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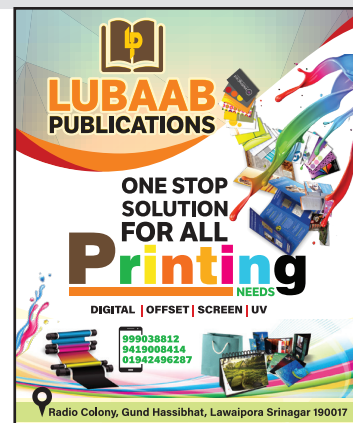
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15TH  
YEAR OF  
PUBLICATION

HEADLINES

TODAY

Voice To The Voiceless



# Soldiers kill terrorists because of their deeds: Rajnath

■ HT News Network

**JODHPUR, AUG 25:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday asserted that Indian forces gave a "befitting reply" to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor and "our soldiers did not kill terrorists based on their religion, but because of their deeds".

Addressing an event Here, Singh also lauded the people of border areas for supporting the administration and the armed forces during the military operation to avenge the Pahalgam terror attack.

The Defence Minister said that after the incident, he called the service chiefs and asked if they were ready for the operation.

"The chiefs of all three armed forces unanimously replied, 'We are ready for any operation.' This is India. The prime minister gave the necessary directives," he said. "The target that was decided was hit



precisely, just as planned. During Operation Sindoor, our forces received full support from all border regions. India is a country that not only considers people within its

borders as members but also regards people across the world as part of its family, spreading the message of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam."

"India does not discriminate based on caste or religion. However, terrorists killed people after identifying their religion. Our soldiers did not kill the terrorists based on religion but because of their deeds," he said.

Under Operation Sindoor in May, precision strikes were carried out on multiple targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir linked to terror groups. The operation aimed at destroying terror infrastructure and neutralising key operatives following the April 22 Pahalgam attack.

Lauding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts in the education sector, Singh said a significant transformation had taken place over the years that will help the

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## LG Manoj Sinha Addresses Convocation of BBA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha addressed the Convocation of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

Shri Arif Mohammed Khan, Hon'ble Governor of Bihar presided over the Convocation Ceremony.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor congratulated the management of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University, faculty members, staff and graduating students, and extended his best wishes.

He called upon the youth to cultivate two key qualities – positive mindset for change and courage for greater achievement and growth. He said the optimism and courageous personality enables youth to overcome challenges and helps them to capitalise on opportunities and make meaningful contribution in nation building.

"Life is a continuous journey of learning. It is a constant thirst for knowledge. It means there is always something new to be discovered, some-



thing more to be invented.

A convocation isn't just an end; it's a new beginning. It marks the conclusion of one journey and the start of a new one. This new journey provides a different set of skills through professional experience," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that

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## Parliamentary committee on Home Affairs set to visit J&K

To meet PRIs and other delegations

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** The Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs is scheduled to visit Jammu and Kashmir in the first week of September.

Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the panel is expected to arrive on September 01 and remain in the region for five to six days.

Headed by BJP MP Radha Mohan Das Agarwal, the committee comprises 31 members, including prominent leaders such as Priyanka Gandhi, Kapil Sibal, Supriya Sule, Ajay Maken, and Derek O'Brien, among others.

Sources revealed that the panel is likely to meet representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), members of civil society, and the business community to gather insights and feedback about different matters.

The committee was initially scheduled

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## CM Omar reaffirms social welfare as Government's primary responsibility

Addresses one-day event on 'Empowering Communities—"Welfare for All" at SKICC

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reiterated the government's firm commitment to welfare of all segments of society as Government's main responsibility rather than an act of charity.

Addressing a one-day event on "Empowering Communities—Welfare for All" at the SKICC, the Chief Minister stressed that welfare ini-



## Govt Bans Pen Drives In Offices To Strengthen Cybersecurity

■ HT News Network

**JAMMU, AUG 25:** To strengthen cybersecurity, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday said it has decided to prohibit the use of pen drives on official devices at all administrative departments in the civil secretariat and

deputy commissioners' offices across districts.

The use of public messaging platforms such as WhatsApp or unsecured online services like iLovePDF for processing, sharing or storing official or confidential materials has also been prohibited to uphold data sovereignty

and prevent security breaches, a government order said.

The order issued by M Raju, Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department (GAD), said the decisions were taken to enhance the cybersecurity posture of the Union Territory, protect

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## Kashmir Wetlands Record 1.3M Birds, 65% Rise in 6 Years

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** Kashmir's wetlands have turned into a bustling haven for migratory birds this season, witnessing an unprecedented surge with 13.43 lakh birds representing 67 species flocking to the Valley. Over the past six years, the wetland bird population in these wet-

lands has shown a major upward trend of up to 65 per cent.

According to the census document accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a total of 1,343,506 birds belonging to 67 species were recorded across 26 wetlands. Hokersar contributed 29.97% of the total bird count.

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## Statehood Restoration SC declines urgent hearing, lists matter on Oct 10

■ HT News Network

**NEW DELHI, AUG 25:** The Supreme Court on Monday declined to grant an urgent hearing on the petition concerning the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, reiterating that the matter is already scheduled for October 10 this year.

The plea for early listing was made by the counsel for petitioners, who sought urgent hearing of a contempt petition linked to the abrogation of Article 370. "Statehood was to be granted to Jammu and Kashmir, and I am seeking early listing of the matter," the counsel submitted before the bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai.

Chief Justice Gavai, however, turned down the

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### Hope SC will fix timeline: CM Omar

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said that he is hopeful that the Supreme Court will set a deadline for restoring Jammu and Kashmir's statehood when it hears the case on October 10.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar,

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## FDA J&K Cracks Down on Rotten Food; Violators List Soon

■ HT News Network

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** As the people await violators to be held accountable and face public scrutiny for selling rotten meat and other food products the much-awaited list is set to be made public within the next few days.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has intensified raids in Jammu and Kashmir, seizing 12,000 kg of meat, 21 quintals of synthetic cheese, and 440 quintals of Rasgulla ahead of the festival season.

Smita Sethi, Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, J&K, speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said inspections are ongoing. "Yesterday, a big raid was

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## Itoo Chairs J&K's First Drug De-Addiction Meet

Itoo Stresses Surveillance & Community Monitoring to Curb Drug Menace

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** Minister for Health & Medical Education, School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo today chaired a first-of-its-kind stakeholders' meeting on the burning issue of drug de-addiction across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, held at Sher-i-Kashmir Convention Centre (SKICC), was attended by Commissioner Secretary Social Welfare Department, Secretary

Health & Medical Education, DIG Police Crime Branch, Director School Education Jammu/Kashmir, Director Health Services Kashmir, Director Colleges, Principals of degree colleges, Chief Education Officers, Zonal Education Officers, school heads, representatives of NGOs, doctors, experts, civil society members and other stakeholders, both in person and through virtual mode.

During the meeting, participants voiced serious concern over the rampant rise of drug abuse among children and youth in J&K.



They flagged the easy availability of narcotics and psychotropic substances, particularly around schools, colleges and other vulnerable areas. Suggestions were made to introduce training modules in curricula, establish structural mechanisms, and conduct scientific awareness campaigns. Several substance users undergoing rehabilitation also shared their personal stories, narrating how they got trapped in addiction and the challenges of recovery.

Addressing the meeting,

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آج یعنی 25 اگست کو کشمیری زبان کے ممتاز ادیب، شاعر، دانشور، محقق، نقاد، مترجم اور ماہر تعلیم مرحوم نشاط انصاری کی 24 ویں برسی ہے۔ نشاط انصاری کا شمار ان صاحب طرز ادیبوں میں ہوتا ہے جنہوں نے اپنے منفرد فکری احساس اور جذبات کو الفاظ کا ایسا جامہ پہنایا، جو براہ راست قاری کے دل کی گہرائیوں میں اتر جاتا ہے۔ نشاط انصاری کے شعری اظہار میں انسانیت، فطرت، محبت اور زندگی کے حقیقی رنگ نمایاں ہیں۔ ان کے لب و لہجے میں سچائی، گہرائی اور تازگی نمایاں ہے، ایک ایسی طرزِ ادا جو قاری کو اپنی گرفت میں لے لیتی ہے۔ کشمیری ادب میں نشاط انصاری کا شعری اثاثہ قاری کے جذبات کو چھو لینے کی بھرپور صلاحیت رکھتا ہے۔ انہوں نے اپنے لب و لہجے سے سماجی شعور کو جگانے اور انسانیت کا پیغام پھیلانے میں اہم کردار ادا کیا ہے۔ اگرچہ آج نشاط انصاری ہمارے درمیان موجود نہیں ہیں، مگر ان کی فکری، علمی اور ادبی شخصیت آج بھی ہمارے شعور کو جلا بخشتی ہے۔ وقت لکنا بھی بیت جائے مگر ان کی ادبی حیثیت کو ہمیشہ سنہری حروف سے لکھا جائے گا۔

(مُجِبَّانِ مرحوم نشاط انصاری)





## CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

### Soldiers kill.....

country achieve new heights.  
“There is a considerable difference between the education of our time and today's education. “I had also studied in a village primary school. When I used to look at the globe on the principal's table, it felt like a magical ball,” he said.

He attributed the changes to decades of hard work, saying, “In recent years, there have been significant changes in education. Today, our children can access information on the internet. Such a huge transformation has taken place.”

Singh expressed gratitude toward Prime Minister Modi, saying, “I want to thank Modi for showing a strong resolve to improve the education sector. Bringing reforms in education was not an easy task. Several commissions were formed and recommendations were given but the kind of reform that was needed did not come.”

He said that today's children can acquire information from an app about the entire world.

“In our time, science meant only the black-board,” he said.

Singh said that the visible difference in the education sector is India's real strength. “This is the real change and this is the future of India. This will take our country to even greater heights,” he said.

Elaborating on India's history, he said that when people in other parts of the world were living in caves, Indian sages were writing the Natya Shastra.

“When the world did not understand the causes of diseases, India had doctors like Sushruta. Knowledge of medicinal plants like turmeric, neem and ashwagandha existed, which scientists now acknowledge,” he said.

Singh also touched upon the concept of spiritual growth, saying that the importance of balancing physical and spiritual development in children's education was important.

He said that children's development should not only be physical but also spiritual.

“Spiritual development can only happen through educational institutions. Give children education that will expand their minds,” he said.

He quoted former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, saying, “No one becomes great with a small mind. No one stands tall with a broken heart.”

“Indian sages' minds were so vast that they considered everyone in the world as part of their family and spread the message of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,” he said.

“Imagine the mind as a circle. As you expand its circumference, your experience of happiness increases in proportion. In the end, you will attain supreme bliss,” he said.

During the event, he inaugurated a sports academy in Jodhpur.

Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and other leaders were also present on the occasion. (Agencies)

### LG Manoj Sinha.....

the challenges are essential for building a person's integrity, honesty, and overall character.

Our culture teaches us that new discoveries are the most significant achievements of life. The adventurous journey to discover and learn something new drives personal growth and fosters curiosity and creativity. The same enthusiasm and curiosity you had in the classroom should continue with you throughout your life, he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also paid homage to the prominent luminaries, revolutionaries, social reformers and great personalities of Bihar.

After a long time, Bihar is reclaiming its intellectual and cultural glory, and a modern, strong, and progressive Bihar will make significant contribution in Viksit Bharat. The youth must now pledge to make Bihar and India number one.

The steps being taken for self-reliance and innovations are unlocking country's true potential and nothing can stop India from becoming a global economic power,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also congratulated the women students, who were conferred with gold medals for academic excellence and said that our daughters are breaking barriers and achieving success in all fields.

This is a proud moment for the university, for Bihar and the entire nation. These achievements demonstrate the strength of our Nari Shakti and it reflects the bright future of society, he further said.

Prof. Dinesh Chandra Rai, Vice-Chancellor, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur; Prof. Dr. Samir Kumar Sharma, Registrar, Heads of Department, Faculty, staff and students of the University were present at the Convocation ceremony.

### CM Omar.....

event on “Empowering Communities—Welfare for All” at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) organised by Social Welfare Department, J&K.

Reaffirming his government's commitment to inclusive development, the Chief Minister said that while it is easy to deliver schemes to those who already enjoy resources, education and good health, the true test of governance lies in reaching the poor, the vulnerable, and those in far-flung rural areas.

“Social welfare schemes are neither favours nor acts of generosity. They are the rightful due

of citizens who face greater hardships than others. Any government that ignores them or focuses only on privileged sections fails in its duty,” Omar Abdullah said.

The Chief Minister emphasized that from the beginning of his tenure, his cabinet—particularly Minister for Social Welfare Sakina Itoo—worked with sincerity to prioritize the weaker and disadvantaged sections. “We knew we could not change everything overnight. But as the saying goes, drop by drop becomes an ocean. Our effort has always been to start where the need is greatest,” he added.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah underlined the government's paradigm shift from charity-driven welfare to a rights-based approach, ensuring that benefits reach those who need them the most. He said that social protection measures are not favours, but the rightful entitlements of citizens facing socio-economic challenges.

The Chief Minister highlighted several flagship initiatives of his government, including enhanced marriage assistance for girls belonging to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), an increase in pensions for over 10 lakh beneficiaries, and the provision of free public transport facilities for women to promote mobility and safety.

He also spelled out about the upgradation of 500 Anganwadi Centres into Saksham Centres and Bal Vidyalayas, designed to provide integrated child development, education, and nutrition services. In addition, new facilities such as Shakti Sadans and Vatsalya Sadans established to extend institutional care and protection to women and children in need.

Omar Abdullah also called for greater corporate participation in welfare efforts. Referring to schemes like distribution of scooters and assistive devices, he admitted that financial limitations sometimes delay benefits but stressed that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds from big businesses could complement government efforts.

Another major challenge, he said, was the lack of awareness about government schemes in remote areas. “It would be unfair if people in one district enjoy a scheme while those in another remain deprived. The government belongs to all districts and all communities of J&K. Welfare benefits must reach every corner of the state,” the CM asserted.

