Station, Srinagar.

The event was graced by Ashok Koul, BJP General Secretary (Organization), Jammu and Kashmir, who addressed party workers, local residents, and railway staff gathered for the occasion.

In his address, Koul emphas-



sized the importance of the national flag as a symbol of unity, pride, and sacrifice. He lauded the enthusiasm of the people of Jammu and Kashmir in embracing the campaign and reaffirmed the BJP's commitment to fostering a strong sense of national identity and patriotism across every household.

Ashok Koul was accompanied by the BJP District President Srinagar Adv Sheikh Salman, the District Srinagar team and Chanapora Constituency team.

"The Tricolour represents the

hopes and dreams of every Indian. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, this campaign aims to instill pride in our rich heritage and pay tribute to the freedom fighters who laid down their lives for our nation," said Koul.

The workshop saw participation from BJP workers, youth volunteers, and members of the local community, who pledged to hoist the national flag at their homes from August 13 to 15, in line with the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign.

thought of Sonallah Khan resonated strongly: "The true strength of a school lies in the united efforts of parents, teachers, and the community."

In his address, Principal BHSS Kukroosa Farooq Ahmad Bhat reaffirmed the school's commitment to delivering quality and promising education to every student. He stressed that the institution is determined to foster academic excellence, moral values, and creative skills, and pledged to incorporate constructive feedback from parents and the community into actionable plans for student growth.

The district-wide meetings concluded with a promise for sustained parent-teacher partnership as the cornerstone for shaping a brighter educational future for the children of Kupwara.



# DC Kulgam Chairs District Road Safety Meeting, Stresses Strict Enforcement of Traffic Rules

■ **Farooq Rather**

**KULGAM, AUG 09:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Shafi Khan (IAS), today chaired a meeting of the District Road Safety Committee (DRSC) to review the implementation of the Road Safety Action Plan and to discuss coordinated efforts to enhance road safety across the district.

The meeting began with a detailed review of the compliance report from the previous DRSC meeting. The DC emphasized the importance of inter-departmental coordination to strengthen road safety mechanisms and ensure effective enforcement of traffic laws.

Officials from various departments apprised the DC of actions taken so far, including identification and rectification of accident-prone spots, installation of crash barriers, and road signage at critical locations. Special focus was laid on enhancing safety measures along vulnerable stretches.

The DC directed the concerned departments to identify all accident-prone and vulnerable areas and prepare a comprehensive plan for the installation of CCTV cameras and proper signage. He also stressed intensifying public awareness campaigns, particularly in schools, marketplaces, and rural areas.

Instructions were issued for



preparing a detailed Road Safety Audit Plan to check the safety conditions of major roads,

bridges, and intersections. The R&B and PMGSY departments were asked to conduct audits

and immediately address issues such as black and blind spots. DC Khan called for strict

enforcement of traffic laws, directing the Motor Vehicles Department and Traffic Police to remove roadside encroachments, curb traffic violations, and maintain smooth traffic flow, especially in urban areas.

He also issued strict instructions to petrol pump operators to implement the "No Helmet, No Petrol" policy without fail, to promote road safety among two-wheeler riders.

All departments were asked to regularly update the iRAD (Integrated Road Accident Database) portal for accurate reporting of road incidents.

The meeting also reviewed the progress of key infrastructure projects, including Barzallo Bridge and Sakarsam

Bridge, with clear directions for their timely completion. Delays in installing road signage would invite show-cause notices, the DC warned.

The meeting also focused on strengthening post-accident emergency response systems, enhancing medical support, organizing emergency medical camps, and ensuring swift coordination with health services.

The DC concluded the meeting with a call for collective, time-bound action by all departments to improve road safety and reduce accidents in the district. He also appealed to the public to follow traffic rules and cooperate with authorities in creating safer roads for all.

## Grand Cluster-Level Parent-Teacher Meeting at GHSS Delina

■ **HT News Desk**

**DELINA, AUG 09:** A grand cluster-level Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) was held today at Govt. Higher Secondary School Delina with an overwhelming participation of parents.

The programme began with a welcome address by Qazi Syed Sajad, this was followed by an enlightening session on the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 by Resource Person Mr. Ishfaq Ahmad Lone, who particularly highlighted the vital role of paren-



tal involvement in ensuring the best educational development of children.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Shabir Ahmad Wani, then addressed the large gathering of parents and teachers. He underscored the importance of community participation in strengthening the education system, stressing that in the tripolar process of education, no single pillar can function effectively in isolation.

A special attraction of the event was an impressive skit presented by students, depicting constructive parent-teacher dialogues in schools. The programme concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Mr. Hilal Ahmad. The session was beautifully moderated by Insha Shafeeq and Snobar Altaf.

After the culmination of the programme, parents visited their respective stalls to review the academic progress of their wards. Teachers briefed them on achievements as well as areas needing improvement, while parents shared valuable suggestions, which were duly noted. Separate stalls were also set up for the cluster schools, facilitating direct interaction between their teachers and parents.

The event was hailed as a great success, fostering stronger school-parent partnerships. The school administration expressed gratitude to all parents for their enthusiastic participation and encouraged them to continue visiting the school regularly to monitor their children's progress and provide constructive feedback.

## Awantipora Police along with Civil Administration intensifies Market Checking in Tral

■ **Junaid Ali**

**AWANTIPORA, AUG 09:** In order to ensure safe and hygienic sale /availability of edible items in the market, a team headed by SDPO Tral Shri Rakesh Kumar along with SHO Police Station Tral Inspector Ab.Rashid in coordination with food safety department, and Municipal Committee Tral ,

conducted inspections of various restaurants falling under the jurisdiction of Police Station Tral.

During the inspection, rotten and unhygienic edible items were found in several establishments including restaurants. The same were destroyed on the spot and fine was imposed.

Strict instructions were also issued to the restaurant owners



to maintain proper hygiene and adhere to food safety standards, failing which strict action under relevant provisions shall be initiated.

Awantipora Police assures such inspections would be conducted on a regular basis and warned the traders/restaurant owners of stern action if they are found indulging in illegal activities

## 'Healthy Streams' QR-Coded Planter Project Launched at GHSS Rainawari

Students, Teachers, Parents Pledge Plastic-Free Campus, Cleaner Water Bodies

■ **HT News Desk**

**SRINAGAR, AUG 09:** A unique environmental campaign titled "Healthy Streams for Healthy Neighbors" was launched today at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Rainawari, coinciding with a Mass Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM). The initiative seeks to make local stream water safe for drinking by preventing sewage inflow, protecting public health and safeguarding the ecosystem.

The programme brought together faculty and students from multiple schools across the Rainawari cluster. Noted environmentalist and Chairman of Nigeen Lake Conservation Organisation (NLCO), Mr. Manzoor Ahmad Wangnoo, graced the occasion as Chief Guest, while Prof. M.A. Shah, Head of the Department of Physics at NIT Srinagar, was the Guest of Honour. The event was presided over by Mrs. Gulshan Afroza, Principal GHSS Rainawari.

Students showcased their creativity through performances promoting environmental awareness and community responsibility. The Chief Guest and Guest of Honour also toured the school campus, viewing its well-equipped science laboratory, flourishing vegetable garden, and an innovative QR-coded planter system that allows students to digitally track plant growth and strengthen their bond with nature. The project is being led by GHSS



students under the supervision of Mr. Khursheed Ahmad and Mr. Gowhar Khursheed, with the School Green Team headed by Miss Irm Fatimah, who officially handed over the project document to Mr. Manzoor Wangnoo in the presence of Prof. Shah.

In his address, Manzoor Wangnoo praised the school's holistic approach to environmental stewardship, calling GHSS Rainawari "a hidden gem" for its commitment to eco-conscious education. He extended special appreciation to the school gardener for maintaining the green campus and announced that NLCO, in collaboration with participating schools, will adopt and clean a designated patch of Dal Lake to instill environmental

responsibility among students. He concluded by thanking Prof. Shah, Principal Afroza, senior lecturers, teachers, parents and students for their active participation.

Prof. M.A. Shah, in his remarks, commended the initiative and urged all educational institutions to show similar dedication towards environmental protection.

The event concluded with a collective pledge by all participants to make the school premises completely free from plastic and polythene. Principal Mrs. Afroza expressed gratitude to the distinguished guests, faculty, students, and partner schools for their contributions to making the programme a resounding success.

## Traffic Police Rural Kashmir Holds Patriotic Tiranga Yatra on NH-44

■ **HT News Desk**

**AWANTIPORA, AUG 09:** Traffic Police Rural Kashmir today organised a vibrant Tiranga Yatra along NH-44, from Toll Plaza Kachkote to Kaigham and back. The rally saw enthusiastic participation from traffic police personnel, toll plaza employees, and local residents, all proudly carrying the national flag.

The march showcased unity and national pride, with the saffron representing courage and sacrifice, white symbolising peace and truth, green



denoting faith and prosperity, and the Ashoka Chakra embodying progress and justice. The sight of uniformed officers walking alongside civilians under the fluttering tricolour created a powerful display of patriotism.

The event concluded at Toll Plaza Kachkote with heartfelt thanks to all participants, and special appreciation for the local civilians who joined the rally.

## Drug Control Officer & Police Inspect Courier Services in Ramban to Curb Drug Trafficking

■ **HT News Desk**

**RAMBAN, AUG 9:** In line with the directives of District Administration Ramban, the Drug Control Officer, in coordination with Police authorities, conducted inspections at courier centers in Chanderkote to check the misuse of courier services for the sale of narcotics and psychotropic drugs in the district.

