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After Decades of Neglect, Justice Finally Being Delivered to The Victims: LG Manoj Sinha

Handed Over Appointment Letters to 39 Next of Kin (NoKs) of Terror Victims

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 13: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Saturday handed over appointment letters to 39 Next of Kin (NoKs) of terror victims from the Kashmir Division at Lok Bhavan, Srinagar, marking a significant step towards justice, rehabilitation and dignity for families devastated by terrorism.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said the administration is committed to correcting historical wrongs suf-

fered by terror victim families. "For these families, the long wait for justice has ended. With concrete steps for rehabilitation, we have restored their dignity and renewed their faith in the system," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that terrorism not only claimed innocent lives but destroyed entire households, forcing families into years of silence, stigma and economic hardship. "Behind every brutal terror killing is a home that never recovered, children who

grew up without parents, and families left to struggle alone," he added.

Several families, whose pleas had remained unheard for decades, finally received government jobs. Among them were Pakeeza Riyaz of Anantnag, whose father Riyaz Ahmed Mir was killed in 1999, and Shaista of Hyderpora, Srinagar, whose father Abdul Rashid Ganai was murdered in 2000. Ishtiyak Ahmad, son of BSF braveheart Altaf Hussain who was martyred

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LG Sinha Lauds Medical Fraternity at SKIMS Valedictory, Unveils Five-Point Vision for Healthcare Transformation

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 13: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Saturday paid rich tributes to doctors, nurses and employees of the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), praising their unwavering dedication, compassion and personal sacrifice in serving humanity and strengthening the nation's healthcare system.

Addressing the Valedictory Ceremony of the SKIMS Annual Festival Week in Srinagar, the Lieutenant Governor said Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed unprecedented reforms and expansion in healthcare and medical education over the past five years. The event also marked the commencement of the 29th Post-Graduate Research

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India Remembers Parliament Attack Martyrs ; Top Leadership Pays Solemn Tribute on 24th Anniversary

HT NEWS DESK / UNI

NEW DELHI, DEC 13: The nation on Saturday paid homage to the brave personnel who laid down their lives while thwarting the terrorist attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001, as the 24th anniversary of the assault was observed with solemn dignity at Samvidhan Sadan.

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan, also the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, led parliamentarians in offering floral tributes to the martyrs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first to pay his respects at the commemorative ceremony held outside the old Parliament building.

CISF personnel presented a ceremonial "samman guard," followed by a moment of silence in memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Until 2023, the CRPF had traditionally rendered the 'salami shastra' during the annual observance.

Senior Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were present at the ceremony, reflecting a collective remembrance that transcended party lines. Union ministers Kiren Rijiju, Jitendra Singh and Arjun Ram Meghwal also offered floral tributes.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla did not attend the event as he was in Latur to participate in the funeral of former Lok Sabha Speaker and ex-Union minister Shivraj Patil.

On December 13, 2001, five heavily armed terrorists attempted to breach the Parliament

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"Adapt or Fade Away": CM Omar Abdullah Warns as Gulmarg Hosts Curtain Raiser of 17th Adventure Tourism Convention

HT NEWS NETWORK

GULMARG, DEC 13: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday unveiled the curtain raiser of the 17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) at the Gulmarg Convention Centre, formally setting the tone for the national-level event to be held in Srinagar from December 17 to 20, 2025. He said the convention would be crucial in repositioning Jammu and Kashmir as a premier global destination for adventure tourism.

Addressing a gathering of tourism stakeholders, the Chief Minister thanked ATOAI for choosing Srinagar as the host city, calling it a strong endorsement of Jammu and Kashmir's tourism potential. He observed that



discussions on adventure tourism in India remain incomplete without Jammu and Kashmir, a region that historically led the country in mountaineering, trekking, white-water

rafting and skiing.

Recalling Gulmarg's pioneering role in skiing, Omar Abdullah said the sport was practised here

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CM Omar Launches Gulmarg Projects

HT NEWS NETWORK

GULMARG, DEC 13: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today dedicated a series of major tourism infrastructure projects worth over ₹17 crore to the public at Gulmarg and its adjoining areas, marking a significant milestone in strengthening Jammu and Kashmir's position as a premier global winter tourism destination.

The Chief Minister inaugurated Asia's longest ski drag lift, measuring 726 metres, at Kongdoori at a cost of ₹3.65 crore. He also inaugurated conservation works of a water body at

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Cold Wave Grips Kashmir as Nights Turn Freezing

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 13: A severe cold wave has tightened its grip across Kashmir, with night temperatures plunging well below the freezing point, intensifying winter hardships and disrupting daily life in several parts of the Valley.

According to the Meteorological Department, Srinagar

recorded sub-zero minimum temperatures, while other districts, particularly in south Kashmir, experienced sharper drops during the night. Officials said clear skies and calm weather conditions have contributed to rapid heat loss, leading to freezing nights and widespread frost in the morning hours.

The weather department

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Cold, Cloudy Weather Persists in Ladakh

HT NEWS NETWORK

LADAKH, DEC 13: Cold and cloudy weather conditions continue to prevail across Ladakh, with fresh snowfall reported over several higher reaches, including key mountain passes, officials said on Saturday.

According to the latest weather update, 2 to 3 inches

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Forces Adapting to Changing Environment: CDS Chauhan

HT NEWS DESK

HYDERABAD, DEC 13: Asserting that war and warfare is at the cusp of a major revolution, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Saturday said the Indian Defence forces are committed to adapting to changing environment and imbibing reforms to remain ready and relevant.

Addressing the Combined

Graduation Parade (CGP) of 216 Course held at the Air Force Academy at Dundigal near here, General Chauhan said India's strength rests on robust institutions, democratic stability, and unwavering professionalism of our Armed Forces.