He highlighted the success stories of education loans and scholarships that have enabled many students to pursue higher education, with some even becoming doctors. “This is what we must strive for—using schemes to improve the daily lives of ordinary people. That, I believe, is the highest responsibility of any government,” Omar Abdullah remarked.

The Chief Minister inaugurated an exhibition showcasing social welfare initiatives and schemes, and felicitated achievers who have made remarkable contributions in their fields. He also sanctioned loans in favour of women and disadvantaged groups, besides handing over prosthetic aids and scooters to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive empowerment.

He distributed keys of motorized cycles, sanction letters, and appreciation plaques to beneficiaries and achievers.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Social Welfare Sakina Itoo said that under the leadership of Omar Abdullah, special focus was laid on addressing the needs of weaker, downtrodden, and elderly citizens. She recalled that during his previous tenure, old-age and widow pensions were enhanced significantly, and the same was further increased in the current tenure.

She also highlighted women-centric schemes that have empowered women and made them self-reliant, while stressing the need for awareness campaigns in far-flung areas so that people-centric schemes percolate to the most deserving sections.

Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Commissioner Secretary SWD Sarmad Hafeez, several MLAs from Srinagar and other districts (via video conference), and senior officers of the Social Welfare Department participated in the programme.

### Parliamentary.....

to visit Jammu and Kashmir on April 26. However, the visit was postponed at the last moment following a terrorist attack on tourists at Baisaran in Pahalgam on April 22, which tragically claimed 26 lives.

Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg today review preparations for the visit.

The meeting was attended by deputy commissioners of Srinagar, Baramulla, Bandipora, and Ganderbal, along with senior officials from Srinagar Airport, Rural Development, Health, Tourism, Education, Police, CRPF, and various development authorities—(KNO)

### Govt Bans Pen.....

sensitive government information, and minimise the risks of data breaches, malware infections, and unauthorised access.

“In exceptional cases where operational needs justify their use, controlled whitelisting may be permitted for up to 2-3 pen drives per department upon formal requests routed through the respective administrative head to the state informatics officer (SIO), National Informatics Centre.

“After approval, the pen drive must be phys-

ically submitted to the respective NIC cell for reconfiguration, authorisation, and ownership registration prior to use,” the order said.

As a secure alternative, it said the departments are strongly encouraged to adopt GovDrive—a Cloud-based, multi-tenant platform offering every government official 50 GB of secure storage with centralised access and synchronisation across devices, it said.

The order also said that all sensitive technical information, including ICT architecture diagrams, system configurations, vulnerability assessments, IP addressing schemes and strategic technology plans, must be classified as confidential and handled exclusively through approved secure channels in accordance with the Information Security Best Practices by the Ministry of Home Affairs, CERT-In directives, and department data classification policies.

“Failure to adhere to these instructions shall be viewed seriously and may invite disciplinary action under relevant rules governing official conduct, IT usage and administrative responsibility,” the order said.

It also said the directions have issued with the approval of the competent authority and shall come into fore with immediate effect.

“All the departments are advised to accord top priority to the implementation of these guidelines in the interest of secure and safe e-governance,” it said. (Agencies)

### Kashmir Wetlands....

followed by Shalabugh (29.44%) and other wetlands (40.59%). Eurasian Teal (Anas crecca) with 292,039 individuals (22.17% of total bird count) was the most abundant species, followed by Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) with 226,023 individuals (17.16%) and Northern Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) with 209,715 individuals (15.92%).

The seven bird species—Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos), Eurasian Teal (Anas crecca), Northern Pintail (Anas acuta), Eurasian Coot (Fulica atra), Northern Shoveler (Spatula clypeata), Gadwall (Mareca strepera), and Eurasian Wigeon (Mareca penelope)—constituted 91.08% of the total birds counted during the AWC 2025.

An in-depth assessment and analysis of waterbird count data from the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) over the period 2019–2025 demonstrates notable trends in population dynamics of major wintering species in the wetlands of Kashmir. Among these, the Eurasian Teal (Anas crecca) consistently recorded the highest abundance, reaching 336,053 individuals in 2022 and 292,039 in 2025, suggesting a stable preference for the region's shallow, vegetated wetlands.

These trends can be meaningfully correlated with the implementation of wetland management interventions, particularly the construction of bunds and habitat restoration for water retention. Bund creation has been instrumental in maintaining stable water levels during critical wintering months, directly enhancing the foraging and roosting conditions for dabbling ducks such as the Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos), Northern Shoveler (Spatula clypeata), and Gadwall (Mareca strepera), which all showed relatively high and stable counts in recent years. The Northern Shoveler population, for instance, increased dramatically from 53,868 in 2019 to 209,715 in 2025, a change that aligns with improved water retention capacity and reduced human disturbance in managed zones.

Over the span of the last six years, from 2020 to 2025, the water bird population in the wetlands of Kashmir has shown a remarkable upward trend, rising from 813,043 individuals in 2020 to 1,343,506 in 2025, marking a significant 65.28% increase over the period. This increase of over half a million birds demonstrates the success of sustained conservation efforts and wetland management strategies implemented by the Department of Wildlife Protection, Jammu and Kashmir.

One of the most impactful measures contributing to this growth has been the creation of bunds and the installation of regulatory gates in major wetland Ramsar sites such as Hokersar, Hygam, and Shalabugh, which improved water retention capacity and helped maintain stable water levels throughout the migratory and breeding seasons. Desilting efforts, particularly intensified after 2020, rejuvenated open water areas and improved the depth and quality of aquatic habitats, directly correlating with the spike in bird numbers in 2021 and 2022.

Habitat restoration activities, including the removal of invasive weeds and promotion of native aquatic vegetation, contributed to increased habitat heterogeneity, attracting a more diverse array of water birds. Peripheral channels were restored and regularly maintained, reducing habitat fragmentation and supporting both core and buffer zones of the wetland. Solid waste management initiatives significantly reduced pollution and human disturbance, improving the overall health of the ecosystem.

Another key intervention was continuous water quality monitoring, which allowed timely action to address issues such as eutrophication and pH imbalances. Equally important were anti-poaching measures, including intensified patrolling and community compliance programs, which minimised threats during peak migratory influx and protected critical roosting areas.

The upward census trend over the past six years is not merely a reflection of migratory patterns but a direct outcome of holistic, science-

based wetland management—(KNO)

### SC declines....

request, pointing out that the court is required to sit as a constitutional bench of presidential reference in the matter and therefore it cannot be taken up before October 10. “The matter is already listed on October 10,” the CJI said, making it clear that no urgent hearing will be entertained before the scheduled date.

Earlier, on August 14, the apex court had sought the Centre's reply within eight weeks on the statehood petition and stressed that the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir must be taken into account before any decision on restoration of statehood. At that time, the Chief Justice had remarked, “You cannot ignore what happened in Pahalgam,” in reference to the militant attack that claimed 26 lives.

The petitioners argue that the government had committed to restoring statehood after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and subsequent reorganization of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories. The issue has since remained a matter of legal and political contention.

The Supreme Court's decision today means that the hearing will go ahead as per schedule in October, keeping the question of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir pending for now. (KNT)

### Hope SC will.....

Omar said that statehood has been his government's top priority since taking charge. “In our first cabinet meeting, we passed a resolution on statehood and I personally gave it to the Prime Minister. But for ten months, nothing has moved forward,” he said.

He added that earlier elections in J&K were held only because the Supreme Court set a deadline. “I hope this time too, the SC fixes a timeline so that our statehood is restored quickly,” CM said.

On PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's protest seeking transfer of prisoners, Omar Abdullah said such matters are decided in Delhi, not Srinagar.

“We too raised this issue with Home Minister Amit Shah. If PDP wants to protest here for show, let them, but the real decision lies in Delhi,” he said.

CM also said NC's signature campaign for statehood is going on and will be submitted to the Centre and the Supreme Court once completed. (KINS)

### FDA J&K Cracks.....

carried out in Jammu. Today, around 100 kg of synthetic cheese was seized, bringing the total seized products to 12,000 kg of meat, 21 quintals of cheese, and 440 quintals of Rasgulla,” she said.

She added that the Rasgulla's were expired, torn, kept in cold storage in tins without packaging or labeling, and likely to flood markets. “They had no proper storage solution, so we destroyed them,” Sethi said.

On the meat supply chain and its movement to the Valley, she said it appears to

be 'smuggled'. “Yesterday's cheese seizure came through railways after a tip-off from Railway Police. Rotten and expired oil in 78 tins was also recovered,” she said.

Commissioner Sethi added that the seized meat lacked proper storage conditions. “The owners have not disclosed the source. Some consignments have names associated, and we are trying to establish links, especially regarding the cheese,” she said.

She confirmed that investigations are progressing, and a “list of violators, including license details, will be published within a few days.”

Regarding food testing, Sethi said 12 reports have been received—four unsafe, four standard, and four in bad condition and unfit for consumption. “Unsafe samples contained only synthetic colors; no major harmful elements, viral or cancer-causing agents, were found,” she clarified.

The Commissioner assured that strict enforcement will continue to safeguard consumers across Jammu and Kashmir, with drives ongoing throughout the Union Territory. Notably, J&K FDA earlier ordered strict compliance with FSSAI rules for the sale of frozen meat and chicken products.

“Violators face fines up to Rs 10 lakh, seizure of stock, license cancellation, and even six years' imprisonment under the Food Safety Act,” said an official—(KNO)

### Itoo Chairs.....

Minister Sakeena stressed on the need for shift from token awareness to meaningful action. “Awareness programmes must go beyond speeches. If we are able to save even one child through such initiatives, it will be a significant contribution to society,” she asserted.

The Minister announced that the installation of CCTV cameras in and around schools and colleges would be made mandatory to monitor activities and prevent illicit drug circulation. She also called for the formation of community-based monitoring committees comprising parents, civil society members, and religious leaders, facilitated by the Education Department.

These committees, she directed, should submit monthly reports to the Directors of School Education and Higher Education on their activities and impact.

The Minister further underlined the importance of regular health and behavioural screenings in colleges and schools for early detection and timely counselling of vulnerable students. “If we collectively implement surveillance, monitoring, community involvement, and screening, I am confident that we can make meaningful progress in addressing the drug menace,” she affirmed.

The Minister assured that the government would extend full support to institutions, civil society and NGOs working in the field of de-addiction, and urged all stakeholders to work in close coordination to protect the future of the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

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# Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather reiterates PM Modi's assurance on granting Statehood to J&K

Delivers address at All India Speakers' Conference in New Delhi, calls for strengthening Democratic values

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**NEW DELHI, AUG 25:** The Speaker of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today reiterated the call for the early restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, underscoring the importance of democratic institutions in fulfilling the aspirations of its people.

Speaking to the media on the side-lines of the All India Speakers' Conference in New Delhi, Rather recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance on the matter, stating, "The Prime Minister himself has assured that Jammu and Kashmir will be granted statehood very soon."

He added, "Democratic institutions are vital for fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and the restoration of statehood will further strengthen that faith in democracy."

Earlier, delivering his address at the conference on the theme "India – The Mother of Democracy," the J&K Speaker highlighted India's ancient democratic traditions, cultural foundations of dialogue and pluralism, and its remarkable journey as the world's largest democracy.

The Speaker emphasized that democracy in India was not a borrowed idea but deeply rooted in its civilizational ethos. Citing references from the Rig Veda and the Upanishads, he noted that collective decision-

making, freedom of thought, and public participation were practiced in India thousands of years before the modern world embraced these values.

"The idea that India is the mother of democracy is not just a poetic phrase; it is a historical fact backed by ancient evidences," he observed.

Tracing India's democratic journey, he said, "In 1950, when India adopted its Constitution, it became the largest democracy in the world – not by force, but by choice. Despite poverty, illiteracy, and immense diversity, India chose universal adult franchise, a bold and unprecedented step that gave every citizen, regardless of caste, religion, gender, or background, the power to vote. That is the



soul of our democracy."

The Speaker further stressed that India's diversity is a strength, not a weakness.

"With over 900 million voters, thousands of political parties, and multiple languages,

religions, and ideologies, India today stands as a beacon of democracy, diversity, and resilience."

Acknowledging that challenges remain, he urged collective responsibility to ensure

equal opportunities, quality education, healthcare, and justice for all.

"Being the mother of democracy is not just a title – it is a responsibility. Freedom of speech, the right to vote, and equal rights are not just privileges, but duties we owe to our country and its future," he asserted.

Calling upon legislators across the country, Rather said, "As custodians of legislative forums, we must rise to the responsibility of not only preserving democracy but also elevating it. Let this conference be not just a meeting of minds, but a movement for democratic renewal."

Adding the Speaker remarked, "India did not borrow

democracy – India gave it to the world, a gift from our ancestors, polished by time and protected by generations. Let us honour this legacy by living its values every day."

The Conference was attended by the Speakers/ Dy Speakers and Secretaries of all the State / UT Legislative Assemblies.

Sh Amit Shah, Union Home Minister gave inaugural address. Lok Sabha Speaker, Sh Om Birla; Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Kiren Rijiju; Dy Chairman Rajya Sabha, Harivansh, Lt Governor and Chief Minister of Delhi also attended the conference.

The Speaker is accompanied by Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Manoj Pandita.

## KVK Kulgam Organizes Rural Credit Workshop under JK-CIP at Akhran Kulgam

■ Farooq Rather

**KULGAM, AUG 25:** Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Kulgam, SKUAST-Kashmir, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and allied sectors, successfully organized a Rural Credit Workshop under the JK-CIP-IFAD initiative at Akhran, Kulgam today. The event saw enthusiastic participation from over 130 farmers, rural youth, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and members of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

The workshop was presided over by Prof. Manzoor Ahmad Ganai, Chief Scientist and Head, KVK Kulgam. In his address, he underlined the crucial role of accessible and timely credit in improving rural livelihoods and promoting agripreneurship. He emphasized that rural credit acts as a lifeline for farmers, enabling them to adopt modern agricultural practices, diversify income sources, and enhance sustainability in agriculture.