During the inspection, special focus was laid on deliveries of medicines, particularly psychotropic drugs ordered online. The Drug Control Officer sensitized courier service providers about the potential abuse of their services by drug peddlers,

highlighting that unverified consignments can be easily transported without detection.

The inspection team instructed all courier service centers in Ramban district to immediately report any suspicious medicinal parcels to the Drug Control Department. They were also directed to monitor addresses that frequently receive such consignments and to remain vigilant to prevent courier services from being misused for drug trafficking.

They said team will conduct regular inspections of all courier service centers to ensure the authenticity of consignments containing medicines. This

measure aims to curb the misuse of habit-forming drugs and reinforce efforts to eradicate drug abuse from society.

The Drug Control Officer urged courier agencies to cooperate, stating, "It is our collective responsibility to combat drug addiction. Every consignment of medicine or suspicious parcel must be verified before delivery."

Courier operators have been strictly directed not to dispatch or deliver any medicine consignment without prior intimation to the Drug Control Department, Ramban, through WhatsApp at 9596231600 or via email at drugofficeramban@gmail.com.

## Mega Tiranga Rally Enthralls Banihal under Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign

■ **HT News Desk**

**RAMBAN, AUG 9:** As part of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign being celebrated across district Ramban under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner, Mohammad Alyas Khan, a vibrant Mega Tiranga Rally was today organized in Banihal to mark the 79th Independence Day celebration.

The event in Banihal was led by Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Banihal, Mohammad Naseeb Bajraan, and aimed at instilling patriotic fervor while promoting the spirit of unity. It witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of

students, teachers, and locals. Carrying the tricolour in their hands and chanting slogans of national pride, the participants filled the main market and streets of Banihal with the colours of the nation.

The rally commenced from the GMHSS Banihal and passed through the main market, drawing wide attention from the public. The event was marked by the active involvement of educational institutions, civil society members, and officials from various departments.

Addressing the gathering, the SDM highlighted the significance of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, urging citizens to

hoist the national flag atop their homes especially from 13th to 15th August as a tribute to the nation's journey of independence. He lauded the overwhelming participation of the youth, terming them as the torchbearers of the country's bright future.

The rally concluded with the singing of the National Anthem, symbolizing collective commitment towards the ideals of freedom, unity, and integrity. The programme was organized with the cooperation of the local administration, police, educational institutions, and community members, reflecting a deep patriotic spirit.





# Sakeena Itoo inaugurates Science Block at GHSS D K Marg Kulgam

Addresses PTM's at GHSS D K Marg, K B Pora

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**KULGAM, AUG 09:** Minister for Education, Sakeena Itoo, today inaugurated the newly constructed Science Block at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS), D K Marg besides participating in Parent-Teachers Meet (PTM) of the institute.

Director School Education Kashmir, CEO Kulgam, Principal GHSS D.K Marg, SDM DH Pora, senior officers of district administration, faculty members and students were present on the occasion.

While speaking on the occasion of the Cluster PTM, the Minister said that the government is focused to ensure access to quality education for all, adding that concrete measures are

being taken to strengthen the educational infrastructure across the region. She added that the government is actively creating and upgrading the school infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir to provide students with modern, well-equipped learning environments.

The Minister further said that the students possess immense talent and the government is giving special focus to the education and health sectors, ensuring inclusive development. She noted that there is ample talent among the students which needs to be tapped in a positive way by providing them with platforms to showcase their abilities, including those from remote areas.



The Minister highlighted that the schools will be equipped with all kind of basic amenities like washrooms, fencing and other essential facilities to create a better learning environment.

The Minister also said that the tourism potential of DH Pora and its surrounding areas like Aharbal, Kongwattan, Kounsarnag and Panchan Pathri areas, known for their pristine beauty, rich biodiversity and trekking routes, will be tapped to boost tourism activities in these areas. She added that the local youth will be trained in tourism related trades to boost the self employment avenues for them and also develop these areas economically.

The Minister also felicitated NEET achiever and an athlete of the institution on the occasion.

Later, the Minister visited GHSS K.B.Pora and participated in a PTM at the institute.

Addressing the gathering, the Ministers said that Omar Abdullah led government is determined to ensure holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir. She added that education and health sectors are prime target for this government for development, adding that infrastructure and staff augmentation in schools and hospitals is being boosted for public good.

On the occasion, the Minister also distributed aids and appliances among the Children with Special Needs (CWSN).

## Har Ghar Tiranga campaign and Raksha Bandhan celebrations strengthen civil-military bond in Rajouri

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**RAJOURI, AUGUST 09:** On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma, a series of patriotic activities were organised across the district, especially along the Line of Control (LoC), as part of the ongoing Har Ghar Tiranga campaign.

As part of the celebrations, various government schools along the LoC—including GMS Chowki, GMS Jhangar, BMS Charyalla, BMS Pacca Makaan, GMS Pind Narian and HS Bamliya—marked the occasion of Raksha Bandhan with great fervour. Students collaborated with the Indian Army, BSF and other security agencies, enthusiastically tying rakhis to the soldiers to express deep respect and gratitude for their unwavering service to the nation.

Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma directed all Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADCs) and Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) to ensure that Raksha Bandhan celebrations with security forces,



especially the Indian Army, were organised in their respective subdivisions. The initiative aimed to reinforce the spirit of unity, patriotism and mutual respect between civilians and armed forces personnel.

The events witnessed enthusiastic participation from the district administration, students, teachers and community members showcasing the district's enduring bond with the guardians of the nation's borders.

## Drug Control Officer and Police inspect courier services in Ramban to curb trafficking

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**RAMBAN, AUGUST 09:** In line with directives from the District Administration Ramban, the Drug Control Officer, in coordination with Police authorities, inspected courier centres in Chanderkote to check for the misuse of services for the sale of narcotics and psychotropic drugs.

During the inspection, the team focused on deliveries of medicines, particularly psychotropic drugs ordered online. The Drug Control Officer sensitised courier service providers about the potential abuse of their services by drug peddlers and highlighted how unverified consignments can be easily transported without detection.

The inspection team instructed all courier service centres in Ramban district to immediately report any suspicious medicinal parcels to the Drug Control Department.



They were also directed to monitor addresses that frequently receive

such consignments and to remain vigilant to prevent courier services

from being misused for drug trafficking.

The team will conduct regular inspections of all courier service centres to ensure the authenticity of consignments containing medicines. This measure aims to curb the misuse of habit-forming drugs and reinforce efforts to eradicate drug abuse from society.

The Drug Control Officer urged courier agencies to cooperate, stating, "It is our collective responsibility to combat drug addiction. Every consignment of medicine or suspicious parcel must be verified before delivery."

Courier operators have been strictly directed not to dispatch or deliver any medicine consignment without prior intimation to the Drug Control Department, Ramban, through WhatsApp at 9596231600 or via email at drugofficeramban@gmail.com.

## DC Budgam reviews progress of 125 bedded New District Hospital, 100 bedded CCU at Reshipora

Construction of New District Hospital & Critical Care Unit in full swing: Dr Bilal

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**BUDGAM, AUGUST 09:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, today conducted an extensive visit to the under-construction 125-bedded state of art New District Hospital and the 100-bedded Critical Care Unit (CCU), both located in the Reshipora area of Budgam.

During the site inspection, DC emphasised the importance of

expediting the ongoing construction work to ensure the timely completion of these crucial healthcare projects.

He highlighted that these facilities will significantly enhance the district's healthcare infrastructure and provide advanced medical services to the residents.

Speaking on the occasion, DC stated that he was extremely encouraged by the rapid pace of development going on at these places.

"Our commitment to upgrading healthcare infrastructure is unwavering, and these new projects will play a pivotal role in providing advanced medical services to our community. The efforts and dedication of all involved are commendable, and I am confident that these institutions will soon set new benchmarks in patient care and emergency services," he added.

Dr Bilal said that district administration along with R&B and health

department is working in a focused manner to ensure that both these key projects of the district are completed at the earliest, paving the way for their dedication to the public ahead of its scheduled timeline.

The completion of the hospital and critical care unit will play a pivotal role in addressing healthcare needs in Budgam, particularly in providing specialized care and critical medical facilities to patients within the district, he

added.

DC said that regular and consistent monitoring of the projects is being conducted to ensure that teething issues, if any, are addressed real time with multi-departmental coordination to achieve before schedule completion and seamless progress.

DC was accompanied by Executive Engineers R&B, AEEs and representatives of executing agencies.

## Javid Dar inaugurates Macadamization Projects in Rafiabab Constituency

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**BARAMULLA, AUGUST 9:** Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development Department, and Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, today inaugurated the macadamization work of roads in various localities of Rafiabab Constituency including Alsafa Colony B&C, Rohama Seripora, Brandub Kammer and Khanmoh and Tujjar Sharif - Zanipora road, Baramulla.

Javid Dar stated that the road infrastructure development is aimed at improving the connectivity and accessibility for residents. He further said that the government is determined for enhancing the road conditions to facilitate smooth transportation and boost local economic activities in these areas.

The Minister assured that macadamization of roads in these localities is expected to have a positive impact on the local community, improving connectivity, accessibility and economic activity. The projects demonstrate the government's efforts in enhancing the quality of life for the residents



and promote sustainable development in the region.