He said the intensity of operations may have ebbed, but Operation Sindoor continues. "You (new officers) also join the Air Force at a moment when

a new normal has firmly taken shape. An era defined by a high degree of operational preparedness, 24-7, 365 days. The intensity of operations may have ebbed, but Operation Sindoor continues," he said.

He further said the newly trained officers are entering the Indian Air Force during a phase of deep transformation of the Indian Armed Forces.

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8 Illegal Structures Of Drug Peddlers Demolished In Jammu; 1 Held In Kathua

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 13: Eight illegal structures, including houses belonging to alleged drug peddlers, were demolished in a major drive here, while a person was arrested along with 6.64 grams of heroin in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district on Saturday, officials said.

In a major action against drug peddlers and land grabbers, the officials said dis-

trict administration Jammu carried out a demolition drive at village Narwal Bala in Bahu Tehsil on the directions of district magistrate Jammu, Rakesh Minhas, in coordination with Senior Superintendent of Police, Jammu, Joginder Singh.

The district administration demolished eight illegal structures of drug peddlers involved in multiple cases under NDPS Act, the officials said, adding

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EOW Kashmir files chargesheet against four in Rs 53 lakh land fraud case

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 13: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Crime Branch, Kashmir, has filed a chargesheet before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, against four persons in connection with an alleged land-sale

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Night Timber Smuggling Ravages Mawer Forest

HT NEWS NETWORK

HANDWARA, DEC 13: Fresh instances of illegal timber smuggling have surfaced from the Mawer Forest Range in north Kashmir's Handwara town, where deodar trees were allegedly cut down during night hours

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Chief Secretary Visits Mini-Township Jagti

Sanction, Allotment Orders Distributed to Migrant Beneficiaries

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 13: Chief Secretary Atal Duloo today visited the mini-township Jagti Nagrota to inspect development works besides inaugurating vital projects.

The Chief Secretary inspected the Sub District Hospital and Government Higher Secondary School, Jagti, the ongoing work on multi purpose community hall being constructed with an estimated cost of Rs 6.5 crore and other development works. He also inaugurated five bore wells and visited the NFSA integration centre.

Later, the Chief Secretary distributed



sanction orders under various Social Security Schemes like Old Age Pension, Widow

Pension and Disability Pension among

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Naxalism benefits nobody, only peace can pave way for development: Amit Shah

HT NEWS NETWORK

RAIPUR, DEC 13: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Naxalism does not benefit anyone – neither those who take up arms nor the security personnel, and asserted that only peace can pave the way for development.

Reiterating the Narendra Modi government's resolve to end Naxalism by March 31, 2026, he said the Centre has decided to transform Chhattisgarh's Bastar division, comprising seven districts, the most developed tribal region in the country in the next five years.

Addressing the closing ceremony of Bastar Olympic 2025 sport event at Indira Priyadarshi-

ni Stadium in Jagdalpur, the headquarter of state's Bastar district, Shah said Naxalism was like a "poisonous snake" that stalled the development in the region, and a "new chapter of development" will begin once the menace ends.

He appealed to those who are still associated with outlawed CPI (Maoists) to lay down arms and join the mainstream of society.

The government has decided to end "red terror" across the country before March 31, 2026, and the goal is now within reach, the Union minister said.

"I came here to participate in Bastar Olympic 2024, again in 2025, and I promise I will come

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CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

After Decades.....

nearly 19 years ago, also secured a government appointment.

Justice was also delivered to the family of Dilawar Ganie and his son Fayaz Ganie of Qazigund, brutally killed in 2000, leaving behind a traumatised family that has lived in fear and grief for 25 years. The family of Abdul Aziz Dar of Srinagar, killed by terrorists three decades ago, also saw closure after years of struggle.

The Lieutenant Governor said that for a long time, real victims of terrorism were ignored, while elements linked to the terror ecosystem benefited from the system. "On one hand, OGWs were given government jobs, while NoKs of terror victims were left to fend for themselves. This injustice will not be allowed to continue," he asserted.

Highlighting a change after the abrogation of Article 370, LG Sinha said terror victim families are now speaking up without fear. "For generations, the system failed them. Today, we are empowering victims' voices and ensuring they receive the rights and dignity they deserve. We are also committed to swift and fair justice against perpetrators," he said.

Calling for collective resolve, the Lieutenant Governor said the fight against terrorism is a shared responsibility. "We must confront this menace with determination and patience and foil the designs of our adversaries," he said.

Reiterating the government's firm stance, LG Sinha said, "Our policy on terrorism is unequivocal – zero tolerance in all its forms. Every resource will be used to make Jammu and Kashmir terror-free. Those providing shelter or support to terrorists will pay a heavy price."

On the occasion, appointment letters were also handed over to beneficiaries under Compassionate Appointment Rules SRO-43 and the Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme (RAS). The administration has provided self-employment opportunities to 156 family members of terror victims under schemes including Mission Yuva, HADP and PMEGP. Additionally, encroachments have been removed from properties belonging to 17 victim families, while 36 families have been identified for house reconstruction, with more to be included.

Senior officials, representatives of social organisations and family members of terror victims were present at the event.

LG Sinha Lauds.....

Presentation Programme (PGRP-2025) and felicitation of PGRP awardees, doctors, nursing staff and employees of SKIMS.

"Accessible and affordable quality healthcare has turned into a reality under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji," LG Sinha said, adding that transformative changes have reshaped J&K's medical education and public health landscape since 2019.

Highlighting major achievements, the Lieutenant Governor noted that it took nearly seven decades to create 500 MBBS seats in the region, whereas 800 additional MBBS seats were created within just four years. "Issues such as lack of government medical colleges and unaffordable private institutions are now a thing of the past. Through bold and systemic reforms between 2020 and 2024, quality medical education has become more accessible," he said.