Sheikh Mohammad Amin, District Agriculture Officer, highlighted the significance of institutional credit in helping farmers overcome financial constraints and invest in high-value agricultural enterprises. He reiterated the department's commitment to facilitating credit linkages and strengthening capacity-building efforts for the farming community.

Dr. Shahid Ahmad, Scientist at KVK Kulgam, delivered a detailed presentation on innovative



financing models, credit-linked government schemes, and the collective power of farmer groups in gaining better access to formal credit systems.

Experts and officials from the Sheep Husbandry, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture Department, and J&K Bank also shared valuable insights into credit support mechanisms, entrepreneurship development, and integrated farming opportunities. The workshop featured interactive sessions where participants received hands-on information about credit availability, financial literacy, insurance schemes, and agribusiness ventures.

The programme concluded with an open discussion session, during which farmers and rural youth raised queries regarding loan procedures, subsidy structures, and opportunities under various central and UT government schemes. Resource persons addressed their concerns and encouraged participants to undertake innovative agri-based ventures through strategic credit planning.

The event was highly appreciated by the participants, who termed it a timely and meaningful initiative aimed at empowering the rural economy of District Kulgam through effective credit linkage and financial inclusion.

The workshop concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Tariq Iqbal, Subject Matter Specialist (Agri-Extension), who expressed gratitude to all the stakeholders and participants for making the programme a success.

## 18 Motorized Tricycles Distributed Among Specially-Abled Persons in Kulgam

■ Farooq Rather

**KULGAM, AUG 25:** In a significant step towards empowering specially-abled individuals, 18 motorized tricycles were distributed among beneficiaries in a function held today at the Mini-Secretariat, Kulgam.

The event was jointly presided over by Chairperson District Development Council (DDC) Kulgam, Mohammad Afzal Parrey, and Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) Devsar, Feroz Ahmad Shah. The distribution programme was organized by the District Social Welfare Office Kulgam and sponsored by the J&K Rehabilitation Council.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson DDC Mohammad Afzal Parrey stated that the initiative aims to empower specially-abled persons by improving their mobility and enabling them to lead independent and dignified lives. He emphasized the administration's commitment to inclusive development and equitable access to welfare schemes.

MLA Devsar, Feroz Ahmad Shah, in his address, said that concerted efforts are underway to ensure specially-abled individuals and children in the district have access to the opportunities and facilities they need to fulfill their dreams and aspirations. He



reiterated the government's resolve to uplift marginalized sections of society through sustained welfare interventions.

Among other dignitaries present were Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Altaf Ahmad Khan, several DDC members, and officials from the Department of Social Welfare.

The beneficiaries expressed their gratitude for the support and welcomed the administration's inclusive approach, terming the initiative as a meaningful step towards ensuring mobility, dignity, and empowerment for specially-abled citizens in the district.

## Dentavision 2025 – Shaping the Future of Dentistry in Jammu & Kashmir

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** The Indian Dental Association (IDA) Kashmir Central Branch successfully hosted Dentavision 2025 at Hotel Sarovar Premiere, City Mall, M.A. Road, Srinagar. This landmark summit brought together leading dental professionals, academicians, policymakers, innovators, and young practitioners from across the country under the theme "Innovate, Integrate, Inspire – The Future of Dentistry in J&K."

The proceedings began with a Welcome Address by Prof. (Dr.) H. U. Malik, Patron, who highlighted the importance of collaboration, innovation, and youth empowerment in shaping the future of dentistry in the region.

A special keynote address was delivered by Mr. Pirzada Farooq Ahmed Shah, IAS, Hon'ble MLA Gulmarg & Former Secretary, Tourism and Education, who shared valuable perspectives on healthcare, tourism, and education as drivers of professional growth in Jammu & Kashmir.

The summit featured a series of thought-provoking panel discussions with distinguished experts:

- "Future of Dentistry in Jammu & Kashmir – Way Forward"

- Prof. (Dr.) Altaf Hussain Chalkoo, Professor & HOD, Oral Medicine & Radiology, Govt. Dental College Srinagar
- "Is Dentistry Still a Promising Career? Exploring New Employment



Avenues for Young Dental Surgeons"

Prof. (Dr.) Mohammed Shakeel, Professor & HOD, Maxillofacial Surgery, SKIMS MCH Bemina; Project Director, MAAYA Cleft & Cranio-Facial Centre, New City Hospital Srinagar

"Bridging the Gap: Financial Support & Self-Employment Opportunities for Unemployed Dental Surgeons in J&K"

Mr. Ejaz Ayoub, Research Scholar (Economics, NIT); Certified Professional in Economics of Money & Banking, Columbia University

"Ethical Practice in Dentistry: Safeguarding Patient Trust in J&K"

Dr. Sanjeet Singh Risam, Head, Department of Dentistry, Government Medical College Anantnag

The sessions were skillfully moderated by Sardar Nasir Ali Khan, renowned media personality, and Saba Reshi, anchor, photographer,

and digital banker, ensuring engaging and structured discussions.

A notable highlight was the launch of IDA Kashmir Central Branch's Quarterly Newsletter, "The Oral Health Conversation," designed to promote knowledge-sharing, keep members updated on new developments, and strengthen professional networking across the region.

The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Dr. Adil Malik, Organizing Secretary, who extended heartfelt gratitude to all delegates, panelists, and participants for their valuable contributions in making Dentavision 2025 a grand success.

Dentavision-2025 not only provided a platform for meaningful dialogue but also laid the foundation for new opportunities, strategies, and innovations in advancing the future of dentistry in Jammu & Kashmir.

## PUCA to Announce Rs 50 Crore Scholarship for J&K Students in Srinagar

PUCA will organise education summit in Srinagar on Sep 8

■ HT News Desk

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** The Punjab Unaided Colleges Association (PUCA) organised a press conference today in Press club of Kashmir, Srinagar for the students of Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing a press conference Dr. Anshu Kataria, President, PUCA, Chairman, Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh informed that the Association will be organizing a grand Education Summit on 8th September 2025 at Srinagar. He announced that PUCA will announce Rs 50 Crore in scholarships to support needy and deserving students of Jammu & Kashmir for pursuing their higher studies in Punjab colleges.

Kataria added that Around 20 renowned colleges of Punjab will participate in the Summit, providing students with information and guidance on various higher education opportunities. The event will also witness the participation of around 200 education counselors across J&K.

In upcoming education summit in Srinagar, Renowned institutions including Aryans Group, Chandigarh, Amritsar Group of Colleges, Amritsar; Amritsar College of Nursing, Amritsar; Akal College, Mastuana Sahib; Ashoka Group of Institutions, Patiala; Bharat Group of Colleges, Sardulgarh; Global Group of Institutes, Amritsar; Golden Group, Gurdaspur; Gulzar Group of Colleges, Khanna; Jain Group of Institutions, Abohar; KC Group of Institutions, Nawashehar; Quest Group of Institutes, Jhanjeri; Saraswati Group of Colleges, Maur Mandi (Bathinda); SBS Group of Educational Institutions, Patti; Shiva Group of Colleges, Himachal Pradesh; St. Mary's Rehabilitation University, Hyderabad; Sukhjinder Group of Institutes, Gurdaspur; SVIET Group, Banur, Rajpura; Universal Group of Institutions, Lalru; and Vidya Jyoti Eduversity, Derabassi.

## Baramulla-Banihal Train Delays Leave Passengers Frustrated in Kashmir

■ Ubaid Mehdi

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** The Baramulla-Banihal rail service has become a source of daily trouble for commuters in Kashmir, with persistent delays continuing for over a month.

A group of passengers told news that the train service rarely operates on schedule, causing widespread inconvenience.

"We are unable to reach our offices on time. The late arrival of the train has become a serious

problem for us," said a group of government employees who use the service daily.

Commuters said the delays, often stretching beyond an hour, have turned the once-reliable service into a major headache.

"This has been happening for

weeks now. The Northern Railway must take immediate steps, and the administration, including Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the LG's office, should intervene to ensure punctuality," said annoyed passengers.

The Baramulla-Banihal rail

link is considered a crucial transport lifeline in the Valley, catering to government staff, students, traders, and the general public.

With delays becoming routine, the disruption is now severely affecting day-to-day life for hundreds of Kashmiris.



## DC Srinagar inspects work progress on under-construction Hostel for wards of Ex-Servicemen/ Martyrs at Peerbagh

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Monday conducted a site visit to under-construction Hostel for wards of Ex-Servicemen/Martyrs at Peerbagh and inspected the pace and quality of work being carried out on the project.

The project is aimed to provide residential facilities and support for the children of those who have served or sacrificed for the nation.

During the visit, DC was accompanied by the Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; Tehsildar



Chanpora, Executive Engineers of R&B, Zila Sainik Welfare Officer,

and other officers.

DC took round of the under-construction building and reviewed the ongoing construction works. He directed the executing agency to increase manpower and expedite the pace of work to ensure timely completion of the project.

On the occasion, DC was informed that the hostel, being built at an estimated cost of Rs 7.44 crore, comprises a Ground+2 structure with 25 rooms and a capacity of 100 beds. The facility will cater to the residential needs of the wards of ex-servicemen and martyrs.

## JKEDI boot camp campaign reaches GCET Jammu, GDC Shopian; 06 innovative ideas shortlisted

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SHOPIAN/JAMMU, AUG 25:** The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute's (JKEDI) Boot Camp Campaign under J&K Startup Idea Challenge on Monday reached the Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCET), Jammu and Imtiyaz Memorial Government Degree College (GDC), Shopian.

These boot camps which were eighth and ninth in the series of 46 programs aimed to foster startup ideation and entrepreneurial spirit among the students.

At Jammu, the boot camp under the J&K Startup Idea Challenge was held at Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCET), Jammu and was conducted by a three-member team from CIIBM vertical of JKEDI Regional Campus Bari Brahmana, including Zahid Ali, Project Manager, JKEDI, Shiwani Sharma, Assistant Faculty, JKEDI and Sorab Mengi, Assistant Manager, JKEDI.

The boot camp witnessed participation from 105 students, showcasing their enthusiasm for exploring entrepreneurship as a viable career choice. Out of these students, seven participants pitched their startup ideas before the panel of experts designated from the college and officers/officials of JKEDI.

Two ideas were shortlisted for next rounds. The panel appreciated their creativity and provided constructive feedback. The session concluded with an interactive exchange of ideas, where students received encouragement and insights from the distinguished panel.

At Shopian, the boot camp under the J&K Startup Idea Challenge was held at Imtiyaz Memorial Government Degree College, Shopian. The boot camp was conducted by a team including Irtif Mehraj, Incubation Manager, JKEDI, Sayeem Rafiq, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI, Shop-

ian, Mudasir Mohiuddin, Assistant Faculty, Faheem ul Din Malik, Associate Project Manager and Syed Rizwan, Office Associate.

The boot camp saw participation of 275 students and aspiring entrepreneurs. Out of these, five participants pitched their ideas before the designated panel of experts from the college, Lead District Manager (LDM), J&K Bank and officers/officials of JKEDI. Out of these, four ideas made it to the next round. The students and faculty members expressed their desire to be a part of more such programmes to take advantage of the mentorship and handholding.

A programme was also held under J&K Startup Idea Challenge at GDC Bijbehara Anantnag which saw participation of more than 150 candidates.

The shortlisted participants will undergo intensive mentoring and pitch training at JKEDI's Pampore and Bari Brahmana campuses before competing in a Grand Finale, where the best 20 ideas will be presented before a jury of industry experts, investors, and policymakers. The winners will receive prizes, incentives, and incubation support at JKEDI and partner incubators across J&K.

A total of 46 boot camps shall be held across the colleges and universities of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir under the J&K Startup Idea Challenge. In addition, two major workshops and two intensive boot camps will be organized at JKEDI's Pampore and Bari Brahmana campuses. These sessions will offer focused mentoring, pitch training, and business model refinement for the short-listed participants.

The boot camps are being organised with support from event partners, Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Bharti Airtel Private Limited, ICICI Bank, P-Mark, Jamkash Vehicleleads and Rahim Greens.

## JKESIS organises awareness camp-cum-registration drive for workers at Srinagar

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** In an effort to raise awareness and provide access to government welfare schemes, the J&K Employees State Insurance Society (JKESIS), in collaboration with the Labour & Employment department organized an Awareness Camp cum Registration Drive at Industrial Estate, Zainakote here today.

The initiative was aimed to inform organized workers, daily wage earners and other underserved groups about their rights and entitlements under various social security and labour welfare schemes.

During the camp, on-the-spot registration services were also provided for schemes like PM-SBY, besides information regarding other schemes was also imparted through various pamphlets.

The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from local workers, community members, employees.

Speaking on the occasion, Director, JKESIS and Labour Commissioner, J&K, S. Charandeep Singh emphasized on the importance of collaboration between civil society and government institutions in ensuring inclusive development. "This initiative bridges the gap between policy and people. We are committed to supporting marginalized communities by connecting them with the benefits they rightfully deserve", he said.

Several Insured Persons (IPs) came forward to share their personal journeys and the how the ESI scheme has benefitted them morally and financially in overcoming various day to day problems.

The Labour Commissioner also distributed the approved amount of Medical Reimbursement Claim to the IPs amounting to Rs. 45,000/- for the expenditure they had incurred on the treatment of their dependents.

An interactive session between the Labour Commissioner and the workers and IPs was also held on the occasion.

During the session, the Labour Commissioner listened to the grievances and issues of the workers and assured them prompt redressal of the same.

## Pulwama Joins UT-Level Mega Event, Distributes Motorised Tricycles to Specially-Abled Persons

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**PULWAMA, AUG 25:** As part of the Union Territory-level programme, the District Administration Pulwama today virtually joined the main event of distribution of retrofitted motorized tricycles, presided over by the Chief Minister of J&K at SKICC, Srinagar. Simultaneously, a special function was organised in Pulwama to extend the benefits to local beneficiaries.

During the Pulwama event, MLA Pampore, Hasnain Masoodi; MLA Tral, Rafiq Ahmad Naik; and MLA Rajpora, Ghulam Mohi Uddin Mir jointly distributed 16 retrofitted motorised tricycles among specially-abled persons belonging to different areas of the district.