## Reasi glows in colours of unity as Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign 2025 gains momentum

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**REASI, AUGUST 09:** The Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign 2025, organised by the District Administration Reasi under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Nidhi Malik, is sweeping across the district with remarkable enthusiasm and participation. The tricolour is proudly displayed in schools, colleges, municipal wards and panchayats, reflecting the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.

Across various blocks, students, teachers and local representatives have joined hands to celebrate the nation's pride through a variety of engaging activities. School walls and notice boards are adorned with Tiranga-inspired artwork, while public spaces feature vibrant rangoli designs in the colours of the national flag. Creative workshops for making tricolour rakhis have enabled students to express their love for the nation.

The campaign also features the innovative Tiranga Weaves and Threads initiative, which highlights traditional craftsmanship in saffron, white and green, displayed in markets and community centres. Quiz



competitions are being organised to deepen knowledge of the Constitution and strengthen democratic values among the youth.

With every street and institution radiating patriotic fervour, Reasi has transformed into a living canvas of unity and pride. The Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign continues to gain momentum, setting the tone for a grand and memorable Independence Day 2025 celebration across the district.

## DC Budgam stresses joint role of parents & teachers in holistic development of children

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**BUDGAM, AUGUST 09:** A parent-teacher meeting was today held at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Nagam, Chadoora, under the flagship initiative of School Education department Kashmir, with a focus on strengthening the collaboration between home and school for the overall welfare and growth of students.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, presided over the event as the chief guest. In his address, he emphasized that the well-rounded development of children requires consistent and coordinated efforts from both teachers and parents.

He said that the responsibility of the administration is not just to educate children academically, but to nurture their moral character, life skills, and resilience so they can meet the challenges of the future. Dr Bilal underscored that parents must maintain active communication with teachers, take interest in their child's learning, and extend guidance beyond school hours. He said that a child's success is the result of teamwork between school and home.

DC said that every child deserves the combined mentorship, care, and discipline of both teachers and parents. Expressing concern over the rise in substance abuse among youth, DC called upon parents to remain alert and informed. He said parents must closely monitor their wards' activities, peer groups, and online engagements.

He said that early awareness, open communication, and timely intervention are crucial in shielding our children from drugs. He also urged for collective responsibility to safeguard the future generation.

DC highlighted the need to promote cultural, literary, and sports activities alongside academics, noting that such exposure builds confidence, leadership qualities, and a sense of identity in students.

He said that a balanced education is one that cultivates intellect, creativity, and moral values in a person.

The event featured an impressive cultural programme with performances by students from various schools of the block, including a poetic song, traditional Kashmiri Rouf, a drama, and other artistic presentations that reflected the rich heritage of the region.





## Agriculture sector progresses by leaps and bounds; courtesy HADP

The Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) has led to a revolution in the agriculture sector. More and more people are taking up the agriculture sector as a viable means of income and as such are contributing towards the household income. Like commercial floriculture, commercial agriculture has also taken roots in the Kashmir valley. Agriculture has progressed by leaps and bounds over the past few years with people reaping the benefits.

The silver lining in this whole scenario is that women have taken up agriculture as their profession and more and more female agripreneurs are coming to the fore. Success stories of female agriculturalists are emanating from the different parts of the Kashmir and Jammu regions. Since agriculture has turned into a full-fledged round the year activity vegetables are available to the people in the Kashmir valley.

Not long ago the Kashmir valley would face a scarcity of the vegetables during the winter more so when the Srinagar-Jammu national highway would get closed on account of inclement weather. Things have changed in the recent past with the green houses heralding a new revolution in the agriculture sector. Almost all types of vegetables are available to the people round the year and the people are heaving a sigh of relief.

The availability of green vegetables during the winter season has led to less dependence on dried vegetables and the dried vegetables are considered as delicacies by the people. Since some of the doctors have voiced concern over the usage of dried vegetables it is important that necessary caution is followed while using such vegetables. In such a scenario the availability of green vegetables has come as a welcome relief.

Over the years the Department of Agriculture has taken many innovative measures so as to motivate the existing farmers to adopt the new techniques so that there is an increase in the production. It is due to these measures that the young generation has also been motivated to take up agriculture as a full time means of employment. This is a great step since the younger generation is not running after government jobs.

It is high time that more and more youngsters take a plunge in the agriculture sector so that they turn out to be successful entrepreneurs. This will ensure that more and more people are willing to set up their own ventures rather than going after government jobs or menial jobs. This would give a new dimension to the economic progress scenario of the Kashmir valley.

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# Rakshabandhan: Are Siblings Truly Keeping Their Promise?



■ Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

Rakshabandhan is not just a festival of tying rakhi and giving gifts, but it is a symbol of affection, trust and mutual cooperation between brother and sister. Today this festival is getting reduced to social media show-off and formalities. Brother and sister stay apart for the whole year, but one day they give proof of 'keeping the relationship' by clicking a photo. The real protection is when both of them become each other's support in difficult times, whether it is emotional or financial. The meaning of the festival is not likes, but presence in life. It is important to tie the thread of Rakhi not only on the wrist, but also in the heart.

Festivals are a mirror of India's cultural soul. They are not just dates recorded in the calendar, but are living symbols of emotions, relationships and social bonds linked for generations. Rakshabandhan is also one such festival, which symbolizes the bond of affection, protection and trust in the relationship of brother and sister. But the question is, are we really following the basic spirit of this festival today, or has it also been lost in the glare of show and formality like other festivals?

## A journey from tradition to the present

Rakshabandhan was once an occasion when sisters applied tilak on their brother's forehead, tied a rakhi and took a promise of lifelong protection and support from them. This protection was not only to protect

them from physical dangers but also an assurance of standing by them in every difficulty of life. Brothers also fulfilled this promise with great pride. This relationship flourished in the courtyard of the house, was reflected in letters and lasted for a lifetime.

But today, tying a rakhi has become a 'photogenic' event. Posting pictures on social media, giving expensive gifts, ordering rakhis online - all this is making it superficial instead of touching the real emotion. Communication between brothers and sisters is decreasing, and the scope of the word 'Raksha' is also shrinking.

## The changing meaning of defence

In old times, sisters did not depend only on their brothers, but they knew that in times of trouble, their brothers would become their shield. In today's times, both brothers and sisters are so entangled in their busy lives that they are often unaware of each other's problems. The meaning of protection has now become more limited to 'financial help' or 'emergency support' than 'physical protection'.

But there is an irony here too - when a sister is financially capable, she often helps her brother, but this sentiment does not find much space in the discussion of Rakshabandhan. In our culture, the responsibility of protection is still put on the brother in a one-sided manner, whereas in modern relationships, protection and cooperation should be from both sides.

In the age of social media, festivals have become more of a public display than a private experience. Pictures of rakhi, videos of gifts, status updates - all these suppress the real soul of the relationship. Many times brothers and sisters do not talk for a whole year, but on the day of Rakhi they click pictures and post them online so that society gets proof of a 'perfect

relationship'.

This pretense hides the truth that many sisters are victims of domestic violence, mental harassment or economic exploitation and brothers remain silent even after knowing it. At the same time, many brothers want emotional support from their sisters in the difficulties of life, but they too get only the answer of 'festival relationship'.

## Lack of sensations

The basic idea behind Raksha Bandhan was that brothers and sisters should become each other's strength and not weakness. But today, there is a dearth of sensitivity. Relationships may be of blood, but formality and distance are increasing in them. In cities, family bonding is getting weaker due to jobs, business and personal priorities.

This situation is a matter of concern not only for Rakshabandhan but for all family relationships. If the relationship between brother and sister is limited to a one-day celebration, then in the coming times this festival will also become a festival of only 'flowers, sweets and photos'.

## Equality approach

In today's time, protection cannot be the responsibility of a man alone. Sisters should also play an equal role in the lives of their brothers - whether it is emotional support, advice or shoulder to lean on in difficult times. A brother-sister relationship is meaningful only when there is equality and mutual cooperation in it.

If a brother has to shoulder the responsibility of his sister's marriage, education or career, then the sister also has the responsibility to understand her brother's needs and help him. This balance can keep this relationship relevant even in modern times.

We have to understand that the real value of the festival lies not in its

rituals but in the emotions behind it. Both brothers and sisters should lay the foundation of their relationship with trust and cooperation and not just maintain it with the help of gifts and photos. Talking to each other throughout the year, sharing small joys and troubles is what keeps the relationship alive. A phone call, a meeting, or the feeling of standing together in difficult times, creates a bond much stronger than the thread of Rakhi. It is more important to maintain it in reality rather than showing it on social media. Rakhi does not mean 'likes' but presence in life. Both brothers and sisters should take care of each other's safety, respect and needs. The thinking of one-sided responsibility has to change. While performing the ritual of Rakhi, it is important to give place to modern values in the relationship - like equality, freedom and personal respect.

## The real promise of Rakshabandhan

Raksha Bandhan is not just a festival but a true test of relationships. This day reminds us that there are people in our lives to whom we are connected without any selfishness. But if this connection survives only on the date of the calendar, then its real significance will be lost.

Today, there is a need to tie the thread of Rakhi not only on the wrist but also in the heart - a bond that fulfils the promise of affection, respect and protection 365 days a year. Only then will we be able to say that we are truly fulfilling the promise of love and protection as brothers and sisters.