Reiterating his commitment to equitable healthcare, LG Sinha stressed that special focus is being laid on underprivileged sections and residents of far-flung areas. Guided by the vision of 'Health for All', he called upon the healthcare fraternity to work towards an inclusive, resilient and people-centric healthcare system.

"We must enrich healthcare through knowledge, innovation and research. A multidisciplinary approach that addresses physical, mental and social well-being, beyond just treating illness, is the need of the hour," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also lauded the significant transformation of SKIMS over the last four to five years, citing execution of over 1,100 long-pending promotions, clearance of more than 1,800 DPC cases, revival and referral of around 1,300 paramedical and ministerial posts, including 120 faculty positions, and referral of additional gazetted and non-gazetted posts to recruiting agencies. He said SKIMS is planning to establish future Centres of Excellence in transplant services, emergency and trauma care, neurosciences, cardiac sciences, renal medicine, pulmonary diseases, and endocrine and metabolic disorders.

On the occasion, LG Sinha inaugurated several key projects at SKIMS, including an Emergency S.M.A.R.T. Lab, ICU-VII, a heavy-duty lift and a new firefighting system. He also laid foundation stones for major upcoming facilities such as a Centre for One Health, a 3 MLD sewage treatment plant, multi-level car parking, Attendant Inn Phase-II and a shopping complex for hostels. New digital initiatives were also launched.

Emphasising technology-driven reforms, the Lieutenant Governor outlined five goals for healthcare transformation: data-driven care for personalized treatment, robust auditing of patient outcomes, 100 per cent digital health records, decentralized healthcare enabling timely treatment in remote areas, and collaborative efforts to promote preventive health and wellness.

The valedictory ceremony was attended by Prof. Mohd Ashraf Ganie, Director SKIMS; Prof. Vivek Lal, Director PGIMER Chandigarh; Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, Vice Chancellor Central University of Kashmir; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg; IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdi; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo, along

with senior officials, medical professionals, faculty, students and staff of SKIMS.

"Adapt or Fade.....

long before it gained popularity elsewhere in India. However, he noted that climatic changes and evolving circumstances have caused the region to lag behind other destinations now dominating national adventure tourism conversations.

Drawing attention to the visible effects of climate change, the Chief Minister expressed concern over declining snowfall in recent years. He said that while Gulmarg earlier witnessed heavy snowfall by mid-December, recent winters have seen minimal snow, posing a serious challenge to winter tourism. Warning against inaction, he remarked that without timely adaptation, skiing in Gulmarg could turn into a thing of the past.

Pitching a technology-driven revival, he advocated the introduction of artificial snow-making systems, as used in several European ski destinations. He suggested storing rainwater and deploying snow machines during sub-zero temperatures, particularly on slopes equipped with newly installed drag lifts. He also proposed installing floodlights on select slopes, on the model of Japan, to extend skiing into evening hours and make better use of short winter days.

These measures, he said, would enhance visitor experience while providing sustained livelihoods to ski guides, instructors, equipment rental operators and others dependent on winter tourism. He stressed that infrastructure investments alone would not deliver results unless backed by assured snow cover and longer operational hours.

The Chief Minister also suggested exploring the feasibility of summer skiing on higher-altitude slopes where snow persists, urging the Tourism Department to optimise existing infrastructure with minimal modifications.

Highlighting the significance of the ATOAI convention, Omar Abdullah said it offers a valuable opportunity to exchange best practices from across the country while showcasing Jammu and Kashmir's vast but under-utilised adventure tourism potential. With the right mix of local expertise and national collaboration, he expressed confidence that Jammu and Kashmir could emerge as India's leading adventure tourism hub.

He reiterated that the true success of tourism lies not just in attracting visitors, but in ensuring they return with positive and lasting experiences. Reaffirming the government's commitment, the Chief Minister said infrastructure development and tourism promotion would continue without interruption, assuring stakeholders of full support.

He concluded by expressing hope that the upcoming ATOAI Annual Convention would be successful and mutually beneficial, further strengthening Jammu and Kashmir's standing on the national and global adventure tourism map.

CM Omar.....

Kongdoori, completed at a cost of ₹0.90 crore. At Apharwat, the Chief Minister inaugurated the rotating conference hall, constructed by JKCC at a cost of ₹0.86 crore, adding a unique attraction to Gulmarg's high-altitude tourism infrastructure.

The Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for fencing of the Gulmarg Golf Course, a project worth ₹4.77 crore, aimed at protecting and enhancing one of the region's iconic tourism assets. Through online inaugurations and foundation ceremonies, he also dedicated several important projects, including the office building of the Gulmarg Development Authority at a cost of ₹0.82 crore, reconstruction of Hut No. 2 costing ₹0.64 crore, construction of the Devri path along the Alambal roadside at ₹2.62 crore, and development of a dedicated car parking facility with an estimated cost of ₹2.78 crore.

In addition, the Chief Minister inaugurated the Integrated Skiing Training & Adventure Tourism Centre at Gulmarg and launched integrated ski training courses to strengthen professional winter sports training facilities. These projects have been executed by the Gulmarg Development Authority and the Jammu and Kashmir Cable Car Corporation (JKCC).

Speaking at the occasion, the Chief Minister said Gulmarg remains the crown jewel of Jammu & Kashmir's tourism landscape and that sustained investment in modern, high-quality infrastructure is essential to unlocking its full potential. "These initiatives are not just infrastructure additions but strategic investments that will create year-round tourism opportunities, generate employment for local youth and elevate Gulmarg to international standards," he said.

Congratulating the Department of Tourism and JKCC for the timely completion of these ambitious projects, the Chief Minister appreciated their professionalism and coordinated efforts. He said the newly inaugurated ski drag lift and training facilities would give a major boost to winter sports and professional skiing, while the revolving conference hall at Apharwat would significantly enhance visitor experience. "Our vision is to make Gulmarg a global hub for winter sports while ensuring conservation of its fragile ecology and natural beauty," he added.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Gulmarg Farooq Ahmad Shah, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Minga Sherpa, Director Tourism and Managing Director JKCC Syed Qamar Sajad, senior officers, tourism stakeholders and prominent tourism players from across Kashmir were

present on the occasion.