Addressing the gathering, the MLAs commended the Social Welfare Department for ensuring the effective implementation of welfare initiatives at the grassroots level. They emphasized that such schemes are crucial to improving the quality of life

of specially-abled persons by providing them enhanced mobility and opportunities for independent living.

The legislators underlined the need for sustained and collective efforts to create an enabling environment for specially-abled individuals so that they can actively participate in social, educational, and economic spheres. They also assured that the government is committed to launching more livelihood and skill-based programmes for this section of society.

On the sidelines of the programme, officials from the Social Welfare Department interacted with beneficiaries and their families, making them aware of other welfare schemes including pensions, scholarships, and rehabilitation support programmes available for differently-abled persons.

The beneficiaries expressed happiness and gratitude for receiving the mobility aids, terming the initiative as a step towards dignity and empowerment.

## 27 Motorised Tricycles Distributed Among Specially-Abled Persons at Pinjora Shopian

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SHOPIAN, AUG 25:** In a significant welfare initiative aimed at empowering specially-abled persons, the Social Welfare Department, Shopian today organised a grand distribution function at Palash Pinjora, where 27 motorised tricycles were handed over to beneficiaries from across the district.

The programme was presided over by MLA Zainapora, Showkat Hussain Ganie, and MLA Shopian, Shabir Ahmad Kullay, in the presence of a large gathering of citizens, community representatives, and beneficiaries.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLAs congratulated the beneficiaries and underlined the government's vision of inclusive growth and social justice, ensuring that no section of society is left behind.



"Our specially-abled brothers and sisters are not to be treated with sympathy but with respect and empowerment. These mobility aids are a step towards building their confidence and helping them lead dignified, independent lives,"

said MLA Ganie.

MLA Shabir Ahmad Kullay, in his address, highlighted that the administration has intensified its outreach programmes to identify genuine beneficiaries and provide them with need-based assistance.

He assured that more steps are being planned to support specially-abled youth through skill development programmes, educational scholarships, and livelihood schemes.

The event witnessed emotional moments as beneficiaries received the tricycles with joy and gratitude. Several participants expressed how the mobility aid would transform their daily lives. "This tricycle will help me move around freely without depending on anyone. It feels like a new beginning for me," said one of the recipients, drawing applause from the audience.

Officials from the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO), Tehsil Social Welfare Office (TSWO), and other functionaries of the department were also present. They briefed the gathering about other welfare initiatives

such as old-age pensions, marriage assistance, educational stipends, and rehabilitation grants available for specially-abled persons under different government schemes.

The function was described as not just a distribution event, but part of a larger social inclusion drive being carried out across the Union Territory. By extending mobility support, the administration aims to open doors of opportunity, enabling specially-abled persons to participate more actively in community, economic, and cultural life.

The event concluded with the administration's assurance that Shopian will continue to remain in focus for welfare initiatives, and that every eligible specially-abled person will be brought under the umbrella of government support programmes.

## NCORD Meeting in Reasi Charts Stronger Anti-Drug Strategy

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**REASI, AUG 25:** Sending out a strong message of zero tolerance towards drug abuse, the District-Level Narco Coordination Committee (NCORD) meeting was today held under the chairpersonship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Reasi, Nidhi Malik, at the DC Office Complex. The meeting reviewed the ongoing anti-narcotics measures, chalked out fresh strategies, and called for a comprehensive, multi-agency approach to protect the youth from falling prey to the drug menace.

At the outset, the DC reiterated that drug abuse is not merely a crime but a social evil that destroys families and erodes community well-being. She stressed the importance of real-time and synchronized intelligence sharing between enforcement agencies, health officials, educational institutions, and civil society groups. "Every link in the drug supply chain must be dismantled. From peddlers to kingpins, we need a coordinated approach to break their networks and bring them to justice," she asserted.

She directed the Assistant

Drug Controller to conduct surprise inspections of medical shops and clinics to monitor the sale of habit-forming drugs, with strict penal action against violators. The Police authorities were instructed to scale up enforcement by intensifying raids, cracking down on hotspots, and ensuring that no loopholes remain for traffickers to exploit.

During the meeting, the DC also reviewed the progress of awareness activities under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA). She emphasized that the campaigns should move beyond tokenism and instead reach villages, mohallas, and schools, particularly targeting youth, women, and vulnerable groups. Block Development Officers (BDOs) were tasked with designing impactful programmes involving community leaders, PRIs, and NGOs to foster mass awareness.

The Education Department was directed to institutionalize anti-drugs sensitization through daily school assemblies, classroom interactions, debates, and counseling sessions, ensuring that the younger generation understands both the health and legal consequences of substance abuse.



stance abuse. Meanwhile, the Sports Department was asked to leverage the popularity of sports among youth by organizing drug-free tournaments, pledge-taking ceremonies, and awareness rallies during local events.

The meeting also discussed long-term interventions such as:

- Strengthening rehabilitation and counseling centres for victims of drug addiction, ensuring psychological and medical support.
- Providing adequate drug-testing kits at police stations, hospitals, and border checkpoints to detect substance abuse promptly.
- Launching a special

drive to identify and destroy illegal cannabis and poppy cultivation in hilly and remote pockets.

- Undertaking community plantation drives in vulnerable areas as part of a strategy to provide sustainable and positive alternatives to drug-prone regions.
- Introducing voca-

tional training and livelihood schemes to help vulnerable youth secure dignified employment instead of falling into addiction.

Calling for whole-of-society participation, DC Malik urged parents, teachers, religious leaders, and civil society organizations to play a proactive role in safeguarding the

younger generation. "This fight cannot be won by the administration or the police alone. It requires collective resolve from every section of society. We must ensure that our children choose books, sports, and skills over drugs," she remarked.

SSP Reasi Paramveer Singh, while speaking at the meeting, assured that police will step up its efforts against traffickers by strengthening surveillance, intelligence gathering, and quick prosecution of offenders. He added that special teams are being mobilized to track cross-district and inter-state trafficking routes.

The meeting was also attended by ADC Rakesh Kumar, ACR Nitin Verma, PO POSHAN, CMO, DSWO, Tehsil-level officers, and other concerned stakeholders, who provided their departmental inputs and committed to working in synergy.

The session concluded with a unanimous pledge to intensify both preventive and punitive measures, ensuring that Reasi becomes a model district in the fight against narcotics under the vision of a "Nasha Mukta J&K."



4th Meeting of UTLLACPC Convened in Srinagar

# Director Libraries Stresses Infrastructure Upgradation, Digitization of Libraries

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**SRINAGAR, AUG 25:** The 4th meeting of the J&K Union Territory Level Library Advisory-cum-Purchase Committee (UTLLACPC) was today convened at the SPS Library, Srinagar, where the focus remained on infrastructure upgradation, digitization, and expansion of public library services to meet the growing demand of readers across Jammu and Kashmir.

Chairing the meeting, Director Libraries & Research, Mrs. Rubina Kousar, said that the Department is laying renewed emphasis on improving the physical and digital infrastructure of libraries to keep pace with the increasing footfall. She noted with satisfaction that J&K is witnessing a revival of reading culture, especially among youth who are frequenting libraries for academic and competitive exam preparation.

"It is heartening to see that our Public Libraries are once again buzzing with activity. However, the surge in footfall has placed immense pressure



on existing infrastructure, and there is an urgent need to enhance facilities to match the aspirations of today's readers," she remarked in her opening address.

The two-day meeting will deliberate on critical issues concerning library reforms as well as finalize the selection of books for purchase for the financial year 2025-26.

Mrs. Rubina highlighted the support extended by the J&K Government and the Raja Ram-

mohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF) towards library development. She expressed special gratitude to Prof. A. P. Singh, Director General RRRLF, for his sustained guidance and personal intervention in strengthening J&K's library infrastructure.

The Director underlined gaps that still exist in the system, pointing out that many libraries continue to lack basic facilities such as proper furniture, drink-

ing water, toilets, IT infrastructure, and dedicated amenities for specially-abled readers. She said the Department is committed to bridging these gaps in a phased manner.

In this regard, she announced that in the first phase, all Central and District Libraries will be equipped with ramps, specialized furniture, and audio-visual reading aids for Divyangjan under RRRLF's matching grant.

Focusing on youth-centric initiatives, Mrs. Rubina said the Department has already stocked libraries with quality resources for Civil Services, JEE, and NEET examinations free of cost, which has been widely appreciated by students. She assured that such resources will soon be extended to aspirants of judicial services, SSC, CET, NET/SLET, SSB, GMAT, CLAT, CAT, and other competitive examinations.

The Director also emphasized

the need for a digital transformation of libraries, with automation and digitization of Central and District Libraries already proposed. This, she said, will ensure better access to e-resources, online catalogues, and digital learning tools, making libraries more relevant in the age of technology.

To further popularize reading culture, she also pitched the idea of establishing Libraries-cum-Reading Centres at prominent

tourist destinations across J&K, enabling visitors to access books in serene settings. Additionally, she proposed the creation of Newspaper Reading Kiosks at public parks and walking tracks for morning readers.

The meeting also reviewed measures to revamp library spaces, create more reading rooms, and introduce modern furnishing to make libraries attractive, comfortable, and inclusive for all sections of society.

It was noted that the 17-member UTLLACPC, reconstituted by the Government in November 2024, plays a vital role in shaping policies for library development, resource allocation, and selection of quality books that cater to the diverse needs of readers across the Union Territory.

The session concluded with a reaffirmed commitment to transform public libraries into dynamic centres of knowledge, skill-building, and career development, in line with the changing aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

## MLA Nizamuddin Bhat Visits Hailstorm-Hit Bandipora Villages, Calls for Immediate Relief

■ HT News Desk

**BANDIPORA, AUG 25:** A severe hailstorm that lashed parts of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Saturday evening caused extensive damage to standing crops, apple orchards, and vegetable fields, leaving hundreds of farming families in distress. Villages including Dardpora and Shamthan were among the worst hit, with farmers reporting heavy losses to their seasonal produce.

In response, MLA Bandipora, Nizamuddin Bhat, on Sunday visited the affected villages to take stock of the situation on ground. He was accompanied by officials from the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, as well as field officers who conducted spot inspections of damaged orchards and farmland to assess the scale of destruction.

During his interaction with farmers and orchardists, Bhat expressed deep concern over the losses and called for immediate relief and compensation. "The damage is widespread, and the livelihoods of hundreds of families are at stake. The administration must



act swiftly to conduct a comprehensive damage assessment and ensure timely support reaches the affected," he stated.

He assured the residents that he would personally take up the matter with higher authorities, pressing for special relief packages and compensation to mitigate the financial stress on farmers.

Farmers, meanwhile, narrated their ordeal, saying the hailstorm destroyed nearly 70-80% of apple produce in some areas, along with paddy fields, maize, and vegetable crops. Many

expressed fear of mounting financial strain and debt burden if assistance is delayed. "We depend entirely on the apple harvest to sustain our families for the year. This calamity has left us devastated," said one orchardist in Dardpora.

The MLA also stressed the importance of crop insurance schemes and preventive measures, urging the government to explore long-term strategies to protect farmers from recurring climate-related calamities. He suggested that the Horticulture Department provide technical guidance and subsidized inputs to help farmers rejuvenate damaged orchards.

The visiting officers assured farmers that the administration would soon initiate a detailed survey of affected villages, after which relief under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and other government schemes would be extended.

The visit concluded with the MLA reiterating his solidarity with the farming community and his commitment to ensure that no affected family is left unattended in this hour of crisis.

## SDM Gool Reviews Progress of PWD & PMGSY Roads, Stresses Timely Completion & Safety Measures

■ HT News Desk

**RAMBAN, AUG 25:** Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Gool, Imtiaz, today convened a comprehensive review meeting to take stock of ongoing developmental works being executed under the Public Works Department (PWD) and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in Sub-Division Gool.

The meeting, attended by AEE PMGSY & PWD Sub-Division Gool along with all Assistant Engineers (AEs) and Junior Engineers (JEs), focused on assessing the physical progress of road, building, and bridge projects currently underway.

During the deliberations, the SDM sought detailed status reports on each project, highlighting bottlenecks and stressing on time-bound completion of works. He emphasized that road in-

frastructure plays a pivotal role in ensuring connectivity, mobility, and economic growth in the hilly and remote areas of Gool.

The SDM directed engineers to ensure regular maintenance of all existing roads, particularly focusing on the drainage system to prevent waterlogging and damage during rains. He instructed JEs to carry out daily monitoring and field inspections, with special attention to road safety measures, signage, crash barriers, and slope protection in vulnerable stretches.

Taking note of the slow progress on some projects, the SDM fixed targets for completion of major bridges on the Jaman-Kalimastaroad, stressing their importance for local commuters, school-going children, and patients requiring medical referrals. He reiterated that any laxity



or delays in execution would not be tolerated.

Keeping in view the tough terrain and frequent weather-related disruptions, the SDM instructed staff to remain on alert and ensure that all key roads are kept functional, motorable, and properly maintained even during adverse weather conditions. He further directed engineers to coordinate with disaster management teams to deal with landslides or blockades on priority.

The SDM underscored the importance of inter-departmental coordination and called for a proactive approach to expedite works under centrally sponsored schemes, ensuring that the benefits of PMGSY reach every remote hamlet of Sub-Division Gool.

He also highlighted that timely completion of projects would not only improve road connectivity and accessibility but also give a boost to education, healthcare delivery, and local economic activities by facilitating easier transport of goods and services.

Concluding the meeting, SDM Imtiaz urged engineers and field staff to work with dedication, accountability, and transparency, assuring that his office would extend full support in addressing genuine issues hindering progress.

## Motorized tricycles handed over to specially-abled persons at Udhampur

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

**UDHAMPUR, AUG 25:** Government of Jammu and Kashmir, through the Council for Rehabilitation of Widows, Orphans, Handicapped and Old Persons (Victims of Militancy) under the Social Welfare Department, organized a special distribution program for retrofitted motorized tricycles to empower specially-abled persons.