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# Rakhi - the symbol of Affection & Responsibility



■ Omkar Dattatray

Raksha Bandhan is a popular and traditionally Hindu annual rite or ceremony that is central to a festival of the same name celebrated in South Asia. It is also celebrated in other parts of the world significantly influenced by Hindu culture. It is one of the important festival of Hindus and in Santan Dharma its significance cannot be exaggerated. On this day, sisters of all ages tie a talisman or amulet called Rakhi around the wrists of their brothers. They symbolically protect them, receive a gift in return and traditionally invest the brothers with a share of the responsibility of their potential care. Raksha Bandhan is observed on the last day of the Hindu lunar calendar month of Shraavana, which typically falls in August. The expression Raksha Bandhan (Sanskrit, literally 'the bond of protection, obligation and care') is now principally applied to this ritual. So this festival is the bond of love, affection and protection between the brothers and sisters and has an important place in Hinduism. Until the mid 20th century, the expression was more commonly applied to a similar ritual, held on the same day, with precedence in ancient Hindu texts. In that ritual, a domestic priest ties amulet, charms or threads on the wrists of their patrons, or changes their sacred thread, and receives gifts of money. This is still the case in some places. On this auspicious occasion sisters tie rakhi or thread on the wrist of their brothers as a mark of love, affection, symbol of protection and bonding between the brothers and sisters. This festival is celebrated every year with great fervor and enthusiasm and with the ritual of this festival the bond and love between the brothers and sisters is strengthened. This festival coincides with the Shravan Purnima and this day is celebrated and culminates with the Darshan of Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati at the natural cave of Shri Amarnath Ji in the Himalayas of Southern district of Anantnag. By contrast, the sister-brother festival, with origin in folk lore and culture, had names which varied with location. Some were rendered as saluno, silana and rakri. A ritual associated with saluno included

the sisters placing shoots of barley behind the ears of their brothers. Of special significance to married women, Raksha Bandhan is rooted in the practice of territorial or village exogamy. The bride marries out of her natal village or town, and her parents by custom do not visit her in her married home. In rural north India, where village exogamy is prevalent, large numbers of married Hindu women travel back to their parents homes every year for the ceremony of tying Rakhi to their brothers. Their brothers who typically live with their parents or nearby, sometimes travel to their sisters married home to escort them back. Many younger married women arrive few weeks earlier at their natal homes and stay until the ceremony of Raksha bandhan. The brothers serve as lifelong intermediaries between their married sisters and parental homes, as well as potential stewards of their security. In urban India, where families are increasingly nuclear, the festival has become more symbolic but continues to be popular. The rituals associated with this festival have spread beyond their traditional regions and have been transformed through technology and migration. Other factors that have played a role are movies, social interaction and promotion by politicized Hinduism as well as by nation state. Among females and males who are not blood relations, the act of tying the rakhi amulets has given rise to the tradition of voluntary kin relationship, which has sometimes cut across lines of caste, class and religion. In fact Rakhi or Raksha Bandhan is a Hindu festival celebrating the relationship between the brothers and sisters. This year Rakhi will be celebrated on 31st of August 2023. But unfortunately a confusion regarding the date of Raksha Bandhan has been created by some unscrupulous religious brokers as there is confusion whether Rakhi will be celebrated on 30 or 31st August because of Bhadun. However the religious scholars have made it clear that the festival of Raksha Bandhan falls on 31st of August as it always coincides with Shravan Purnima. Raksha Bandhan is celebrated across the country as a symbol of bond between siblings. Rakhi is an ancient Hindu festival. Rakhi celebrates bond between the brothers and sisters. Sisters tie Rakhi on the wrist of brothers as a mark of love and brothers pledge to protect and guard their sisters through thick and thin. The festival is very famous with several cultures in the country as the concept of duty and love between siblings is universal. On the morning of the festival day, brothers and sisters gather together with their families. Sisters tie rakhis (threads) as a symbol of protection. Rakhis are also used to celebrate other relationships between neighbors

and friends. Raksha Bandhan is a monsoon festival, which has a deeper meaning. The rainy season eradicates all the filth and convolutions of life. The season gives us affluence and a new hope to relish life to its fullest. That is why Shravan month is considered as holy to celebrate the untainted bondage of love between siblings and the advent of good fortune. Raksha Bandhan also known as Rakhi or Rakri, is a joyous festival celebrated by Hindus worldwide to honor the bond of love and responsibility between brothers and sisters. However, the significance of this festival goes beyond biological relationships as it brings together the people of all genders, religions and ethnic backgrounds to celebrate various forms of platonic love. The term 'Raksha Bandhan' translates to the knot of protection in Sanskrit. Although the rituals associated with festival vary in different regions, they all involve the tying of a thread. The sister or a sister like figure ties a colorful and sometimes elaborate thread around her brothers wrist, symbolizing her prayers and well wishes for his protection. In return, the brother presents his sister with a meaningful gift. The origins of Raksha Bandhan can be traced back to ancient times. References to this festival can be found in legends related to Alexander the Great dating back to 326 BCE. Hindu scriptures also contain several accounts of Raksha Bandhan. There are many stories how this festival started in Sanatan Dharma. But in all probabilities, the most popular story in Indian mythology is that of Lord Krishna and Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandavas. The story goes on Maker Sankranti, Krishna cut his little finger when handling sugarcane. His queen Rukmini immediately sent an official to get bandages. Meanwhile Draupadi, who was watching the entire incident, cut off a little bit of her saree and tied his finger with it to stop the bleeding. In return Krishna promised to help her when required. That is the story behind the help Krishna provides during the unceremonious disrobing of Draupadi. Krishna came and made her saree never ending, saving her the embarrassment by giving her protection when she needed it most. And this is how it is believed that Rakshabandhan started. Another story as per Shrimad Bhagavatam describes another event centered around Bali Maharaja, who was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. Won by the Bali's devotion, Lord Vishnu agreed to eternally protect Bali Maharaja by becoming his doorkeeper. Goddess Laxmi, Lord Vishnu's consort wanted him to come home, disguised herself as a poor woman seeking help, and approached Bali.

The author is a columnist, social and KP activist



# National Book Lovers Day: Increasing Importance of Books in the Changing Era



■ Vijay Garg

National Book Lovers Day is celebrated on 9th August every year. This day is dedicated to those who love reading, for whom books are not just the means of knowledge, but the direction of spiritual balance and mental journey. But in today's time it is natural to get up the question whether we are actually still left to the book Lovers?

Books were the most important source of knowledge, entertainment and life values until a few decades ago. It was a matter of pride to have a small library at home. Those who could not buy books resorted to municipalities or institutional libraries. There was an account open, books were issue, and read and returned. It was a rite, the rite of sharing knowledge. But after the advent of the digital age, this tradition gradually went down. Today, smartphones, tablets and internet have not only replaced books but also affected people's concentration, patience and studiousness. Many historical and prominent libraries have been locked or had illegal occupations. A whole generation of youth is unaware of these experiences. They look for life in reels and emotions in messages.

Though social media and digital platforms have democratized writing. Now anyone can say, post, share their thing. This has brought out many new writers and thinkers who are raising the ground issues of society. But the question is, can this digital writing equate the depth, sensation, and research of traditional literary writing? Along with this, now Artificial Intelligence has also entered the world of writing. It not only makes writing simple, but also gives creativity a new direction. But when everything starts to 'meet instantly', like statistics, references, quotes



from Google, the need for serious and intense contemplation makes people feel less. That's why today's writing gets a satchness.

In this changing scenario it has become necessary that we revive the book love again. Give children the rite of library,

motivate youth to read digital writing as well as traditional literary compositions. The world of books does not only give information, that approach also engages.

Books for knowledge no longer required Knowledge does not meet books. After all, why did Kabirdas have to say, Pothi is

a tradition, Jag Mua, Pandit Bhaya Na Koy. Dhai akhar prem ka, read so pandit yes. This couplet means how many people in the world reached the gate of death while reading rough texts, but not all scholars could. Kabirdas says that, if one reads only two and a half letters of love or love cor-

rectly, then he recognizes the true form of love and the same is true knowledgeable. Education can be taken from books, but for knowledge you have to look at the chahunor. Knowledge around the world is wisdom.

Knowledge has always been paramount in the world. Everyone wants to be successful in life. Want to reach your goal by achieving the key to success. For this they remain immersed in books only. Knowledge from books can be earned, but it will be largely limited knowledge. Gathering information is essential for success. Chahunor is the bar of information in the world. So go out of the book and look around you in the world and gather knowledge.

It has been seen that even after holding a high- high degree, people fail very much in practical life, they do not understand how to take off and use this bookish knowledge of yours in life. Acharya Vinoba Bhave termed such a situation as 'Hanuman Jump'. It is therefore important to acquire human and practical knowledge as well as bookish knowledge. It is derived from us not from books, but from social behaviour, from surroundings and experience.

Many people will have a question about how to collect information after all? There is different criteria for everyone to get success. People want to make their career in different fields. Interact with people related to the area you want to move forward or whatever goal you have. Interact with your Gurujans, family members, successful individuals and people around, the best means of information is communication. Only through the dialogue can you gather all the information in the world and earn knowledge. That is why Kabirdas also explains through his couplets that being immersed in books will never lead to the shedding of knowledge. Rather than love experience, one can touch the pinnacle of knowledge.