India Remembers.....

complex. The attack was foiled by the swift and courageous response of personnel from the then Parliament Security Service, CRPF and Delhi Police, ensuring that no terrorist entered the building.

Six Delhi Police personnel, two members of the Parliament Security Service, a gardener and a television cameraman were killed in the line of duty. All five terrorists were neutralised in the forecourt of the Parliament, cementing the day as a powerful reminder of sacrifice, vigilance and the nation's unwavering resolve.

Cold Wave.....

has issued an advisory urging people to take precautions against extreme cold, especially during late night and early morning hours.

Power demand has surged as temperatures dipped, with increased use of heating devices and traditional warming methods such as kangris. However, locals in several areas complained of unscheduled power interruptions during night hours, adding to discomfort during the cold spell.

Markets witnessed thin footfall during morning and late evening hours, reflecting the impact of harsh weather on routine economic activity.

Doctors have advised people to avoid prolonged exposure to cold, wear layered clothing, and ensure adequate indoor heating. Health officials said respiratory infections and cold-related complaints typically rise during such weather conditions.

The Meteorological Department has forecast the continuation of cold and dry weather over the coming days, with the possibility of further drops in minimum temperatures. [KNT]

Cold, Cloudy.....

of snowfall has been recorded over Zojila, Drass, Sankoo Zanskar, Shinkula, Khardongla and other higher altitude areas. The prevailing weather conditions are expected to persist today, with cold and cloudy skies dominating most parts of Ladakh.

The forecast indicates that similar weather conditions are likely to continue during December 14 and 15, with snowfall expected over peaks and high-altitude passes. From December 16 to 19, the weather is expected to remain partly cloudy, offering a brief window of relatively stable conditions.

However, between December 20 and 22, there is a possibility of light to moderate snowfall at several places along the Zojila Kargil Zanskar axis and over higher reaches of the Leh Changthang area. Weather officials said no major snowfall is forecast in the western Himalayan region, including Ladakh, at least until December 20.

Authorities have clarified that there is no weather warning in place at present. However, an advisory has been issued urging travellers to exercise extreme caution while moving over mountain passes, as low temperatures combined with snowfall can make roads slippery and risky. People have also been advised to switch off bukharis and other heating devices before going to bed, as improper use can lead to asphyxiation and pose serious life-threatening risks.

Meanwhile, officials said road conditions and weather updates will continue to be closely monitored, especially along vital passes that connect Ladakh with Kashmir and other regions. [KNT]

EOW Kashmir.....

fraud involving ₹53 lakh, officials said.

The chargesheet, as per statement issued to KNS, has been filed in FIR No. 23/2025 against Tariq Ahmad Hajam, Ghulam Hassan Mir, Mohammad Sultan Mir alias Sulla and Abdul Razaq Mir, all residents of Barthana Qamarwari area of Srinagar, under Sections 420 and 120-B of the Ranbir Penal Code.

According to officials, the case was registered on a complaint alleging that the accused had fraudulently obtained ₹53 lakh from the complainant and his father on the pretext of selling a piece of land.

However, after receiving the money, the accused allegedly sold the same land to other parties and transferred portions of it to their family members.

Investigations revealed that the accused, acting in connivance with each other, entered into a criminal conspiracy to cheat the complainant in a deal involving 2.09 kanals of land at Estate Barthana in Srinagar, officials said, adding that both oral and documentary evidence collected during the probe supported the allegations.

With the filing of the chargesheet, the case is now ready for judicial proceedings, officials said. [KNS].

Forces Adapting.....

Integrated structures, joint operations, and national pursuit of Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence are shaping the future of India's military strength, he said.

"Your journey ahead will be accordingly guided by Jai, the first word of Jai Hind, that's victory. 'J' stands for jointness, fighting as one nation, one force. 'A' stands for Atmanirbhar Bharat, trusted platforms and systems made not just for India but for the world. And finally, 'I' for innovation, daring to think ahead and to be ahead of the curve," he explained.

General Chauhan further said battles in the older domains will always remain contested, often brutal. But in the new domains, they will be smart, swift, and shaped by intellect, innovation, and initiative. The force that masters new

frontiers is more likely to prevail in future conflicts. (AGENCIES)

8 Illegal Structures.....

that despite allowing sufficient time, the peddlers did not mend their ways and were actively involved in illegal sale and purchase of narcotics substances.

The district administration once again cautioned that no illegal structures or encroachment will be tolerated, reiterating that strict legal action will be initiated against those involved in NDPS related offences besides other violators.

In a separate incident, the officials said a drug peddler was arrested after 6.64 grams of heroin was recovered from his possession during vehicle checking in Nagri area of Kathua district.

The accused Parvinder Singh, a resident of Kathua, was travelling on a motorcycle which was also seized, the officials said, adding a case under NDPS Act was registered and further investigation is on. (Agencies)

Night Timber.....

and later set ablaze to erase evidence, triggering outrage among locals and environmental concerns.

Local sources told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that the incident occurred in the Boti Nar Gundkamal Gundchubutra area of Mawer Forest Range-1 under Langate Forest Division. Smugglers reportedly targeted mature deodar trees under the cover of darkness, felling them quietly before attempting to destroy proof of the crime by setting the remaining stumps on fire.

Locals said that the freshly cut deodar stumps with burn marks and smoke indicate a deliberate attempt to conceal illegal activity. Forest dwellers and villagers who noticed the damage expressed shock over the brazenness of timber smugglers and alleged lax enforcement in sensitive forest zones.