The UT-level inaugural ceremony was held at SKICC, Srinagar, where Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah and Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakina Masood Itoo distributed 547 retrofitted motorized tricycles among the beneficiaries.

In continuation to the main event, a district-level distribution programme was organized in the Conference Hall DC Office Complex Udhampur, which was virtually attended by MLA Chenani, Balwant Singh Mankotia, MLA Udhampur West, Pawan Kumar Gupta, MLA Udhampur East, Ranbir Singh Pathania, MLA Ramnagar, Sunil Bhardwaj, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Prem Singh, along with other officers.

As many as 24 motorized tricycles were given away to specially-abled beneficiaries of the district at an impressive function organized by the District Administration Udhampur and Social Welfare Department.

The program commenced with a welcome address by District Social Welfare Officer Kanika Gupta. She highlighted the welfare schemes of the Social Welfare Department dedicated to specially-abled persons.

The Deputy Commissioner congratulated the beneficiaries and appreciated the Social Welfare Department for successfully organizing the distribution camp.

## Balwant Thakur Engages with Roman Actors at Bath, England

■ HT News Desk

**BATH, AUG 25:** Balwant Thakur, India's eminent theatre director and cultural diplomat currently on a cultural tour of the UK, visited the historic Roman Baths in Bath—one of Britain's most celebrated heritage landmarks and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Dating back nearly 2,000 years, the Roman Baths were once at the heart of Roman Britain's spiritual, social, and cultural life. Today, they remain not only an architectural marvel but also a global attraction for heritage tourism, renowned for their innovative use of immersive theatre and live interpretation in narrating history.

At the site, costumed actors portraying Roman priests, soldiers, citizens, and attendants animate the ancient complex through rituals, dialogue, and storytelling. Visitors witness sacrifices, prayers to Roman gods, and everyday scenes of Roman social life—transforming the monument into a living theatre of history rather than a static archaeological display.

Thakur, who interacted with these actors, praised Bath's fusion of performance and heritage. Known for his landmark Indian productions like Bawa Jitto and Ghumayee, which bring local tra-



ditions and folklore to life, Thakur described the Roman Baths as an example of how theatre can bridge centuries and cultures.

"The Roman Baths demonstrate how performance can connect people across centuries," Thakur observed. "This is precisely what

theatre has the power to do—transform the past into a lived, shared experience for contemporary audiences."

For Thakur, the visit was also an opportunity to reflect on parallels between global practices of heritage preservation. Just as

Bath employs theatre to animate the Roman story, Thakur has championed folk and traditional performance in India as tools to keep oral histories, community rituals, and cultural memory alive.

Observers noted that Thakur's

engagement with Bath's actors represents a cross-cultural dialogue—a reminder that despite geographical distance, societies across the world turn to performance and storytelling as timeless mediums of identity, continuity, and education.

The Roman Baths officials too acknowledged the significance of hosting a cultural figure of Thakur's stature. His reflections highlighted the importance of international cultural diplomacy, where heritage sites become spaces of global exchange and mutual learning.

Thakur's presence in the UK also reflects India's growing cultural footprint worldwide. Through his career—as Secretary of the Academy of Art, Culture, Languages of Jammu & Kashmir, Regional Director of ICCR, and later India's Cultural Diplomat to South Africa and Mauritius—he has continuously advocated for theatre as a tool of cultural diplomacy and global dialogue.

Currently, he continues to champion heritage preservation and international cultural exchange, using theatre as a creative bridge between the local and the global, the past and the present. His Bath experience reinforced his vision of theatre as a universal language of humanity.



HT EDITORIAL

## Restore Trust Through Transparency

The cancellation of written examination by the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) following allegations of a paper leak has once again cast a long shadow over the recruitment process in the region. While the decision itself may be a necessary corrective measure, it also exposes deeper and systemic flaws that need urgent attention.

For thousands of aspirants, the government jobs represent not just employment but a pathway to stability and dignity in a region that has long grappled with political and economic uncertainties. Each recruitment exam carries with it the hopes and sacrifices of young men and women, many of whom prepare under challenging circumstances. Allegations of irregularities such as paper leaks, therefore, do more than taint an exam; they erode public confidence in institutions and damage the morale of the youth.

This is not the first time the JKSSB has come under scrutiny. Past controversies around recruitment processes and result delays have already created a trust deficit. The latest incident, unless handled with complete transparency and accountability, risks deepening public cynicism.

The Board must now go beyond mere cancellation. A thorough, time-bound and independent investigation should be launched to identify those responsible, whether insiders, external actors or a nexus of both. Accountability must not stop at scapegoats; structural reforms are essential to prevent recurrence.

Moreover, the aspirants deserve clear communication about the next steps. When will the fresh exam be held? What additional safeguards will be in place? How will fairness be ensured this time? Vague assurances will no longer suffice; the credibility of the process demands clear timelines and concrete action.

This episode should also serve as a wake-up call to overhaul the recruitment ecosystem in J&K. Digitization of question paper delivery, biometric attendance, and strict third-party monitoring are no longer optional—they are essential. If the administration is serious about empowering the youth and promoting meritocracy, then cleansing recruitment processes must be a top priority. Restoring faith in the JKSSB is not just about one exam. It's about reaffirming the integrity of the entire system.

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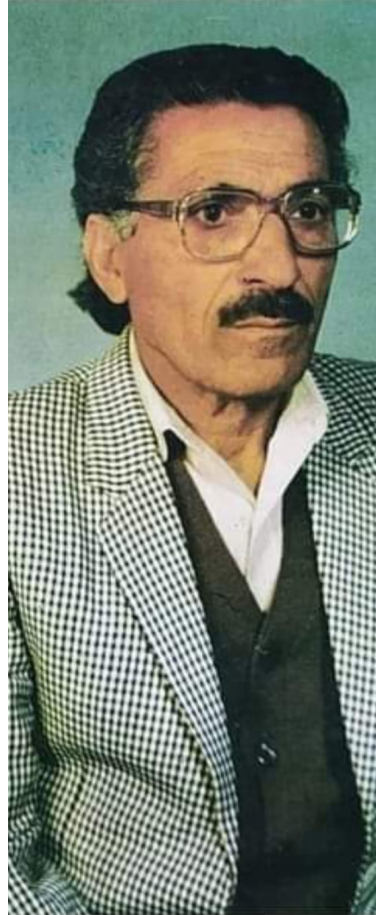
# Nishat Ansari – The Doyen of Urdu and Kashmiri Literature



■ Rayees Ahmad Kumar

In the galaxy of eminent litterateurs, authors, poets and writers, Nishat Ansari stands as a towering and respectable name whose literary brilliance continues to inspire generations.

Born on 23 December 1930 (though official records mention 23 December 1928), his actual name was Gh. Mustafa Ansari, while his pen name remained Nishat. After matriculation, he was appointed to the Cooperative Department, but due to lack of interest he resigned and later joined the Education Department as a teacher. For 23 years, he served across the Valley in different capacities, remembered by his students for teaching them with the care of a father. In recognition of his dedication, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir conferred upon him the Best



Teacher Award.

A multidimensional personality, Nishat Ansari never shied away from a literary challenge. Author of more than two dozen books, he was at once a poet, critic, researcher, translator and essayist. Five of his poetry collections were published during his lifetime, among them Gulnar, Nawan, Ablag, Aokus Boukus and Souz. His collection Gulnar won him the Best Book Award (1981) from the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

For the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, he authored research monographs on Prof. Mohiuddin Hajini and Gh. Nabi Dilsoz, besides translating the revered saint Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani's (RA) poetic Shruks into Urdu under the title Salsabeel. He also translated works of Dr. Zakir Hussain and Jigar Muradabadi into Kashmiri, published by the Sahitya Akademi. Posthumously, the Akademi awarded him for his translation of Dr. Zakir Hussain's book.

Over the years, Nishat Ansari remained deeply associated with prestigious institutions including All India Radio Srinagar, Sahitya Akademi New Delhi, J&K Academy of Art,

Culture and Languages, Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar, Board of School Education, University of Kashmir and NCPUL.

Beyond an individual, Nishat Ansari was an institution in himself. He was the founder of Dayira Adab Delina Baramulla, and a basic member, Vice-President and long-serving General Secretary of Abdi Markaz Kamraz – the Valley's largest literary organisation. For 30 years, his role in maintaining records, organising events, and compiling conference reports was widely admired.

He also penned nearly 300 research-based and critical essays published in reputed journals across Kashmir, India, and Pakistan. His autobiography, spanning more than 300 pages, will soon reach readers eager to explore the life of this literary giant.

On 25 May 2000, Nishat Ansari – a distinguished poet, critic and scholar of Urdu and Kashmiri literature – breathed his last. May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may Almighty Allah grant him the highest ranks in Jannah.

Writer is a columnist based in Gazigund Kashmir

## Contractual Hands, Broken Trust, and the Betrayal of Dogri Language



■ By Mohd Yaseen

The recent recruitment controversy at Prasar Bharati's Regional News Unit, Jammu, has thrown open a window to the disturbing realities of favoritism, mismanagement, and erosion of institutional credibility. What should have been a transparent process to promote regional languages like Dogri and Gojri has instead exposed how fragile and compromised our systems become when temporary authority collides with permanent responsibility.

The recruitment of Editorial Executives and Newsreader-cum-Translators in Dogri was supposed to strengthen local broadcasting and give a platform to deserving youth. Instead, the episode is remembered for irregularities, procedural violations, and blatant internal manipulation. In the name of opportunity for regional talent, the process became a showcase of how personal networks and contractual influence can override fairness and legality.

The central charge lies in the role of contractual employees who were allowed to run critical aspects of recruitment without having any statutory power. In a national broadcaster where accountability is paramount, the sight of temporary employees conducting voice tests and even sitting in the chair of senior officials is not only irregular but deeply shocking. The presence of Jagmohan Sharma, who insiders say often acted in place of Assistant Director Gulshan Raina, raises sharp questions. Can a person with no permanent status in the organization be allowed to carry out functions reserved for senior officers? The answer lies in law and governance, and both seem to have been ignored.

Equally startling is the involvement of Vijay Bajaj, another contractual worker, who allegedly played an active role in conducting the recruitment tests. Voice tests are one of the most crucial elements in the selection of newsreaders and translators, but instead of being handled by authorized officers, they were reportedly managed by contractual hands. This is not a small procedural lapse. It is a direct assault on the sanctity of recruitment and on the trust of candidates who came forward with the hope of a fair assessment.

Adding insult to injury, the name of Professor Veena Gupta, a highly respected scholar of Dogri and former head of the Dogri Department at the University of Jammu, was misused as a supposed consultant for setting the examination paper. Professor Gupta herself clarified that she had no role in the process. This was not just a casual clerical mistake. It was a deliberate act to cloak a compromised selection with the veneer of scholarly endorsement. By misusing the name of an eminent academic, the organizers crossed the boundary from irregularity into deliberate deception.

But the consequences of these irregularities have become most visible on air. Even those who were

finally selected are seen fumbling when they present their bulletins. Pronunciations falter, sentences break midway, and the flow of news collapses into hesitation. Listeners who tune in for clarity and confidence are instead greeted by confusion and stammering. When merit is sidelined and selections are made on the basis of dosti-yaari, favoritism, or other informal networks, the result is bound to be incompetence. Broadcasting is not a hobby; it requires training, fluency, and the ability to carry the trust of an entire audience. Sadly, this trust is being shattered every time an undeserving candidate takes the microphone.

This situation raises a haunting question: was the entire exercise meant to find the best voices for the job, or was it only meant to accommodate a chosen few? If personal friendships and hidden alliances decide who becomes a newsreader, then what future is left for hundreds of youth who prepare tirelessly, study for exams, and refine their skills in the hope of a fair chance?

The allegations do not end here. Insiders revealed that during the recruitment process, two highly qualified individuals who had once been associated with Akashvani were sidelined entirely. Their exclusion speaks volumes about the intentions behind the exercise. If merit and experience are deliberately ignored while questionable candidates are promoted, then the process cannot be described as anything but manipulation. The names repeatedly emerging in this manipulation are Jagmohan Sharma and Vijay Bajaj, who seem to have built an outsized influence within the unit.

The damage caused by such practices is not limited to a few failed candidates. It undermines the very spirit of public broadcasting. Akashvani is supposed to represent the voice of the people, provide a fair opportunity to regional language practitioners, and protect cultural diversity. When favoritism replaces merit, when procedural violations replace transparency, the entire credibility of the institution collapses.

The larger question is how such practices have been allowed to thrive. Yaseen and other cultural activists argue that there is a structural failure within the system. Contractual employees, instead of being limited to their defined roles, are often empowered to act like permanent officers. Government employees drawing hefty salaries are given casual duties in addition to their official assignments, thereby blocking opportunities for unemployed youth. The outcome is an atmosphere where insiders protect each other and outsiders, however qualified, are kept away.

This is not an isolated case. Reports suggest that similar irregularities are happening in other language sections, including Gojri. Appointments and selections are being influenced by informal networks rather than by transparent procedures. In effect, a public institution funded by taxpayers is being run like a private fiefdom, with a handful of people deciding who gets opportunities and who remains excluded.

The controversy has also highlighted the larger debate on governance. India is at a juncture where the government often speaks of transparency, accountability, and meritocracy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of good governance emphasizes fairness and opportunity. But when a national broadcaster, operating under Prasar Bharati, permits

such irregularities, it creates a sharp contradiction between vision and reality. The credibility of not just the organization but also of the broader system comes under question.

The incident also reflects how deeply entrenched favoritism has become in our institutional culture. Instead of nurturing new talent, organizations are often content to recycle the same names, empower the same insiders, and protect the same networks. For languages like Dogri and Gojri, which already struggle for visibility, such practices are doubly damaging. They deprive genuine practitioners of opportunities while pushing forward those who may not even have the required qualifications or experience.

What should have been a platform for promoting regional culture has thus been turned into a stage for personal gain. The misuse of authority by contractual employees is not just a breach of rules, it is a betrayal of the trust of young aspirants who prepare and compete in good faith. Every instance of unfair selection sends a message to talented youth that merit does not matter, that transparency is an illusion, and that institutions are in the grip of those who treat them like personal estates.