Vijay Garg Retired Principal  
Educational columnist Eminent  
Educationist street kour Chand MHR  
Malout Punjab

## Environmental Awareness Small Steps Big Impact



■ Mool Raj

The world is facing multiple environmental problems today. Climate change, pollution, deforestation, over-exploitation of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, and other environmental issues are threatening our planet's sustainability and our own well-being. The situation is dire, and we urgently need to take action to mitigate these problems. We have the solutions to most of these issues, but we ignore them, thinking that they don't affect us directly or that we can't make a difference. However, we are wrong. Each of us can contribute to the environment's well-being, and we must start doing it now. Let's take the example of plastic bags. Despite the ban on polythene bags, most of us still use them to carry our purchases, thinking that it's not a big deal. But we forget that plastic bags are hazardous and not even free. We must realize that our actions have consequences, and we are responsible for them. Similarly, we must stop throwing garbage in nearby drains and parks. We must understand that small actions like these can have a significant impact on the environment, and we must take responsibility for them. Water is another resource that we waste without realizing its value. We use running taps to wash our hands, brush our teeth, and do other chores, without considering how much water we are wasting. We must realize that water is a precious



resource, and we must use it judiciously. Our ancestors used water wisely, and it's because of their foresight that we have water today. We must follow their example and pass on this resource to future generations.

In our pursuit of growth and ambition, we have forgotten the importance of sustainable agriculture. We use pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and insecticides to increase crop yields, without realizing the damage we are causing to the environment. The excessive use of chemicals has led to a health hazard, and we must find ways to grow crops sustainably. Young environmentalists can do research in this field and come up with innovative solutions that can benefit the community. We must make a conscious effort to use public transport for longer journeys and walk for shorter distances. Our forefathers preferred walking, and they were healthier than us. We must follow their example and make walking a habit. We must understand that our actions have consequences, and we are accountable for them. The resources we have inherited are a gift from the Almighty, and we must pass them on to future generations. We must mend our ways and end the exploitation of every resource. We know the ecological crisis of the pres-

ent times, and we must value the environment. The government should also take steps to improve public transport infrastructure and connectivity to encourage people to use it more.

We must mend our ways and start making small changes that can have a significant impact. It's time to wake up and start taking action before it's too late. The environmental problems we face today require immediate attention and action. It is not only the responsibility of individuals to make changes in their daily habits, but also the duty of the governments to take steps to ensure the sustainable development of the region. The local administration should invest in improving public transportation systems, enforce strict regulations on the use of pesticides and other harmful chemicals in agriculture, and promote the use of eco-friendly products. They should also work with local communities to raise awareness and educate people about the importance of protecting our environment. By working together and taking collective action, we can ensure a healthier and more sustainable future for ourselves and for generations to come.

The author is a Regular  
Columnist and Freelance Writer

## Students Should Stay Away from Drugs: A Path to a Better Future



■ Suresh Kumar

Drugs are one of the most serious threats to the well-being of today's youth. Students, who are the future of any nation, are especially vulnerable to drug abuse due to peer pressure, curiosity, stress, and lack of awareness. The teenage years are full of challenges — from academic pressure to identity formation — and during this sensitive phase, many students fall into the trap of drug addiction. This article aims to spread awareness about the dangers of drug abuse among students and highlight the importance of staying away from drugs for a successful and healthy life.

### Why Students Fall into Drug Abuse

Peer Pressure: Friends or classmates often persuade students to try drugs just for fun or as a social activity.

Curiosity: Adolescents are naturally curious. They want to experiment with new things, including harmful substances.

Stress and Anxiety: Academic pressure, relationship issues, or family problems can push students towards drugs as a form of escape.

Lack of Awareness: Many students don't know how addictive and harmful even a single trial of drugs can be.

Easy Availability: Unfortunately, drugs are easily accessible, even near educational institutions, making it more tempting for students.

### Consequences of Drug Use on Students

Health Issues: Drug abuse severely affects physical and mental health. It can lead to chronic diseases, mental disorders, and even death in extreme cases.

Academic Failure: Drug users often lose focus, interest, and discipline in their studies, leading to poor performance and even dropout.

Damaged Relationships: Addiction often creates conflicts with parents, teachers, and friends, isolating

the student from society.

Legal Trouble: Possession or use of illegal substances can lead to arrest, criminal charges, and a ruined future.

Loss of Self-Respect: Addiction robs students of their dignity, self-confidence, and the dreams they once had.

### Preventive Measures

Strong Family Support: Parents should maintain open communication with children and be involved in their lives. Emotional support and guidance play a big role.

Awareness Programs in Schools: Regular drug awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars should be conducted to educate students about the dangers of drugs.

Life Skills Education: Schools should teach coping mechanisms, stress management, decision-making, and assertiveness to help students resist pressure.

Counseling and Therapy: Professional counselors should be available in schools and colleges for students facing emotional or psychological issues.

Strict Laws and Surveillance: Authorities must ensure strict monitoring near schools and colleges to prevent drug peddling and punish offenders.

### Role of Students

Students must take personal responsibility for their actions. Saying "No" to drugs is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. They must choose friends wisely, avoid negative influences, and focus on their goals. Participating in positive activities like sports, music, reading, volunteering, and skill development can help students stay on the right track.

### Conclusion

Drug abuse is a serious threat, but it is preventable. Students must understand that their future depends on the choices they make today. By staying away from drugs, they not only protect their health and education but also become responsible citizens who contribute positively to society. The fight against drugs begins with awareness, courage, and the determination to say "No" to anything that can ruin their life. A bright future awaits those who walk on the path of discipline, self-respect, and positive thinking.

The author is a Computer Faculty, Government Girls Senior Secondary School MHR Malout



# Lemon packed with vitamin-C



■ Sahil Manzoor Bhatti

To stay fit and energetic, we need a balanced diet—meaning an adequate amount of all the essential food components required for proper growth and overall development.

In the Kashmir Valley, we mostly experience scorching heat from June to the end of August. This intense heat can dehydrate our bodies and make us unwell. However, it also brings significant benefits for natural vegetation. Every season has its own importance and benefits for flora and fauna, so we must adapt ourselves to live within varying and sometimes harsh natural conditions.

The Almighty has blessed us with foods that suit our body's needs in every season. Believing in and consuming a natural diet is key to maintaining health. Water, in particular, plays a vital role in keeping us fit—it keeps the body hydrated and helps prevent serious issues like urinary infections, kidney stones, fatigue, and dull skin.

Today, I will explore the health benefits of lemon.

In the Kashmir Valley, we mostly experience scorching heat from June to the end of August. This intense heat can dehydrate our bodies and make us unwell. However, it also brings significant benefits for natural vegetation. Every season has its own importance and benefits for flora and fauna, so we must adapt ourselves to live within varying and sometimes harsh natural conditions

## Lemons – A Vitamin C Powerhouse

Lemon is one of the tastiest and most beneficial citrus fruits. It offers a variety of health benefits—helping reduce belly fat, supporting kidney function, and boosting immunity. Packed with vitamin C, lemons enhance skin glow, improve digestion, and keep the body hydrated, especially during summer heat.

Lemon juice is also an effective aid for weight loss, as it boosts metabolism. Many obese individuals drink lemon water on an empty stomach and notice positive results. Mixing lemon juice with lukewarm water amplifies its benefits. Besides vitamin C, lemons also contain vitamin B complex, calcium, magnesium, potassium, fiber, and

other essential nutrients.

## Benefits of Lemon

**Freshens Breath & Oral Health:** Detoxifies the mouth, freshens breath, and may help relieve toothache. **Weight Loss Support:** Pectin fiber helps reduce hunger cravings. **Reduces Inflammation:** Regular consumption can lower inflammation and support the body's natural detox process. **Boosts Energy & Hydration:** Keeps you energetic and hydrated for hours. **Mental Health Aid:** Acts as a natural anxiety and depression reliever. **Antiviral Properties:** Helps protect against various illnesses.

## How to Use Lemon Water

**For Weight Loss:** Squeeze half a lemon into a glass of water. If overweight, squeeze a whole lemon into a glass of water. Drink in the morning on an empty stomach. **For Best Results:** Add lemon juice to lukewarm water. Drink it after a 30-minute walk. Repeat daily for 30 days.

## Final Note:

Nature has already provided us with everything we need to maintain good health. Something as simple as a lemon can make a big difference when used regularly and wisely.

## My best lemons.

If you want, I can also format this into a magazine-style health column so it looks more professional and ready for publication. That way, it will have headings, highlighted facts, and a more appealing layout for readers.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com



## HT - HEALTH TIPS

# Health and Wellness Tips



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# DC Budgam stresses joint role of parents & teachers in holistic development of children

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**BUDGAM, AUGUST 09:** A parent-teacher meeting was today held at Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Nagam, Chadoora, under the flagship initiative of School Education department Kashmir, with a focus on strengthening the collaboration between home and school for the overall welfare and growth of students.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, presided over the event as the chief guest. In his address, he emphasized that the well-rounded development of children requires consistent and coordinated efforts from both teachers and parents.

He said that the responsibility of the administration is not just to educate children academically,



but to nurture their moral character, life skills, and resilience so they can meet the challenges of the future.

Dr Bilal underscored that par-

ents must maintain active communication with teachers, take interest in their child's learning, and extend guidance beyond school hours. He said that a child's success

is the result of teamwork between school and home.

DC said that every child deserves the combined mentorship, care, and discipline of both teachers and parents.

Expressing concern over the rise in substance abuse among youth, DC called upon parents to remain alert and informed. He said parents must closely monitor their wards' activities, peer groups, and online engagements.