Locals said the repeated incidents of forest plunder are threatening the ecological balance of the area and demanded immediate action against those involved. They also called for fixing responsibility within the Forest Department, alleging that such large-scale felling cannot take place without lapses in monitoring.

When contacted for comment, the Divisional Forest Officer, Langate, confirmed the incident, saying a team has been deployed to ascertain the facts.

Locals have appealed to the Forest Department and district administration to conduct a thorough investigation, strengthen night patrolling, and ensure strict action against smugglers and any officials found negligent, to prevent further damage to the region's forest wealth. [KNT]

Chief Secretary.....

about 125 migrant beneficiaries. He also handed over allotment orders to the eligible migrant beneficiaries for 48 government shops and 12 residential quarters.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary also felicitated the meritorious girl students of Government Higher Secondary School, Jagti and distributed digital ration cards among the beneficiaries. Besides, regularization orders were also handed over to some employees of the School Education Department.

Commissioner Secretary, FCS & CA, Saurav Bhagat; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare, Sarmad Hafeez; IGP Jammu, Bhim Sen Tuti; Commissioner, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Dr Arvind Karwani; Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Rakesh Minhas; Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Devyansh Yadav; Director School Education Jammu; Director FCS & CA besides other Heads of Departments and district officers accompanied the Chief Secretary. A sizeable gathering of migrants from Nagrota, Purkhoo and Muthi camps was also present.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of historic moment of extending social sector schemes benefit to the Kashmiri and Jammu Migrants, who were earlier deprived of these benefits since the ration cards were non-digitized and not integrated with the national database. He appealed all the migrants to avail the benefits of various government schemes by getting their ration cards integrated on the national portal.

He directed all the government departments to keep budgetary provisions for operation and maintenance of services pertaining to their department in migrant camps and transit accommodations in Jammu and Kashmir in line with the recent directions issued through the General Administration Department on the subject.

The Chief Secretary directed the Science and Technology Department to install solar lights in the Mini Township Jagti. He directed the Public Works Department to ensure time bound completion of repair and renovation works, with emphasis on maintaining all the quality parameters.

The Chief Secretary asserted that strenuous efforts are being made by the administration to sort out the issues and concerns

of the migrant population. The latest initiatives included maintenance of old and damaged residential quarters, proper sanitation by the Jammu Municipal Corporation and Transit accommodations in the Kashmir Valley. Besides, issues of PM Package employees are also being addressed. He conveyed that under the Mission Youth of J&K government, several young people are given opportunities to become entrepreneurs.

The Chief Secretary urged the migrant youth to avail the benefits of self-employment schemes. He directed the Employment Department to create maximum awareness among the migrant youth about the self-employment and entrepreneurship schemes.

The Chief Secretary directed the Culture Department to draft a proposal for utilizing the upcoming Multi-Purpose Community Hall at Jagti for showcasing rich cultural heritage of Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary further said that religious places of the migrant community are also being renovated in Kashmir.

Earlier, Commissioner, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Dr Arvind Karwani, presented a detailed overview of steps being taken by the Relief Organization. These inter alia included upkeep of infrastructure, major repair and renovation works, yearly maintenance, development of playground, integration of migrant community with Social Security Schemes, digitization of migrant records and outreach initiatives for Ayushman Bharat and other schemes.

Naxalism benefits.....

in 2026 as well. When I arrive for the Bastar Olympic in 2026, Naxalism will have been wiped out from Chhattisgarh and the entire country," he said.

Shah said the seven districts of the Bastar division – Kanker, Kondagaon, Bastar, Sukma, Bijapur, Narayanpur and Dantewada – will be developed into the country's most advanced tribal districts by December 2030.

The BJP governments at the Centre and in the state are committed to ensuring housing, electricity, toilets, tap water, LPG connections, five kg of free foodgrains and free medical treatment up to Rs 5 lakh for every household in these districts, he said.

The Bastar division will be the most developed tribal region in the country, Shah said, adding that every village will be connected by roads, have electricity, banking facilities within a five-km radius and a strong network of primary and community health centres.

"Naxalism acted like a poisonous snake blocking development in this region. With its end, a new chapter of development will begin," he said.

"Naxalism will be eliminated by March 31, 2026, but I want to appeal to those still associated with it to lay down arms and join the mainstream for the welfare of their family and society.

"Naxalism benefits no one – not those who take up weapons, not tribals and not security personnel. Only peace can pave the way for development," he said, calling on misguided youth to take advantage of the rehabilitation policy and lead a dignified life.

Highlighting the changing face of Bastar, Shah said fear has now been replaced by hope, schools bell now ring where gunfire once echoed, and roads, railways and highways are being built where development was once a distant dream.

Slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" have replaced slogans of 'Lal Salaam', marking a major transformation, he added.

"We are all committed to a developed Bastar. In this campaign that has been launched, the Chhattisgarh government and the Centre did not set the goal of merely engaging in encounters with armed cadres and killing them. More than 2,000 Naxalites have surrendered (in the last two years)," he said.

"I want to tell you today that the leaders of tribal communities have made a huge contribution (in the surrender). Their guidance has given courage and strength to the Naxalite youth to lay down weapons, and the state government has also stepped forward. Today, I appeal to all the leaders of the community to work towards bringing those who are still carrying weapons back into the mainstream by explaining things to them," he said.

Referring to the Bastar Olympic, Shah said more than 700 surrendered Naxal youths participated in the sports event as a powerful symbol of choosing unity over division and development over destruction.

He added that officials from the Sports Authority of India are present in the event to identify talent and nurture players from Bastar for future national and international events, including the Commonwealth Games and the 2036 Olympics.