The outrage is growing. Cultural and linguistic circles in Jammu are demanding a thorough inquiry into the recruitment scandal. Yaseen himself has announced plans to file fresh RTI applications to obtain documentation of not just this recruitment but also other recent selections, including for the post of Copy Editor in the news section of Akashvani Jammu. The demand is simple: show the procedures followed, show the qualifications of those selected, and explain on what grounds the decisions were made. If transparency exists, there should be no hesitation in making these details public.

The worry, however, is that silence will prevail. Institutions often prefer to protect themselves by denying information rather than by acknowledging faults. But silence cannot erase the truth. The more Prasar Bharati delays action, the deeper the damage will be to its credibility. The more irregularities are swept under the carpet, the harder it will be to restore faith in the system.

This episode is also a cautionary tale about the broader state of public institutions in India. When authority becomes concentrated in the hands of a few individuals who operate without checks and balances, institutions begin to decay from within. Instead of being engines of opportunity and fairness, they turn into tools for personal networks and vested interests. The story of Akashvani Jammu's Dogri recruitment is not just about one examination. It is about the future of public broadcasting and the future of regional languages in India.

Dogri and Gojri are not just academic subjects. They are living languages that carry the culture, history, and identity of millions of people. For years, activists, scholars, and cultural workers have fought to ensure that these languages receive institutional support and visibility. When recruitment processes meant to support these languages are corrupted, it is not just an administrative failure. It is an assault on cultural preservation itself.

The writer is a National Scholarship and Fellowship Holder from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India in the field of Theatre



# There is no one better equipped to do so than the Indian Army!



■ By M S Nazki

Tragedy is a disaster; but desperation after that tragedy is a much greater disaster!

One disaster makes you forget another disaster! Then a much bigger disaster comes and makes you forget all the other disasters! This universe works like this! If your move is smarter than the move of the universe, only then you will be safe!

The cure to every disaster is humanity in the world. The Indian Army is well versed with the fact of how disasters have to be dealt with and they have never let down the people!

Humanitarian procurement for emergency response is spontaneous and often unplanned, because although we may plan for a catastrophe, when it may happen may be a mystery!

To address this, innovative solutions must include putting in place long term agreements (framework agreements), contracts for vendor consigned stocks, pre-positioning of stocks which would predictably be used for a broad range of responses and a cash based intervention option to allow people affected to have their dignity of choice.

There is no one better equipped to do so than the Indian Army!

Possible Reasons for Cloud Bursts:

Since I was a student of Geology and Geography and my Father-in Law my tutor, I did not have to go far for learning the lessons which would be useful in future! And today they are since learning made me semi perfect but knowledge gained by reading made me a little less degrees from perfection!.....(Major's diary!)

Blasting and cloudbursts are two separate phenomena that can both lead to significant geological disasters in mountainous regions. Blasting, a human-induced activity for construction, can destabilize slopes and trigger landslides. Cloudbursts are natural weather events involving intense rainfall that cause flash floods and mudslides by saturating the already unstable terrain. In mountainous areas, blasting can exacerbate the dangers posed by cloudbursts by increasing the overall risk of landslides and debris flows.

No, human-caused "unprecedented development" does not directly cause cloudbursts, which are natural, localized, and intense rainfall events. However, human activities like unregulated construction and deforestation in vulnerable areas amplify the destructive impact of cloudbursts and flash floods by destabilizing terrain and increasing risks.

Additionally, climate change, a significant human impact, increases atmospheric moisture and destabilizes weather patterns, leading to more intense and frequent thunderstorms, which are the primary cause of cloudbursts.

What is the phenomenon of 'cloudbursts'? Cloudbursts happen when strong updrafts in thunderstorms trap large amounts of water in high-altitude clouds, which then suddenly fall as heavy, localized rain when the updrafts weaken. These events are often intensified by topography, where mountain ranges force warm, moist air to rise (orographic lifting), leading to intense cloud formation and a sudden release of water. Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of cloudbursts because warmer air can hold more moisture, fueling extreme downpours.

Conditions for a Cloudburst: Cumulonimbus Clouds: The process begins with large, tall cumulonimbus clouds that can hold significant moisture.

Rapid Updrafts: Warm, moist air rises rapidly, forming clouds and holding water droplets suspended within them due to strong updrafts.

Trapped Water: The upward currents are so strong that they prevent the water

droplets from falling, accumulating a large amount of rain in the cloud.

Weakening Updrafts: When the updrafts weaken or the cloud becomes too saturated, this collected waterfalls rapidly in a sudden, intense downpour.

Contributing Factors: Orographic Lifting: In mountainous regions, air is forced to rise over the terrain, enhancing cloud development and leading to increased precipitation.

High Humidity: Large amounts of moisture in the atmosphere are necessary for the formation of the heavy clouds involved in a cloudburst.

Temperature Differences: Significant temperature differences between different atmospheric layers can lead to instability and rapid convection, fueling the intense rainfall.

Climate Change: A warmer atmosphere holds more water, which can be released in extreme rainfall events, increasing both the frequency and intensity of cloudbursts.

Forest degradation significantly worsens the impact of a cloudburst by reducing the land's ability to absorb water, which leads to increased runoff, erosion, and landslides, making the event more destructive. While deforestation doesn't cause a cloudburst, which is a meteorological phenomenon, it acts as a critical factor that escalates the natural disaster's ferocity and damage by compromising the natural defenses of vulnerable mountainous regions like the Himalayas.

How Forest Degradation Worsens Cloudbursts: Increased Soil Erosion and Landslides: The dense root systems of trees bind the soil, preventing erosion and acting as a natural barrier against debris flow. Loss of these trees leaves the soil exposed and unstable, causing rapid erosion and increasing the risk of landslides and debris flows during heavy rains.

Reduced Water Absorption: Forests play a crucial role in regulating water flow. Trees absorb rainfall and facilitate its percolation into the soil, reducing surface runoff. Without this natural capacity, rainwater rushes down slopes, overwhelming natural drainage systems and exacerbating flash floods.

Magnified Disaster Severity: Had the forests in regions like Uttarakashi retained their historical tree cover, the impact of the recent disaster would have been significantly less severe, according to experts. The absence of trees means that water and debris flow down the mountainsides with greater force and volume, magnifying the destruction.

Combined Impact with Climate Change: Forest degradation, alongside climate change, human population growth, and unsustainable development, are key factors contributing to the increased frequency and intensity of cloudbursts and their devastating consequences.

In summary, forest degradation acts as a multiplier for the destructive effects of a cloudburst by removing natural defenses against heavy rainfall and causing rapid water runoff.

First Cloud Burst in J&K: There isn't a record of the "first ever" cloud burst in Jammu & Kashmir, as the region has experienced historical flooding, but a significant, devastating cloudburst event occurred in the Kishtwar district on August 14, 2025, killing 65 civilians and leaving 33 missing. This was followed by another cloudburst in Kathua district, which also caused casualties. The Kishtwar event was a major tragedy, severely impacting the Machail Mata temple yatra and causing widespread damage.

There isn't a record of the first-ever cloudburst in the world, as it's a natural phenomenon that predates human record-keeping. However, historical records and scientific studies document many severe cloudbursts throughout history and in various locations, including incidents in Panama in 1911, India in 1908 and 2005, and Guadeloupe in 1970, which highlight the event's destructive potential and long existence.

Historical Examples of Cloudbursts: 1911 (Panama): A rainfall of 63 mm (2.47 inches) in just three minutes was recorded in Porto Bello, Panama.

1970 (India): A cloudburst in the



Alaknanda river catchment area led to a significant rise in the river level.

2005 (Mumbai): The city experienced a massive cloudburst that brought approximately 950 mm (37 inches) of rainfall in a single day.

Before modern meteorological science and recording equipment, events like cloudbursts would not have been documented in detail, making it impossible to pinpoint the first occurrence. Current records often focus on the impact and damages caused by cloudbursts, rather than their first instance.

When disaster strikes, the impact of the disaster can either increase dramatically or decrease dramatically, depending on your response to the disaster!

Heavy rains in Jammu:

Heavy Rain in Jammu: Jammu is facing a crisis after experiencing extreme, continuous rainfall that caused flash floods, submerged low-lying areas, and triggered landslides. The city recorded its second-highest single-day rainfall in August in nearly a century, with floodwaters inundating homes and commercial establishments. Significant infrastructure damage includes submerged and damaged houses, washed-away vehicles, and a bridge on the Jammu-Pathankot NH. Rescue efforts are underway, with teams evacuating trapped students from a hostel. Authorities have issued alerts, closed schools, and advised residents to stay clear of rivers and flood-prone areas as moderate to heavy rainfall is expected to continue.

Flooding: Heavy rainfall led to flash floods and waterlogging in several areas, including Janipur, Roop Nagar, and Talab Tilloo, forcing residents to evacuate.

Infrastructure Damage: Roads have caved in, a vital bridge on the Jammu-Pathankot highway has been damaged, and boundary walls of houses have collapsed.

Landslides: Landslides blocked roads, including the Jammu-Nagrota and Samba-Mansar-Udhampur roads.

Inundated Areas: Low-lying areas, several houses, and the ground floor of the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM) hostel complex were submerged.

Rescue and Response: Evacuations: State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and police rescued over 45 students trapped in the IIIM hostel using boats.

Disaster Alerts: Disaster response teams and police are on alert, with flood alerts issued for rivers like the Ujh and Basantar nullah.

Infrastructure Monitoring: Authorities are monitoring the situation closely, with relief and rescue teams on standby.

Current Situation and Outlook: Weather Forecast: Moderate to intense rainfall is expected to continue in the region for the next few days, with the possibility of more cloudbursts, flash floods, and landslides.

## HT - OPED

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leads to increased runoff, erosion, and landslides, making the event more destructive.

While deforestation doesn't cause a cloudburst, which is a meteorological phenomenon, it acts as a critical factor that escalates the natural disaster's ferocity and damage by compromising the natural defenses of vulnerable mountainous regions like the Himalayas.

crisis situation.

7 killed as cloudbursts hit two villages in J&K's Kathua:

Jammu Kathua Cloudburst : The district administration is closely watching the situation and has requested people to stay away from water bodies for their safety. On the other hand, the Indian Railways has regulated the operations of several trains following the cloudburst.

This was following torrential rain that had already led to local streams overflowing, cloudbursts hit Jodh Ghati village in Rajbagh and Bagra village of Janglote — both in Kathua.

According to local residents, after the cloudbursts, floodwater came down to the plains of Rajbagh and Kathua towns, submerging roads, lanes and bylanes. Several houses were also flooded, causing damage to buildings, belongings, and vehicles. Even the Raj Bagh police station saw knee-deep water.

The Dyalachak-Billawar and Lakhampur-Basohli roads were closed for vehicular traffic after they got damaged due to landslides at various places, the Kathua Police Control Room said.

Rail traffic between Kathua and Jammu was also disrupted after railway authorities halted Jammu-bound trains either at Jalandhar or Pathankote in view of flood waters flowing over the railway tracks in the Kathua area. Later, rail traffic was restored, but the trains were running late by three to four hours, officials said.

Meanwhile, Army columns and teams of J&K Police moved in and launched rescue operations. Deputy Inspector General of Police for Jammu, Samba, and Kathua range was himself camping at Rajbagh, supervising the rescue operations, officials said.

Indian Army columns on the ground in Kathua — rescuing families, giving hope, food and care after the cloudburst,” the Rising Star Corps of the Army said

Heavy rain has led to a sharp increase in the levels of most water bodies, with the Ujh river flowing near the danger mark, officials said, adding that the district administration is closely watching the situation and that people were asked to stay away from water bodies for their safety.

The final take: Can you calmly walk towards a disaster and sing along? Of course you can, but don't think that disaster will be impressed by your courage and run away! We can only salvage the situation and prepare whenever the next one strikes!



# Stem Cell Therapy

## A New Dawn in Diabetes Treatment



■ **Surinderpal Singh**

Diabetes is one of the fastest-growing health problem which is posing biggest challenge for the humanity. A very large percentage of the world's population is suffering from this chronic disease which could lead to heart disease, kidney failure, blindness and nerve damage if it is not properly managed medically. The Current treatments consisting of insulin injections and oral medicines only helps in controlling blood sugar but they do not cure the disease completely. Today scientists and medical researchers across the globe are exploring a revolutionary approach which is known by the name stem cell therapy. This medical miracle which could one day allow the body to naturally produce its own insulin again.