He said that early awareness, open communication, and timely intervention are crucial in shielding our children from drugs. He also urged for collective responsibility to safeguard the future generation.

DC highlighted the need to promote cultural, literary, and sports activities alongside academics, noting that such exposure builds confidence, leadership

qualities, and a sense of identity in students.

He said that a balanced education is one that cultivates intellect, creativity, and moral values in a person.

The event featured an impressive cultural programme with performances by students from various schools of the block, including a poetic song, traditional Kashmiri Rouf, a drama, and other artistic presentations that reflected the rich heritage of the region.

Besides, SDM Chadoora, Tehsildar Chadoora, DYCEO Budgam, teachers, parents, and students participated in the event.

Participants appreciated the initiative and pledged to work collectively for the educational advancement and moral safeguarding of the student community.

## SKUAST-K, KVK Budgam organize Input distribution programme under ICAR-TSP

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUGUST 09:** In an initiative to uplift tribal farming communities, KVK Budgam, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai organized an Input distribution programme today under the ICAR-Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) under project 'Outreach of technology & distribution of farming tools for economic upliftment of ST and low income farmers.'

The programme aimed at empowering tribal farmers through the provision of vital agricultural inputs.

The event was chaired by Prof. (Dr.) Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K, as the chief guest, who led the distribution and interacted with the beneficiary farmers.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Raihana emphasized the importance of continued handholding and field-level demonstrations to ensure optimal utilization of inputs and long-term impact on productivity thus improving the socio-economic conditions of tribals by providing timely support and introducing need-based technological interventions.

She stressed the importance of adopting scientific practices for achieving sustainable agricultural growth and improving rural livelihoods.

Prof. & Head KVK Pulwama (PI of the project), Prof. Javeed Ahmad Mugloo in his address highlighted the objectives of the Tribal Sub Plan, emphasizing the commitment of ICAR and SKUAST-Kashmir towards improving the livelihoods of tribal farming communities through location-specific technologies, capacity building and input support. He urged farmers to adopt scientific farming practices and make the best use of the inputs provided.

Prof. & Head KVK Budgam, Dr. Bilal Ahmad Lone highlighted the objectives of the ICAR-TSP initiative focusing on holistic development of tribal farmers through input support, skill development and technological empowerment.

During the programme, inputs were distributed among identified tribal beneficiaries of Shuplain, Nowgham villages of block Khag. The inputs are expected to support better crop productivity and sustainable farming practices in the district.

## DC Bandipora flags-off Chota Amarnath Yatra

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**BANDIPORA, AUGUST 09:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, along with SSP Bandipora, Harmeet Singh Mehta today flagged-off the annual Chota Amarnath Yatra from Sharda Temple, Kaloosa, amid an atmosphere of devotion and communal harmony.

The Yatra, a revered spiritual journey to the Chota Amarnath Holy Cave in Arin-Dardpora, holds deep significance for devotees of Lord Shiva. Pilgrims from across Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country gathered to embark on the sacred pilgrimage, seeking blessings at the holy cave.



A day before the flag-off, DC interacted with members of the Kashmiri Pandit community. She extended her best wishes to the pilgrims for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey.

District administration, in close coordination with the police and other departments, ensured comprehensive arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Yatra. These included track development up to the Maha Daneshwar Temple, provision of washrooms, langer services, deployment of medical teams, adequate security arrangements, and safe drinking water facilities along the route.

The 15-kilometer Yatra commences from Arin-Dardpora, passing through Shamphan, and culminating at the Chota Amarnath Cave. Adequate security personnel, health camps, and volunteers were stationed throughout the route to facilitate a hassle-free pilgrimage.

Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Development and Tehsildar Bandipora besides other concerned officers from the district administration, volunteers, and senior citizens of the town were present during the flag-off ceremony.

## Mega Tiranga rally enthralls Banihal under Har Ghar Tiranga campaign

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**RAMBAN, AUGUST 09:** As part of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, a vibrant Mega Tiranga Rally was organised today in Banihal to mark the 79th Independence Day celebration.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Banihal, Mohammad Naseeb Bajraan, led the event, which aimed to instil patriotic fervour and promote a spirit of unity. It saw enthusiastic participation from a large number of students, teachers and locals. Carry-

ing the tricolour and chanting national slogans, participants filled the main market and streets of Banihal with the colours of the nation.

The rally commenced from GMHSS Banihal and passed through the main market, attracting widespread public attention. Educational institutions, civil society members and officials from various departments were actively involved.

The SDM highlighted the significance of the campaign, urging citizens to hoist the national flag on their homes from

AUGUST 13 to 15 as a tribute to the nation's journey of independence. He praised the overwhelming participation of the youth, calling them the torchbearers of the country's bright future.

The rally concluded with the singing of the national anthem, symbolising a collective commitment to the ideals of freedom, unity and integrity. The local administration, police, educational institutions and community members cooperated to organise the programme, which reflected a deep patriotic spirit.

## Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan: Drug de-addiction awareness prog. held at BHS Shallakhud Dara in Harwan



■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUGUST 09:** Continuing its outreach under the Nasha Mukti J&K Abhiyan, Cultural Unit Srinagar of the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) today organised a drug de-addiction awareness programme at Boys High School (BHS) Shallakhud, Dara Harwan Srinagar.

A thought-provoking short play was performed by a local group of theatre artists, vividly depicting the vicious effects of substance abuse on individuals, families, and communities. The engaging performance

drew the attention of students and staff, encouraging open dialogue on preventive measures.

Mirza Jehangir, head of the Institution, in his address, urged students to remain vigilant and committed to leading a drug-free life, highlighting the vital role of education in shaping a responsible generation.

Burhan Hussain, Cultural Officer, underscored the power of performing arts in spreading impactful social messages and called upon the youth to become ambassadors of positive change.

## Floriculture Deptt Launches Training Institute at Rajbagh to Boost Commercial Floriculture

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUGUST 09:** The Floriculture Department, Kashmir, has operationalized its long-awaited Training Institute at Rajbagh, marking a transformative step toward enhancing floriculture education, skill development, and livelihood generation in the Valley.

The institute commenced its first training program today with an inaugural batch of 100 trainees, comprising progressive flower growers, budding entrepreneurs, and field functionaries from various districts.

Officials highlighted that the primary objective of the institute is to upgrade gardening and landscaping skills, introduce trainees to modern technological innovations in floriculture, and promote a commercial, market-driven approach to flower cultivation. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between traditional practices and contemporary scientific methods, empowering participants with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on, practical training.

The curriculum includes modules on greenhouse and polyhouse management, ornamental plant propagation, nursery establishment, advanced landscaping techniques, pest and disease management, and floral marketing strategies. Trainees will also be exposed to recent advances in horticultural tools and machinery to improve productivity and quality.

In a forward-looking move, the depart-



ment announced plans to forge collaborations with premier universities, research institutions, and allied agricultural departments, ensuring a steady flow of knowledge exchange, research insights, and global best practices into the region's floriculture sector.

Speaking at the launch, officials expressed confidence that the initiative will strengthen the Valley's floriculture industry, enhance farmer incomes, and open new avenues for rural youth employment. They added that the institute will function as a centre of excellence, attracting growers from within J&K and potentially from other states in the future.

Local growers and trainees welcomed the move, terming it a "game-changer" for the commercial floriculture landscape of Kashmir, especially in a market where demand for ornamental plants, landscaping services, and export-quality flowers is steadily rising.

## Teetwal Hosts Historic Mega Tiranga Rally Under 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Campaign

Hundreds March with 1.5 km National Flag Near LoC, Showcasing Patriotism and Unity

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**KUPWARA, AUGUST 09:** In a remarkable celebration of patriotism at one of India's remotest and most sensitive frontiers, Teetwal, a picturesque border village along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district, came alive today with a Mega Tiranga Rally under the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, part of the ongoing Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav initiative.

The rally—one of the largest ever witnessed in the Karnah subdivision—drew hundreds of enthusiastic participants, including students, government officials, security personnel,

community elders, and local residents. It was flagged off by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse, from Gundishart Teetwal, with senior officers in attendance, including SSP Kupwara, Gulam Jeelani; ACR Kupwara; SDM Karnah; Chief Education Officer; ACD; ASP; and other dignitaries.

At the heart of the event was an awe-inspiring 1.5 km-long National Flag, carried by participants through the streets of the border village. As the tricolour fluttered majestically in the mountain breeze, the rally transformed into a moving river of saffron, white, and green, echoing with slogans

of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram". The sight stirred deep emotions among the onlookers, many of whom lined the route to cheer and wave smaller flags from their homes and shops.

The rally concluded at Teetwal Ground, located just a short distance from the LoC, where participants stood united under the Tiranga—a powerful image of national solidarity in a region that has historically endured cross-border tensions.

Speaking to the media, DC Suse called the rally a symbolic bridge between the nation's heartland and its frontiers, stressing that every citizen, especially in border areas, plays



an integral role in nation-building. He urged all residents of Kupwara to proudly hoist the National Flag at their homes ahead of Independence Day, noting, "The Tiranga is not just a flag—it embodies the sacrifices, struggles, and dreams of our people. It is the very soul of our nation."

The event also featured cultural performances by students from various schools, who captivated the audience with patriotic songs, traditional dances, and thematic skits portraying India's freedom struggle and unity in diversity. Several performers dressed in regional attire, representing the rich cultural mosaic of Jammu & Kash-

mir, while also showcasing local art and music traditions.