"Bastar is changing, and when the Olympics are held again in 2026, they will be organised in a terror-free Bastar," Shah said.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, state Assembly Speaker Raman Singh, Deputy Chief Ministers Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma and others were present. (Agencies)

SSP Handwara Chairs Crime and Security Review Meeting at DPO Handwara

■ DR. AB QAYOOM

HANDWARA, DEC 13: The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Handwara, Shri Sahil Saran-gal, IPS, on Saturday chaired a comprehensive crime and secu-rity review meeting at the Con-ference Hall of the District Police Office (DPO) Handwara. The meeting was attended by all Gazetted Officers, Station House Officers, and In-charges of Police Posts from across the district. During the meeting, the SSP reviewed the prevailing crime and security situation in the dis-trict, with particular focus on combating narcotics trafficking, drug abuse, and anti-national



activities. He emphasized the need for intensified operations against drug peddlers and direct-ed officers to adopt a zero-tol-erance approach towards those involved in unlawful and anti-

national acts. SSP Handwara also laid stress on effective enforce-ment of traffic regulations, time-ly disposal of pending cases, and enhancement of the overall qual-ity of investigations. He instruct-ed officers to strengthen preven-tive policing measures, ensure proper collection and use of evi-dence, and strictly adhere to legal and procedural norms. Urging the police personnel to maintain pro-fessionalism and accountability, the SSP called for a people-friend-ly approach in policing. He reiter-ated that dedicated and sincere efforts by the police force are essential to ensure peace, safety, and security for the general pub-lic of the district.

JNV Aishmuqam Celebrates Annual Day with Cultural Grandeur

■ FAROOQ RATHER

AISHMUQAM, DEC 13: Jawahar Navodaya Vidy-alaya (JNV), Aishmuqam celebrated its Annual Day on December 09, 2025 with great enthusiasm, cultural richness, and a spirit of holistic development within the school campus. The event stood as a strong reflection of the Vidyalaya's commitment to quality education and the all-round development of its students.

The programme featured a vibrant array of cultural performances, including melodious group songs, energetic dances, meaningful skits, and other creative presentations. Each performance showcased the multi-dimensional talents of the students while beautifully highlighting the rich cultural heritage and values nurtured by the Navo-daya system.

The occasion was graced by the presence of distinguished dignitaries, respected parents, and members of the local community, whose partici-pation added grace and dignity to the celebration. Among the prominent guests were Farooq Ahmad Wani SDPO, and Manzoor Ahmad ZEO Aishmuqam, who keenly observed the programme and appreci-ated the students' performances.

Addressing the gathering, Principal Shri S. Gup-ta highlighted the academic achievements, co-curricular activities, and overall progress of the Vidyalaya during the academic session. He lauded the students for their dedication, discipline, and commendable performance throughout the year, and acknowledged the collective efforts of the teachers and staff in shaping young minds.

The Annual Day function concluded on a joyful, motivating, and memorable note, leaving a lasting impression on the audience and reaffirming JNV Aishmuqam's strong commitment to excellence in education and holistic student development.

Selection Grade Granted to Seven Private Secretaries in J&K

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 13: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has accorded sanction for the grant of Selection Grade (Non-functional) in Level 10A (₹56,600–1,79,800) to seven members of the Jammu and Kashmir Private Secretaries to Heads of Depart-ments (Gazetted) Service.

According to Government Order No. 1893-JK(GAD) of 2025, dated December 12, 2025, the benefit has been approved in favour of Lakshman Kumar Shar-ma, Sheikh Mohammad Latief, Hamid Ahmad Tramboo, Rajesh Kumar, Soma Kumar, Anjali Raina, and Sanjay Kumar, with effect from the dates spec-ified against each officer.

As per the order, Lakshman Kumar Sharma has been granted the Selection Grade with effect from April 23, 2024, while Sheikh Mohammad Latief has been accorded the grade from October 11, 2024, up to his retirement on April 30, 2025. Hamid Ahmad Tramboo has been granted the benefit from Novem-ber 21, 2024. Rajesh Kumar and Soma Kumar have been accorded the Selection Grade with effect from March 17, 2025. Anjali Raina has been granted the grade from May 1, 2025, while Sanjay Kumar will receive the benefit with effect from August 14, 2025.

The order states that the sanction shall remain subject to the outcome of any writ petition pend-ing consideration before courts of competent jurisdiction.

The order has been issued by the General Admin-istration Department, Civil Secretariat, and copies have been circulated to the concerned adminis-trative secretaries, departments, and offices for imple-mentation.

J&K Police intensifies drive against traffic violations in Shopian

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, DEC 13: In continuation of its sustained efforts to ensure road safety and strict compliance with traffic regulations, the Jammu and Kashmir Police in Shopian has intensified action against traffic violations involving both two-wheelers and four-wheelers across the district.

During the ongoing special enforcement drive, sev-eral motorists were challaned for violations including riding without helmets, driving without seat belts, absence of valid driving licences, improper documentation, over-loading, rash driving, and other traffic-related offences.



The drive was conducted at multiple locations across the district with the objective of promoting responsible driving behaviour and reducing road accidents.

The J&K Police reiterated that wearing helmets is mandatory for two-wheeler riders as well as pillion pas-sengers, while the use of seat belts is compulsory for drivers and passengers of four-wheelers. Driving without a valid licence and required documents not only violates the law but also poses a serious risk to human lives.

The J&K Police remains committed to promoting road safety, accountability, and strict adherence to traffic laws, and has urged the general public to cooperate in making roads safer for all.

Shrine Board dedicates 'Sadhana Kaksh' for devotees at Vaishno Devi Bhawan

■ NEWSPPOINT BUREAU

KATRA, DEC 13: In a signifi-cant initiative aimed at further enriching the spiritual ambience and facilitating deeper devotional engagement among devotees, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has established and dedicated a 'Sadhana Kaksh' (Meditation Hall) amidst Vedic chanting on Friday at Bhawan area.

The 'Sadhana Kaksh' estab-lished as per the directions of Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT) was dedicated to the devotees under the supervision of Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, SMVDSB.