### How Stem Cell Therapy Works?

Stem cells are the body's master cells which are capable of transforming into many different types of specialized cells. In the case of diabetes:

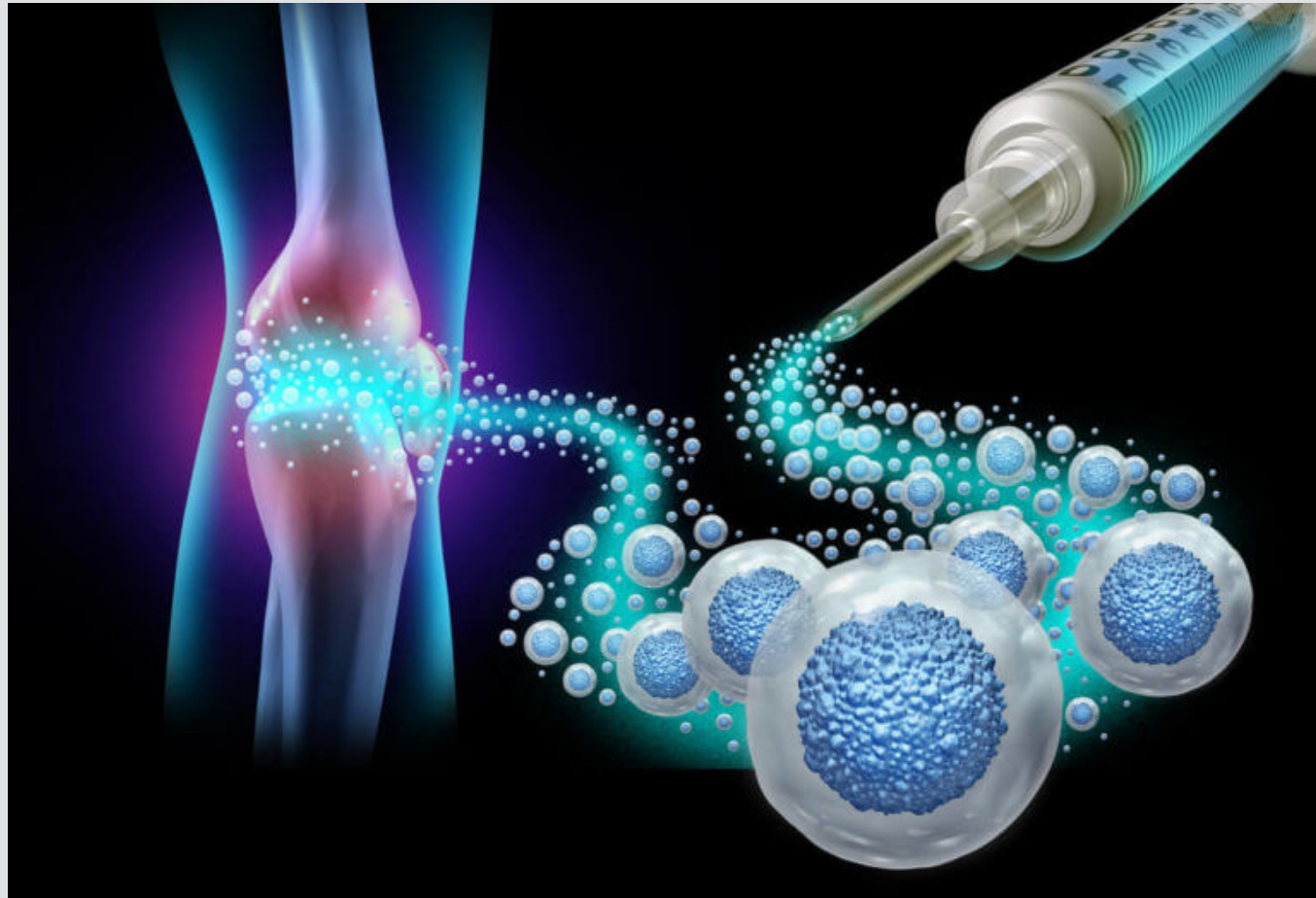
For Type 1 diabetes (where the immune system destroys insulin-producing cells), stem cells can be converted into new insulin-producing B-cells. These cells are then transplanted into the body to restore insulin production.

For Type 2 diabetes (where the body resists insulin and later loses insulin-producing capacity), stem cell therapy helps by repairing damaged B-cells and reducing inflammation making the body more sensitive to insulin.

Some therapies use encapsulated stem cells, placed inside protective capsules that allow insulin to pass through but block immune attack. Others therapies are using the patient's own cells, reprogrammed into insulin-producing cells to reduce the risk of rejection.

### Costs And Availability

In the present era the stem cell therapy is available only through experimental trials at advanced medical centers in the USA, Europe, China and India. The estimated cost is very very high and the expenses of the therapeutic depends



on the hospital and method used. Since it is still under clinical study most health insurance policies do not cover it.

### Success Rates So Far

In Type 1 diabetes, early trials and experimentation have shown that 20–40% of patients can reduce or temporarily stop insulin use after receiving stem cell-derived B-cells. However, long-term success remains under medical research and investigation.

In Type 2 diabetes, about 50–70% of patients in trials have reported better blood sugar control, lower HbA1c levels and reduced need for medication.

While these results are promising for the detailed medical and scientific research but complete cure remains rare at this stage.

### Risks And Challenges

No therapy is without risks. Stem cell treatment may cause:

1. Immune rejection of transplanted cells could also be a problematic area for concern particularly in Type 1 diabetes.
2. The risk of tumor formation if stem

cells are not fully matured before use could be the biggest challenge for the medical fraternity.

3. Infections or complications could occur during the transplantation procedure and this could spoil the dream run of achieving freedom from diabetes.

4. Ethical concerns could be raised in some countries of the world especially regarding embryonic stem cells.

5. High costs of using the therapy could pose a hurdle and which could limit the access of the therapy for ordinary patients.

### Pros And Cons Of Stem Cell Therapy

#### PROS:

1. The Stem Cell Therapy offers a potential long-term solution and the positive of the therapy is that it is not just symptom management.
2. The silver lining of using the therapy is that it may reduce or even eliminate insulin injections in some cases.
3. The biggest boon of the therapy for the humans is that it can prevent

or delay the serious complications of diabetes.

4. Another major factor of the Stem Cell Therapy contributing for the humanity is that it is applicable to both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

#### CONS:

1. This therapy is still in experimental stage and not available as a routine treatment.

2. It is highly expensive with another limitation that very insurance companies are covering it completely and even it is being brought under medical coverage but that too with little insurance coverage.

3. This therapy also has the risk of rejection, relapse or tumor growth in the body.

4. It would also has to overcome the ethical and legal restrictions in some regions of the world.

Several biotechnology companies and research institutions are working on making stem cell therapy safer, cheaper and more effective. Scientists are experimenting with gene editing (such as CRISPR) to make stem cells invisible to the immune system, which

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Several biotechnology companies and research institutions are working on making stem cell therapy safer, cheaper and more effective. Scientists are experimenting with gene editing (such as CRISPR) to make stem cells invisible to the immune system, which could remove the need for lifelong anti-rejection drugs. Keeping in view the circumstances it is estimated that in the next 10–15 years stem cell therapy could move from clinical trials to mainstream diabetes care and become the premier treatment for managing diabetes.

could remove the need for lifelong anti-rejection drugs. Keeping in view the circumstances it is estimated that in the next 10–15 years stem cell therapy could move from clinical trials to mainstream diabetes care and become the premier treatment for managing diabetes.

Stem cell therapy have the potential to become the most exciting medical discovery for diabetes treatment. While it is yet in developing stage but still it offers a golden ray of hope for the diabetes patients. It is also promising that millions of patients would live free from insulin injections but under constant medical monitoring. Till the time all such dreams bore fruits one should aim for strict lifestyle changes, regular medical care and current treatments for managing diabetes.

The author is the Faculty in Science Department Sri Amritsar Sahib Pubjab

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# Rana lays foundation stones for Flood Protection Works, Water Supply Scheme in Uri

Holds Public interaction at Boniyar and Uri

HT News Desk / DIPR

**URI, AUG 25:** In a major push to flood mitigation and infrastructure development in North Kashmir's Uri region, the Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology, Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today laid the foundation stones for Erosion and Flood Protection Works at Boniyar and a comprehensive Water Supply Scheme (WSS) under AMRUT 2.0 in Uri town.

The Erosion and Flood Protection project, with an outlay of 18.57 crore, is being implemented under the Comprehensive Flood Management Programme (CFMP).

The initiative aims to safeguard vulnerable stretches of the River Jhelum from RD 180 km to 225 km, where the riverbanks are most prone to erosion and flooding.

The project includes the construction of RCC retaining walls and crate protection works, and is expected to be completed within eight months, benefiting dozens of villages by protecting lives, property, and agricultural land.

Speaking at the foundation laying ceremony of Erosion and Flood Protection works, Minister Rana stated, "these projects re-



flect Omar Abdullah government's commitment to proactive flood management and environmental protection. They not only address immediate threats but also enhance the long-term resilience and ecological stability of the region."

Laying the foundation of the WSS Uri project, the Minister described it as a transformative step towards achieving 100% potable water coverage in Uri town.

The scheme, costing 6.71 crore, includes the construction of a 0.55 MGD Rapid Sand Filtration Plant (RSFP) at Uri, a 0.25 MGD RSFP at Lagama, a new water reservoir, and augmentation of the existing distribution network.

The system is designed to provide a reliable supply of 135 litres per capita per day, meeting both current and future needs.

He added that the projects will significantly improve public health,

infrastructure and service delivery, especially in remote and underserved areas.

The events were attended by MLA Uri, Dr. Sajad Shafi, Chief Engineer PHE Kashmir, Er. Taj Choudhary, along with senior officials from the Jal Shakti Department.

Later, the Minister held public interaction programmes at Peernia Playground in Boniyar and Officers' Club Uri, where he met

with a large number of residents and representatives from various villages and hamlets.

During the interactive sessions, locals raised pressing issues such as damaged road infrastructure, water supply challenges and the need for improved educational facilities.

The Minister gave a patient and sympathetic hearing, assuring the public that their concerns will be addressed on priority.

"The Omar Abdullah-led government is deeply committed to responsive and accountable governance. Development must reach every doorstep, and grievances must be resolved swiftly," he said.

He further emphasized the importance of timely implementation of projects under flagship programs and centrally sponsored schemes, urging officers to conduct regular field visits and reviews, especially in far-flung areas, to monitor the effectiveness of public welfare services.

Rana concluded by reiterating the government's resolve to bridge development gaps in remote regions and improve the quality of life for all residents through sustained infrastructure investments and public service reforms.

## 7-Day Training Programme on Scientific Beekeeping Concludes at Kisan Kendra Jammu

HT News Desk / DIPR

**JAMMU, AUG 25:** The Department of Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Jammu, under its Apiculture Development Scheme, successfully concluded a Seven-Day Divisional Level Training Programme on Scientific Beekeeping integrated with the Oil Seed Mission (NMEO-OS). The training, which commenced on August 18, 2025, was held under the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) and aimed at empowering farmers with modern apiculture techniques to boost income and enhance pollination efficiency.

The valedictory session, held today at Kisan Kendra, Talab Tillo, was presided over by Director Agriculture Jammu, Anil Gupta as Chief Guest. The event was attended by senior officers including Joint Director Inputs, Dr. Ashwani Kumar; Assistant Entomologist, Rajesh Verma; Agriculture Economist, Tilak Raj Sharma; Agronomist (VIS) Vikas Padha; Agriculture Information Officer (FTC) Guldev Raj; and District Agriculture Officer, Neeraj Rajwal.

A group of 25 prospective beekeepers from Oil Seed Cluster Bhalwal successfully completed the training, which combined classroom lectures, field demonstrations, and exposure visits.

Comprehensive Training Modules  
Scientists from SKUAST-Jammu and departmental experts covered critical aspects of scientific beekeeping, including:

- Apiary Management – handling bee colonies, seasonal management, pest and disease control.
- Pollination Services – significance of bees in enhancing oilseed and horticultural crop productivity.
- Value Addition – processing, testing, and marketing of honey and allied products like wax, propolis, and royal jelly.
- Entrepreneurship Opportunities – business models for honey-based enterprises and role of FPOs.

The participants also visited the Apiculture Demonstration-cum-Training Centre, Chimney Chak, Jammu, where they received hands-on training in hive operations and colony management. Additionally, a field visit to the Honey Processing and Testing Laboratory at SKUAST-J familiarized them with quality control, value addition, and certification standards for honey and bee products.

Empowering Farmers through Beekeeping  
Addressing the gathering, Director Agriculture Anil Gupta highlighted the vast potential of apiculture in enhancing farmers' income, crop diversification, and sustainable agriculture. He urged farmers to adopt scientific techniques and leverage departmental schemes that support modern beekeeping as a profitable allied enterprise.

Joint Director Inputs, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, stressed that apiculture not only generates income but also plays a vital role in pollination management, food security, and ecological balance. He motivated farmers to scale up beekeeping practices with the help of institutional support, training, and market linkages.

Recognition & Support to Farmers  
At the conclusion of the programme, the department distributed Certificates of Participation, Beekeeping Tool Kits, and Bee Flora Saplings among the trainees. These saplings will help farmers develop local nectar sources, ensuring the sustainability of their beekeeping ventures.

Future Roadmap  
Officials shared that such training programmes would be regularly organized across Jammu Division to promote apiculture as a commercially viable, technology-driven, and environmentally sustainable activity. Farmers were also encouraged to form clusters and cooperatives to collectively market honey and related products, thereby enhancing competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

## DC Rajouri Reviews Phase-II Data of 11th Agricultural Census

HT News Desk / DIPR

**RAJOURI, AUG 25:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today chaired a comprehensive meeting in the Conference Hall of the DC Office to review and finalize the Phase-II data of the 11th Agricultural Census and to assess the district's disaster preparedness and damage reports from various tehsils.

Focus on Accuracy of Agricultural Census  
During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner underlined the critical importance of accuracy in Girdawari entries, directing the Agriculture Department to re-verify and cross-check all data submitted by revenue officials. He emphasized that credible agricultural data forms the foundation for policy formulation, welfare scheme implementation, and resource allocation aimed at strengthening the farming community.

To ensure transparency and accountability, joint inspections by officials from the Agriculture and Revenue Departments were ordered. Tehsildars have been asked to submit comprehensive, error-free reports for their respective jurisdictions without delay.

Action Against Negligence  
Taking a tough stance on negligence, the DC ordered disciplinary action against officials responsible for wrong entries during Phase-I of the Agricultural Census. Remarks will be recorded in their service books to ensure accountability and prevent recurrence of such lapses in future exercises.

"The agricultural census is not a routine formality—it is a strategic tool that helps us plan farmer-centric schemes, identify gaps, and strengthen agricultural productivity," DC Sharma asserted.

Review of Disaster Preparedness  
In addition to the census review, the meeting also focused on disaster preparedness in the district. The DC examined damage reports from different tehsils and directed line departments to remain on high alert with updated contingency plans, relief measures, and resource mobilization strategies.

He stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination in mitigating the impact of natural calamities and directed officials to identify vulnerable areas, maintain buffer stocks of essential supplies, and ensure quick response mechanisms to safeguard lives and livelihoods.

Officials Present  
The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Mohd Jahangir Khan; District Statistics and Evaluation Officer (DSEO), Sandeep Sharma; Chief Agriculture Officer; and all Tehsildars of the district.