Community elders and guest speakers took the stage to share stories of border residents' resilience, recalling times when Teetwal served as a hub of trade and cultural exchange before partition, and how today's generation continues to uphold the spirit of peace and progress despite challenges.

The rally not only strengthened the bonds of national integration but also sent a resounding message of peace, pride, and unity from the LoC to the rest of the country—proving that even in the farthest corners, the heartbeat of India remains strong and unwavering.







## Satish Sharma Pays Tributes to Bravehearts L/ Nk Pritpal Singh, Sepoy Harminder Singh

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUGUST 09:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, today paid rich and heartfelt tributes to the valiant Army personnel Lance Naik Pritpal Singh and Sepoy Harminder Singh, who made the supreme sacrifice during ongoing anti-terrorist operations in Kulgam district.

In a solemn condolence message, the Minister said, "I salute the indomitable courage and selfless devotion of our brave hearts L/Nk Pritpal Singh and Sep Harminder Singh, who laid down their lives in the service of the motherland. Their valour, grit, and unwavering determination will always be remembered with pride by the entire nation."

Expressing deep sorrow over the irreparable loss, Sharma extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, stating, "In this hour of grief, my thoughts and prayers are with the families of these martyrs. The people of Jammu & Kashmir and the entire country stand shoulder to shoulder with them, sharing their pain and pride."

The Minister reaffirmed the Government's unwavering commitment towards honouring the sacrifices of the Armed Forces, noting that the supreme sacrifice of these martyrs will inspire generations to come. He emphasised that the valour of the Indian Army continues to be the bedrock of national security, and that every soldier's sacrifice strengthens the nation's resolve to defeat terrorism in all its forms.

Sharma also lauded the pro-



fessionalism, dedication, and selfless service of the Indian Army, which, he said, has time and again demonstrated unmatched courage in safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the country. He called upon the youth to draw inspiration from the life stories of these fallen heroes and

imbibe the spirit of patriotism, duty, and unity.

He further mentioned that the nation's gratitude cannot be measured in words, but will be reflected in continued support to the families of martyrs through welfare measures, financial assistance, and recognition of their legacy.

Meanwhile, arrangements are underway for the final rites of the martyrs, which will be conducted with full military honours. Senior officials, representatives of civil administration, and thousands of locals are expected to gather to pay their last respects. Across various towns and villages, citizens have begun lighting candles, offering prayers, and organising silent marches in memory of the two soldiers whose courage has left an indelible mark on the nation's heart.

## DC Visits Girls Home, OSC, SHEW & Library at Shopian

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SHOPIAN, AUGUST 09:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, today conducted an extensive visit to various women welfare and child care facilities under the Social Welfare Department in Shopian, aimed at reviewing the quality of services and ensuring effective implementation of welfare measures for distressed women and children.

The DC inspected the Girls Home, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBB) Library, One Stop Centre (OSC), and the Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women (SHEW). During the visit, he reviewed lodging, educational, healthcare, and recreational facilities being provided to the residents and interacted with staff and beneficiaries to take first-hand feedback.

At the Girls Home, the DC emphasised the need to provide a safe, nurturing, and encouraging environment for girls, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. He directed the home management to ensure that all lodging, nutritious meals, skill development, and extracurricular activities are maintained at the highest standards. He appreciated the dedication of the staff in looking after the girls round the clock, helping them access formal education, life skills training, and counselling support.

Reviewing the functioning of the OSC, the DC highlighted its importance as a one-stop solution for distressed and neglected women, where victims of harassment and abuse can access counselling, legal aid, shelter, and rehabilitation services under one roof. He directed that all cases be handled with utmost sensitivity, confidentiality, and urgency.

At SHEW, the DC reviewed ongoing women empowerment initiatives, including skill training programs, awareness



campaigns on women's rights, entrepreneurship support, and financial literacy drives. He called upon the staff to extend unconditional assistance to women facing any form of harassment or exploitation, stressing the need to work with dedication and empathy towards achieving gender equality.

During the visit, the DC also took stock of the BBBP Library, encouraging the promotion of reading habits, career guidance, and digital learning among girls. He said such spaces not only help in academic development but also foster confidence, creativity, and leadership skills in young minds.

In a heartwarming moment, the visit coincided with Raksha Bandhan celebrations, where staff members, residents of the Girls Home, and other attendees tied rakhis to the DC and other officials, symbolising the bond of protection, care, and mutual respect. The DC extended warm greetings on the occasion, stating that festivals like Raksha Bandhan reinforce the values of compassion, solidarity, and shared responsibility towards one another.

The DC assured that the district administration will continue to prioritise welfare programmes for women and children, ensuring that no individual is left without support, protection, or opportunities for growth.

## Awareness Programme on 'World Tribal Day' Held at Pulwama

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**PULWAMA, AUGUST 09:** District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Pulwama today organized an awareness programme on World Tribal Day in collaboration with the Education Department Pulwama at Government Middle School Aditrag Sangarwani, aimed at empowering tribal communities through education on their rights and welfare schemes.

On the occasion, Chief LADC Pulwama enlightened participants—comprising tribal elders, youth, and students—about their constitutional and legal entitlements. The gathering was sensitized on key legislations including the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 (PESA), Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, and NALSA (Protection and Enforcement of Tribal Rights Scheme) 2015.

Speakers emphasized that World Tribal Day is not only a symbolic observance but also a reminder of the need to safeguard tribal identity, culture, and resources. It serves as an occasion to promote policies that protect indigenous heritage, while ensuring equal access to education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities.

The Dy. Chief LADC and Assistant LADCs Pulwama underscored the importance of creating a fair and inclusive environment where tribal communities can thrive socially and economically without fear of exploitation or cultural marginalization. They called for active community participation in safeguarding forest rights, preserving traditional knowledge, and embracing sustainable development models that respect tribal values.

The event also featured interactive sessions, where community members voiced their concerns regarding land rights, access to government schemes, and preservation of customary practices. Legal aid volunteers guided participants on how to avail free legal services for the protection of their rights.

A similar awareness programme was conducted at TLSC Tral in collaboration with Government High School, Batnoor Tral, which witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and locals.

## Dr Sanjay Gupta takes charge as new Director Animal Husbandry, Jammu

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**JAMMU, AUGUST 09:** Dr Sanjay Gupta today took charge as the new Director Animal Husbandry, Jammu, at the Directorate of Animal Husbandry in Talab Tillo. Senior officers and staff of the department were present for the handover.

With over thirty-five years of experience, Dr Gupta has held several key positions in the department across various districts of the Jammu division and in Ladakh.



After assuming charge, he instructed officers to work with dedication and ensure the timely implementation of all government schemes. The staff assured him of their full support and cooperation.

## DLSA Shopian observes World Tribal Day at Tragpathri Zampathri

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SHOPIAN, AUGUST 09:** Marking the global observance of World Tribal Day, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Shopian today organised an extensive awareness programme at the scenic tribal hamlet of Tragpathri Zampathri in Keller Tehsil. The event was held under the chairmanship of Chairman DLSA, Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhury, and Secretary DLSA, Mudassar Farooq, and witnessed the active participation of key officials, tribal leaders, and community members.

Among the dignitaries present were the Chief Legal Aid Defence Counsel, Shopian; Tehsildar Keller; SHO Keller; ZEO Keegam/Keller Zone; tribal activists; civil society members; panel lawyers; and paralegal volunteers (PLVs) of DLSA.

In his keynote address, Chairman DLSA shed light on the constitutional and legal safeguards in place for the protection and promotion of tribal rights. He spoke at length on the importance of land rights, forest rights, and the preservation of cultural heritage, while also outlining mechanisms for legal aid and grievance redressal available through DLSA Shopian. Secretary DLSA highlighted



the scope of free legal services offered to the poor and margin-

alised, with a particular focus on tribal populations. He urged com-

munity members to be proactive in voicing their concerns, utilising

available platforms, and safeguarding their heritage and entitlements.

The gathering also heard from other officials and tribal representatives, who discussed pressing issues such as the need for improved access to education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and targeted social security schemes. Emphasis was placed on strengthening awareness to combat exploitation and ensure social justice.

The programme provided an interactive platform for direct engagement between officials and tribal residents, enabling them to share grievances and learn about schemes and services tailored for them. Informative sessions were held on various legal aid initiatives, welfare programmes, and procedures for availing government benefits.

PLVs played an active role in distributing educational material, answering queries, and guiding participants on the next steps for seeking assistance. The event concluded with a collective resolve to work towards safeguarding tribal rights, promoting inclusive development, and ensuring that the voices of indigenous communities are heard and respected at every level.

## DC BANDIPORA REVIEWS INDEPENDENCE DAY ARRANGEMENTS, VISITS VENUE

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**BANDIPORA, AUGUST 09:** To review preparations for the forthcoming Independence Day-2025 celebrations in the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Saturday chaired a meeting at the Mini Secretariat, here.

The meeting focused on ensuring comprehensive planning and inter-departmental coordination for a vibrant and well-organized celebration, reflecting the spirit of unity and patriotism.

Detailed discussions were held on security arrangements, cultural programmes, venue readiness, installation of the Public Address System, medical facilities, fire tenders, uninterrupted water and power supply, and public participation activities.

On the occasion, DC stressed the importance of active involvement from all depart-



ments to make the event memorable, and directed the KPDCL to ensure illumination of key buildings, bridges, and public spaces. Executive Officer, Municipal Council, was asked to maintain cleanliness and

sanitation at the venues.