Located in the lower basement of the Ram Mandir along the exit cave route at Bhawan, the 'Sadhana Kaksh' has been developed with emphasis on simplicity and devotional sanc-tity. Spread over an area of approximately 1,500 square feet, the facility can accommodate about 160–170 devotees at a time. Special care has been taken to maintain silence and sanctity within the Kaksh (hall), ensuring an atmosphere of calm and spiritual focus.

The Chief Executive Officer stated that the establishment of a dedicated 'Sadhana Kaksh' in close proximity to the sanctum of Maa Vaishno Devi ji forms part of the Shrine Board's broader endeavour to strengthen the spiritual infrastructure at Bhawan. He exhorted that as lakhs of devotees undertake the Yatra every month with deep faith



and devotion, the provision of a serene space for meditation significantly enhances the overall pilgrimage experience.

The Shrine Board has issued detailed operational guidelines for the 'Sadhana Kaksh'. As per these guidelines, the Shrine Board shall provide basic materials for use by devotees including prayer beads (malas), cloth pouches (guthis) and other essential accessories. However, mobile phones and all electronic devices shall not be permitted inside the Kaksh. The 'Sadhana Kaksh' will remain open daily from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM throughout the year.

Noteworthy that in recent years, the Shrine Board has undertaken several pilgrim-cen-tric initiatives, including the establishment of a new Yagyas-

hala, the expansion and remodel-ing of the Atka area and the beautification of the exit cave zone, all aimed at providing devotees with a safe, comfortable and spiritually enriching Yatra experience.

Senior officers of the Shrine Board, including Shri Alok Kumar Maurya, Addl. Chief Executive Officer; Shri Satish Kumar Sharma, Jt. Chief Executive Officer; Shri Pawan Kumar Goswami, Dy. Chief Executive Officer; Dr. Gopal Sharma, Asstt. Chief Executive Officer; Shri Mukesh Kumar Thapa, Tehsildar Bhawan and Shri Gopal Shastri, Mukhya Pujari, along with the team of Pujaris, besides, other officers, members of the Shrine Board's engineering team and a large number of devotees were present on the occasion.

JK Tourism Stall at Maditassia, Madurai Showcases UT's Vast Tourism Potential

■ FAROOQ RATHER

MADURAI, DEC 13: The Jammu and Kashmir Tour-ism Department's stall at Maditassia, Madurai, is in full swing, drawing significant attention from visitors and tourism stakeholders. The stall is serving as an effective platform to promote the diverse tourist des-tinations of the Union Territory. Stakeholders, tour operators, and tourism department officers were seen together in one frame, actively engaging with the public and highlighting the natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventure tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir. A wide range of brochures, pamphlets, and other printed publicity material were displayed and distributed to provide visitors with comprehensive information about J&K's tourism offerings.

Among those present were Mohammad Rouf Rehman, (JKAS) Chief Executive Officer, Kokernag Development Authority, and Babu Ram Tandon (JKAS), Chief Executive Officer, Bani Basoli Development Authority, who inter-acted with visitors and tour operators, emphasizing the all-season tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir.

The participation at Maditassia, Madurai, reflects the continued efforts of the UT administration to expand tourism outreach, build traveler confidence, and attract tourists from across the country to Jammu and Kashmir's scenic and culturally rich destinations.

SIR strengthens democracy, protects constitutional values: Sat Sharma

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 13: The Bharati-ya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday held a comprehensive meeting on Electoral Reforms and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) at the party headquarters, Tri-kuta Nagar, Jammu.

The meeting was chaired by J&K BJP President and Rajya Sab-ha MP Sat Sharma, along with General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul. BJP National Spokes-person Pradeep Bhandari joined the deliberations virtually as a key resource person. The meeting was attended by BJP state office-bearers, party spokespersons, and other senior leaders.

During the session, partici-pants collectively watched the address of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on electoral reforms and SIR and raised queries to gain deeper clarity on the issue.

Addressing the gathering, Sat Sharma reaffirmed that the BJP has always stood for free, fair, and transparent elections, which form the foundation of India's demo-cratic system. He said that Parlia-



ment remains the highest forum for debate and discussion, and the BJP has never hesitated to engage on sensitive and signifi-cant issues, including electoral reforms.

Sat Sharma emphasized that SIR is a constitutional and routine exercise conducted by the Elec-tion Commission under Articles 324, 325, 326, and 327 of the Con-stitution, aimed at ensuring that only eligible Indian citizens are

included in electoral rolls. He stated that opposition to SIR by Congress and other parties effec-tively amounts to questioning the Constitution framed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and undermining democratic institutions.

Presenting the organiza-tional roadmap, Ashok Koul announced a structured series of programmes across districts of Jammu and Kashmir. He said awareness sessions, workshops

for party workers, press interac-tions, and public outreach pro-grammes would be organized to educate citizens on the con-stitutional validity and neces-sity of SIR. He stressed that party cadres would be equipped with factual material to counter misinformation and take the message of electoral purity and national security to the grass-roots.

In his detailed presentation,

Pradeep Bhandari highlighted what he termed as the oppo-sition's double standards and undemocratic conduct. He point-ed out that Congress introduced Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) but questions their cred-ibility only after electoral defeats, while remaining silent when it wins. He recalled that the Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld EVMs, and no opposition leader has successfully challenged them within the legally man-dated 45-day period.

Bhandari further noted that SIR has been conducted multiple times since 1952, mostly under Congress governments, and was never opposed earlier. He explained that SIR aims at voter-list purification, removal of dupli-cate entries, deletion of names of deceased persons, inclusion of new eligible voters, and identifi-cation of illegal immigrants—steps essential to protect democ-racy and national security. He also criticized the opposition for walking out of debates on illegal immigration, questioning their credibility and intent.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar inaugurates National Lok Adalat at Jammu

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: A National Lok Adalat was held today under the leadership of Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Patron-In-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority), Arun Palli and Chairmanship of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of J&K Legal Services Authority.