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S/O: LATE AB AHAD NAJAR  
R/O SHEIKHPORA KREE**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:

## DC Reviews Implementation, Progress in Rural and Urban Areas of Kathua

HT News Desk / DIPR

**KATHUA, AUG 25:** In line with the Government's vision of "Housing for All", Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the status of implementation and progress under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)—Gramin and PMAY-Urban in the district.

The meeting, held at the DC Office Complex, was attended by ADDC Surinder Mohan Sharma; ACD Akhil Sadotra; CEO Municipal Council Amit Sharma; Executive Officers of Urban Local Bodies; BDOs; and representatives from the Rural Development Department and Housing for All Mission.

Taking a sector-wise and block-wise review, the DC sought details of sanctioned, completed, and pending housing units under both the rural and urban components of PMAY. He emphasized the need to accelerate construction work and ensure the timely disbursement of financial assistance to all eligible beneficiaries so that families can move into their own homes without unnecessary delays.

Highlighting the flagship goal of PMAY, Rajesh Sharma directed officers to intensify the process of identification, verification, and approval of



beneficiaries, ensuring that no deserving family is left out of the scheme's ambit. He underscored the importance of transparency and accountability in beneficiary selection.

The DC placed particular focus on achieving 100% Aadhaar seeding of all beneficiaries within the next two months, stating that this will help eliminate duplication, plug leakages, and ensure that only genuine households avail benefits under the centrally sponsored housing scheme.

He further directed the Rural Development Department and Urban Local Bodies to resolve bottlenecks at

the earliest, especially in cases where construction has been stalled due to land disputes, delays in fund transfer, or lack of beneficiary awareness. The officers were asked to intensify field visits, door-to-door verification, and awareness campaigns so that the benefits of PMAY reach the grassroots effectively.

The DC also reviewed the physical and financial progress made under PMAY, directing officials to ensure that all pending housing units are completed within stipulated timelines. He assured that the district administration will extend full support to executing agencies by facilitating inter-departmental coordination, timely fund flow, and monitoring mechanisms.

Rajesh Sharma urged officers to adopt a mission mode approach to achieve saturation under PMAY in Kathua, thereby fulfilling the dream of every family having a pucca house with basic amenities.

The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to fast-track the implementation process and ensure that Kathua emerges as one of the leading districts in achieving the ambitious target of "Housing for All by 2025."

## DDC Doda Reviews Progress of HADP, KKG Projects

HT News Desk / DIPR

**DODA, AUG 25:** District Development Commissioner (DDC) Doda, Harvinder Singh, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the DC Office Complex to assess the progress of projects under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the Kisan Khidmat Ghar (KKG) initiative. The meeting also took stock of the Action Taken Report (ATR) on decisions made during the previous review.

Sector-Wise Assessment of Projects

The DDC conducted a detailed sector-wise review of activities being implemented by agriculture and allied departments, including horticulture, animal husbandry, sheep husbandry, and fisheries. Officers were directed to ensure seamless coordination and timely convergence of departmental efforts to maximize benefits for the farming community.

He reiterated that both HADP and KKG are transformational initiatives aimed at reshaping rural livelihoods by promoting modern technology adoption,



scientific farming practices, value addition, and market-driven linkages.

Focus on HADP Implementation  
Emphasizing the importance of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme, the DDC highlighted that the scheme provides a comprehensive framework for sustainable agricultural growth. He directed officials to focus on:

- Technology Transfer:

Ensuring farmers are equipped with modern tools, machinery, and scientific know-how.

- Capacity Building: Organizing training programmes, workshops, and exposure visits to familiarize farmers with advanced practices.
- Market Assurance: Strengthening market linkages, e-marketing platforms, and co-operative models to guarantee farmers better returns.

- Resource Optimization: Promoting water-use efficiency, organic practices, and diversification into high-value crops.

The DDC urged officials to prioritize flagship interventions under HADP, particularly in horticulture expansion, integrated dairy and sheep units, and promotion of niche crops suited to Doda's agro-climatic conditions.

Strengthening Kisan Khidmat Ghars

Reviewing the functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), the DDC underscored their role as single-window service centres enabling farmers to access government schemes, subsidies, advisory services, and grievance redressal mechanisms.

"These centres must become true bridges between administration and farmers. Every farmer in Doda should feel confident that their queries, applications, and grievances will be addressed effectively at their nearest KKG," the DDC said.

He further directed concerned officers to ensure that KKGs are fully equipped with ICT facilities, updated scheme brochures, and

trained staff, making them hubs of information and facilitation for rural farmers.

Accountability and Monitoring

The DDC instructed all officers to fix weekly targets, maintain progress registers, and submit periodic reports. He warned against delays in execution and stressed that field-level officers must maintain regular contact with farmer groups, cooperatives, and Panchayati Raj Institutions to ensure schemes reach beneficiaries transparently.

Discussions on Convergence and Future Roadmap

The meeting also explored opportunities for convergence of HADP with other flagship programmes, such as PM-Kisan, National Beekeeping and Honey Mission, and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, to maximize resource utilization and avoid duplication of efforts.

Looking ahead, the DDC called for preparation of a district-level roadmap that integrates HADP outcomes with broader agricultural development, employment generation, and rural economy strengthening goals.

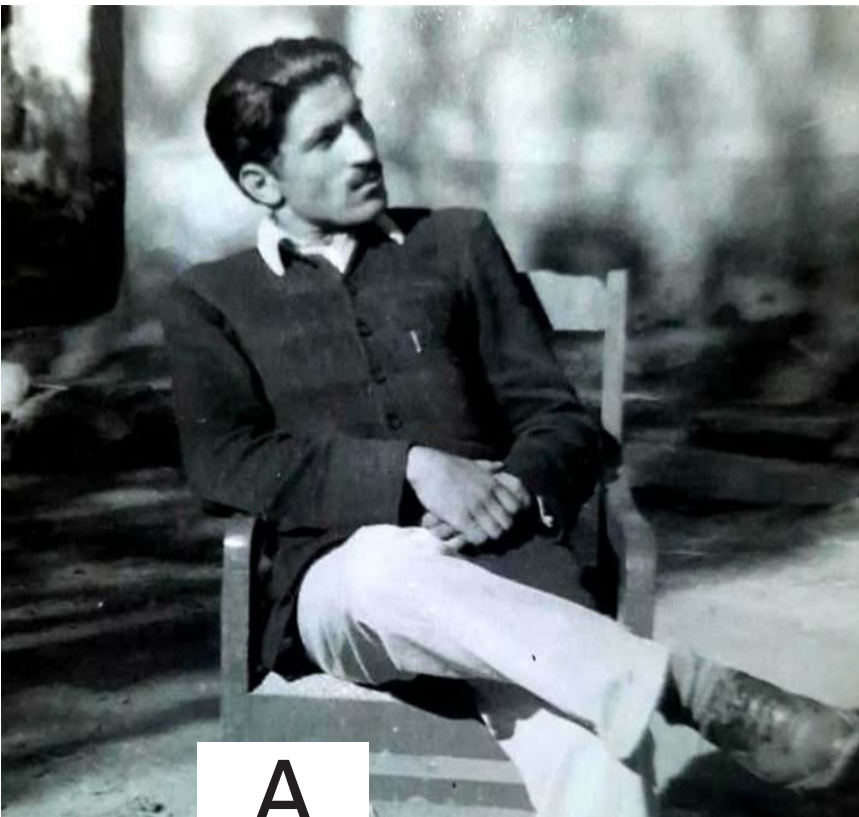


# Tribute to NISHAT ANSARI

(1928-2000)

## 24<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary

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## A Cherismatic Personality

By: Sheikh Gh.Mohammad

Nishat Ansari was a dynamic personality of an exceptional talent who worked through out his life for the promotion and propagation of Kashmiri Language, Literature and culture. Nishat Ansari

has a tall stature among the scholars of Jammu and Kashmir and is rare among the rarest Kashmiri Language teachers who worked through out his life with vision and mission. Nishat Ansari has authored

dozens of books besides authoring articles, talks and features that have been published, broadcasted and telecasted from time to time. Nishat Ansari has at his back five famous poetic collections and his famous poetic collection Gulnaar stands awarded by Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and languages. Nishat Ansari has authored a famous monograph on Prof. Mohi-ud-din. Hajini. Nishat Ansari translated Shruks of Shaikh-ul-Aalam(RA) in to Urdu and this work was published by JKAACL under the title "Salsabeel". Nishat Ansari translated few famous books of Dr. Zakir Hussain (Ex. President of India) into Kashmiri language and this great translation work was awarded by Sahitya Akademi New Delhi. Nishat Ansari remained affiliated through out his life with National Institutions like All India Radio, Doordarshan Kander, Sahitya Akademi, JKAACL, JKBOSE and contributed a lot to these institution out of his Adbi capabilities. Nishat Ansari contributed his best to Adbi organisations. He was founder member of Adbi organisation Daira-Adab-Delina and Adbi Markaz Kamraz - a literary umbrella organisation having its deep roots through out J&K. He served as Vice president and General Secretary of AMK and is known best office record keeper of this great Adbi organisation. Adbi journey of Nishat Ansari is an inspiration for all Adab lovers Nishat Ansari was born on 23th of December 1928 at Delina Baramulla. Nishat was his pen name and his name as per school records is Ghulam Mustafa Ansari. Nishat Ansari passed Matric Examination in 1969 from JKBOSE . Nishat Ansari started his government service career in the department of Co-Operatives J&K but later on resigned from this department and joined School Education Department as per his inner choice. He served in School Education Department for long twenty three years with dedication, commitment, sincerity

and honesty. On merit basis Nishat Ansari was awarded The Best Teacher

Award by School Education Department. Bottom Line Nishat sahab was a well rounded Individual-a multifaceted personality, a poet of repute, a writer, researcher, translator, critic, teacher, educationist, language and culture activist and above all a good human being. Nishat passed away on 25th of August 2000 at his Delina residence Baramulla. May! his soul rest in Jana-tul- Firdous (Ameen).



## Remembering Nishat Ansari

(Ghulam Mustafa Ansari)

**Luminous Voice of Kashmir,  
Poet and Writer Par Excellence,  
Nishat Ansari Belonged to The  
Rare Breed of Writers Who  
Always Wrote Indigenously  
and Not For Mere Applause...**

**Writes Abu Hasnain**

Today we remember the renowned poet, Scholar and a writer par excellence. The world of Kashmiri literature lost a luminous voice with the passing of renowned poet Nishaat Ansari. Known for his deeply evocative verses and his ability to weave emotions into words, Ansari's departure marks the end of an era in contemporary Kashmiri poetry.

Born with an innate sensitivity towards language and expression, Nishaat Ansari belonged to that rare breed of poets who wrote not for applause, but for truth. His works reflected the beauty and melancholy of Kashmir, capturing in verse the fragrance of the chinar, the silence of snowy mountains, and the timeless flow of the Jhelum. He wrote of love and longing, of despair and resilience, always touching the heart with simplicity and depth.

Throughout his poetic journey, Ansari remained a bridge between tradition and modern expression. His poems carried the rhythm of Kashmiri culture, yet spoke in universal tones of humanity, hope, and



endurance. Readers and admirers found in his words both solace and strength, making his verses eternal companions in moments of reflection.

With his passing, Kashmir has lost not only a poet but also a custodian of its collective emotions. His legacy, however, will continue to live on in libraries, in classrooms, and in the hearts of those who turn to poetry for meaning.

As Kashmir mourns this irreparable loss, it also celebrates a life that gave voice to its deepest feelings. Nishaat Ansari may have left the world, but his poetry remains immortal-a testament to the enduring power of words.



# Ganguly Appointed Pretoria Capitals Head Coach In SA20

■ ESPNcricinfo

**BENGALURU:** Sourav Ganguly is going to be the new head coach of Pretoria Capitals for the fourth season of SA20, starting on December 26. He replaces Jonathan Trott in the role, having already acted as the director of cricket for JSW Sports - the parent company of Pretoria Capitals - since last year.

Pretoria Capitals have had an uneven time in the tournament so far: they finished the first season at the top of the table in the group stage, before losing to Sunrisers Eastern Cape in the final. In the two seasons since then - in 2023-24 and 2024-25 - they have faced more middling results, finishing in fifth position both times and failing to qualify for the playoffs.

Pretoria Capitals will be hoping that their luck turns around with Ganguly's appointment. This will be the former India captain's first time as a head coach. For four years, between 2015 and 2019, he was the president of the Cricket Association of Bengal. He joined Delhi Capitals as a mentor for the 2019 sea-

In the time since then, his appointment as JSW's director of cricket last year moved him closer to a coaching role at the helm of one of their franchises, which also include Delhi Capitals in co-ownership with GMR in the IPL and WPL

son, but left the franchise soon after to become the president of the BCCI.

In the time since then, his appointment as JSW's director of cricket last year moved him closer to a coaching role at the helm of one of their franchises, which also include Delhi Capitals in co-ownership with GMR in the IPL and WPL.

His first point of focus will be the player auction on September 9, where Capitals will be looking to refresh their squad to complement the appointment of a new coach.



## Australian quick Lance Morris out for 12 months with back injury

■ United News of India

**MACKAY:** Fast bowler Lance Morris was Sunday ruled out for 12 months due to back surgery, denying him the chance to be part of Australia's squad for the Ashes series later this year.

The 27-year-old, who has been in and around the Australian set-up for several years, was originally named to feature in the current one-day series against South Africa. But he pulled out at the last minute after experiencing lower back pain in the lead up, with further investigation revealing a lumbar bone stress injury.

Morris said he had decided to have surgery.

"I feel this is the most



logical way to realise my full potential and return to my very best cricket for the Perth Scorchers, Western Australia and Australia long into the future," he said in a statement.

"I also take great confidence in others who have undergone similar procedures and returned to their best. I plan to work hard through my recovery and return when the time is right."

Cricket Australia said he would likely be sidelined for 12 months, ending his hopes of an Ashes debut. Morris was seen as a potential fifth pace option for the campaign against England as back-up to Pat Cummins, Mitchell Marsh, Josh Hazlewood and Scott Boland.

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