Senior Superintendent of Police Bandipora, Harmeet Singh Mehta, assured robust security measures for all venues and urged departments to share details of panchayats and other

locations well in advance to facilitate deployment of security personnel.

It was informed that contingents from JKP, JKAP, IRP, Home Guard, JKP Border Battalion, CRPF, Fire and Emergency Services, NCC, and school children will participate in the march past.

Later, DC accompanied by SSP Bandipora and ADC Bandipora besides other district officers visited S.K. Stadium Bandipora, the main venue for the Independence Day celebrations, to take stock of on-ground arrangements.

She inspected the parade ground, stage, and seating arrangements, and issued instructions for timely completion of all works to ensure smooth conduct of the event.

The meeting was attended by SSP Bandipora, Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, ACR Bandipora, DPO, SDMs, Tehsildars, ACD and other senior officers of the district administration.

## GBL Hosts Painting Competition Under 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Mission



■ Gulfam Barji

**Ganderbal, Aug 9:** Vibrant painting competition was organized in Ganderbal as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, aimed at fostering patriotism and nurturing the creative talents of children. The event was jointly conducted by the North Zone Cultural Center (NZCC) Patiala and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) Ganderbal.

The competition saw enthusiastic participation from children across the district, who showcased their artistic skills by painting the Indian tricolor. On the occasion, students were also educated about

the mission and significance of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative, which encourages every household to hoist the national flag from August 2 to August 15 as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.

Outstanding participants were honored with certificates and awards for their exceptional performances. The event highlighted the spirit of patriotism while empowering young minds to express their love for the nation through art.

The 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign is being implemented nationwide, culminating on Independence Day, August 15.



# Samson Seeks Release from RR Before IPL 2026 Auction

■ **Nagraj Gollapudi**

**NEW DELHI:** Rajasthan Royals captain Sanju Samson has told the franchise he wants to be released ahead of the upcoming auction for IPL 2026. ESPNcricinfo learned that Samson informed the RR management of his intention immediately after IPL 2025 ended.

RR, which had its 2025 season review meetings in June, has not yet given Samson a definitive answer and the option of convincing him to stay with the team is still open. The franchise's lead owner Manoj Badale offered no comment when asked about the development. The final decision will be taken by him in coordination with RR head coach Rahul Dravid.

If RR decide to release Samson, they could either trade him to another franchise or send him into the auction. As per the IPL contract,

the final say in such cases lies with the franchise. As far as a trade is concerned, it could be a player swap or an all-cash deal.

Samson, 30, first played for RR for three seasons from IPL 2013 to 2015, and then rejoined them in 2018 after two years at Delhi Daredevils. He was appointed captain in 2021 and, in 2022, led RR to the IPL final for the first time since they won the inaugural edition in 2008. However, two of their key players - Jos Buttler and Yuzvendra Chahal, who won the Orange and Purple caps in 2022 - were released ahead of the 2025 mega auction.

Samson was one of six players retained by RR ahead of last year's mega auction; his price was INR 18 crore (\$2.14 million approx. then). The other players retained were Yashasvi Jaiswal, Parag, Dhruv Jurel, Sandeep Sharma and Shimron Hetmyer.

Samson played only nine of RR's 14 matches in IPL 2025 due to a side strain, with Riyan Parag standing in as captain. They finished ninth with just four wins.

ESPNcricinfo learned that Samson is currently at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru for a routine training programme designed for a targeted pool of players shortlisted by the national selectors. He will likely be picked for the Asia Cup which starts in the UAE from September 9. Before that Samson will play a few matches in the Kerala Cricket League where he was recently picked by Kochi Blue Tigers for INR 26.8 lakh, making him the most expensive player in the tournament.

RR have another two months to make a decision on Samson before the IPL's retention deadline in November.

ESPN Cricinfo



## The McGrath Ashes prediction is here: It'll be 5-0 win for Australia

■ **United News of India**

**LONDON:** The Ashes is still over three months away but pace legend Glenn McGrath is out with his much-awaited prediction for the upcoming edition -- a 5-0 sweep for Australia.

The feisty showdown is slated to begin in Perth on November 21 and McGrath believes England will find it "pretty tough" to battle past the likes of Pat Cummins and a rather poor past record.

McGrath said his prediction this time is based on how England were held to a 2-2 series draw by India in the recent Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy.

"It's very rare for me to make a prediction, isn't it? And I can't make a different one - 5-0," McGrath declared on 'BBC Radio'.

"I'm very confident with our team. When you've got Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon firing in their home conditions, it's going to be pretty tough.

"Plus, that track record England have had, it'd be interesting to see if they can win a Test," he added.

England, who are set to travel Down Under for the five-match series later this year, haven't won the Ashes since 2015.

Additionally, they have lost either 0-5 or 0-4 in all but one series in Australia since 2002-03. Their last Test win came in 2010-11 when they claimed a 3-1 series triumph.

Australia won 4-0 when England last toured the country in 2021-22 and Pat Cummins' side have only lost two of their past 15 Tests at home, winning 11 and drawing two.

The likes of Usman Khawaja, Cameron Green and Marnus Labuschagne are also out of form, while the young and sprightly Sam Konstas is yet to cement his spot as opener.

But with England's bowling attack also needing "to strengthen a little bit", McGrath feels the main battle will be to get the wickets of Joe Root and Harry Brook.

"It's the top order or top and middle order of England against the Australian fast bowlers and Lyon. That's going to be a big match-up." Root, who became the second-highest run-scorer in Test history recently, has scored 892 Test runs in Australia, including nine fifties, but is yet to score a century.

He averages 35.68 down under, compared to his career average of 51.29, with a highest score of 89.

"This series will be a big one for Root. He's never really done that well in Australia, he's not even got a 100 over there, so he'll be keen to get out there. He's in fine form," McGrath said.

"Brook's the one that I've enjoyed watching. He just goes out there, plays his game, and takes it on. The Australians will need to get on him pretty early," added McGrath. "Ben Duckett is such an aggressive opener. Zak Crawley would be keen to score a few more runs than he has previously."

## Kuldeep, Khaleel in Jurel-led Central Zone squad for Duleep Trophy

■ **United News of India**

**NEW DELHI:** After warming the bench through the recent five-match Test series in England, Kuldeep Yadav will return to action in the Duleep Trophy, where he will lead Central Zone's spin attack.

Vidarbha left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey, who broke the record for most wickets in a Ranji Trophy season when he picked up 69 in his side's run to the title in 2024-25, will combine with Kuldeep and Rajasthan's Manav Suthar for Central Zone.

Dhruv Jurel, who had replaced

the injured Rishabh Pant in India's series-levelling win at The Oval, will captain Central Zone with Rajat Patidar named his deputy.

Left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed, who had cut his county stint short with Essex for personal reasons will return to action and will lead Central Zone's seam attack along with Deepak Chahar. Chahar, 33, had suffered an injury during IPL 2025 and missed two games for Mumbai Indians, but recently he was bowling at the India nets at Lord's and The Oval.

Yash Rathod, who was the top



scorer in the previous Ranji season with 960 runs in 18 innings at an average of over 50, and his Vidarbha team-mate Danish Malewar, who scored 153 and 73 in the final against Kerala, were rewarded for their strong form. UP captain Aryan Juyal also made the cut along with Madhya Pradesh off-spinner Saransh Jain and Chhattisgarh batter Sanjeet Desai. Vidarbha's Ranji Trophy-winning coach Usman Ghani was named the head coach of the team.

Fast bowler Kuldeep Sen, who has played a solitary ODI for India, was among the stand-bys.

The Duleep Trophy has reverted to its traditional format of a zonal contest after a season where four teams - A, B, C and D - comprising players in the Test fray were picked by the Ajit Agarkar-led senior men's selection committee. Teams for this year's tournament will be picked by zonal selection committees, comprising one member from each of the state sides from the zone.

Central Zone will start their Duleep Trophy campaign against North East on August 28 at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

## IPL buzz: Ashwin in talks with CSK about future amid speculation of possible move



■ **United News of India**

**CHENNAI:** Senior Indian off-spinner R Ashwin is in discussions with the Chennai Super Kings about his future in the IPL franchise amid speculation that he might seek his release from the team.

With over two months still left before the deadline for retentions, Ashwin, it is reliably learnt, has had conversations with the CSK brass about his role going forward.

"It is early stages to decide on any player's future. The cut off date for retention is yet to be announced. So we have time," an IPL source told PTI.

"It's a pre-auction plan to hold discussions with players and Ashwin, being a senior, is part of it. It is a mutual discussion to understand his role in the team ahead of next IPL season," he added.

The 38-year-old Ashwin, who retired from international cricket last year, was

bought for Rs 9.75 crore in the mega auction before the 2025 season. It was a homecoming of sorts for the Chennai-based player, who earlier turned up for CSK from 2009 to 2015.

Ashwin later went on to play for the now-defunct Rising Pune Super Giant and the then Kings XI Punjab (currently Punjab Kings) in 2018. He played nine games in the season gone by, picking up just seven wickets in a largely disappointing season for the team as it finished fifth with seven wins and as many losses.

There are speculations that CSK might rope in wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson, who wants to leave his current team -- Rajasthan Royals.

"We have certain players in our mind to add to our line up next season. But so far, we have not had discussions with anyone, as I said there is a lot of time for player retention etc," the source said.

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