The event was held in presence of Justice Sindhu Sharma, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Administrative Judge for District Jammu and under the guidance of R. N. Watal, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District & Sessions Judge) Jammu and overall supervision of Maleeka Sharma, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority Jammu.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of J&K Legal Services Authority inaugurated the National Lok Adalat 2025 at District Court Complex, Janipur, Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion,



Justice Sanjeev Kumar emphasized the importance of National Lok Adalat in amicable settlement of long pending disputes. He also added that alternative dispute resolution is a vital tool in the

Justice delivery system which ensures speedy and one time settlement of disputes. The general masses can take the benefit of Lok Adalats as the award passed by the Lok Adalat Benches attains

finality, he added.

Further, while addressing the gathering, Justice Sindhu Sharma highlighted the importance of National Lok Adalat. She said it has an important role in resolving

the cases by providing fast, affordable and accessible alternative to traditional Courts in India and providing forum which promotes settlement through compromise and mutual agreement fostering harmony between parties and saving time and money for the litigants.

On the occasion, Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Sindhu Sharma also distributed MACT cheques among the claimants.

In 4th National Lok Adalat, different kinds of cases were taken up wherein the litigants settled their cases in an amicable and conducive manner.

A Total of 30 benches were constituted in different Courts to deal with the matters of Civil nature, Bank Recovery, Criminal Compoundable, MACT, Matrimonial, NI Act u/s 138, Revenue Cases, BSNL Cases and other Civil Cases.

The total number of 3717 cases pertaining to different nature were taken up in this national lok adalat, of which, 2522 cases were settled. The total Amount recovered is Rs. 13,34,67,277.

DC Kathua reviews progress of Agriculture, allied sector projects under HADP

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KATHUA, DECEMBER 13: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting of concerned officers to review the progress of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner took a sector-wise review of achievements made so far and emphasized the need for completing all approved projects within the stipulated timelines. He directed the implementing agencies to expedite execution with effective monitoring at the field level.



Detailed discussions were held on multiple projects being implemented under agriculture and allied sectors including Millet and Nutritional Cereals, Farm Mechanisation, Mushroom Production, Promotion of Oilseeds, Integrated Farming, Commercial Floriculture, Rainfed Area Development, Rejuvenation of Orchards, Dairy Development, Mutton Production, Poultry, Fodder Development, Fish Seed and Trout Farm development, Sericulture development, establishment of Kisan Khidmat Ghars and other related initiatives. The progress of components pertaining to Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Apiculture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and Cooperatives were reviewed in detail.

The Deputy Commissioner laid special focus on giving further push to the ongoing works and achieving complete saturation of HADP interventions within the allotted time. He also called for aggressive capacity building of farming communities to enhance awareness, adoption of modern practices and optimum utilization of the benefits under the programme.

The Lead District Manager and representatives of banks were asked to proactively intervene for timely disposal of eligible cases of applicants aspiring to avail benefits under various HADP schemes.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Surinder Mohan Sharma; Chief Planning Officer, Ranjit Thakur; Lead District Manager and officers of Agriculture and allied departments were present in the meeting.

Electrician Skill Training Centre inaugurated at Nud- Samba

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SAMBA, DECEMBER 13: An Electrician Skill Training Centre was inaugurated today at Panchayat Ghar Sarain, Nud, Samba, under a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Sun Pharma, implemented by ELFA International. The initiative aims to empower local youth by providing practical, job-oriented electrical skills in line with current industry requirements.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by the Chief Guest, Ayushi Sudan, Deputy Commissioner Samba, who highlighted the crucial role of skill development in creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for young people. She appreciated the initiative for its strong focus on employability and for encouraging self-reliance among the youth of the district.

Nawab Mehran Khana, CEO of ELFA International,



Mr. Ajay Bharti, ACR Samba, Tehsildar, and representatives from Sun Pharma were also present on the occasion, along with other local officials, community representatives, and beneficiaries. The dignitaries lauded the efforts of Sun Pharma and ELFA International in launching the skill development programme, terming it a significant step towards youth employment and economic self-sufficiency.

Under this initiative, 50 youth will undergo a three-month intensive electrician training programme, which will include both theoretical instruction and hands-on practical exposure. Upon successful completion of the training, the participants will be awarded a diploma/certificate, enhancing their prospects for employment in the electrical sector as well as opportunities for self-employment.

Representatives from Sun Pharma and ELFA International stated that the programme has been designed to bridge the existing skill gap and prepare trained electricians capable of meeting market demands. The training centre is expected to play a vital role in strengthening vocational skills and improving job prospects for the local youth.

The event marked a meaningful step towards skill empowerment, inclusive development and sustainable livelihood generation in the district.

DC Kathua reviews progress of works being executed under SASCI

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KATHUA, DECEMBER 13: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the progress of works being executed under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner took stock of the progress achieved in execution of the approved works. He directed the concerned executing agencies to remove all bottlenecks and ensure completion of projects within the prescribed timelines. He emphasized timely flagging of administrative, technical or financial issues with the Deputy Commissioner's



office for prompt intervention.

The meeting reviewed the status of the construction of the District Development Council Building taken up at an estimated cost of Rs. 235.52 lakh; Construction of a 70-metre RCC motorable bridge on the Bhoond to Janu road with an estimated cost of Rs. 712.85 lakh and up-gradation of

the 30-bedded CHC Building Billawar to a 100-bedded facility with an estimated cost of Rs. 2818.44 lakh.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the importance of close coordination among all stakeholders to ensure timely execution of these critical infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening public service delivery in the district.

DDC Rajouri reviews preparations for 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore-2025' and Good Governance Week

Focus on transparent, time bound governance

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

RAJOURI, DECEMBER 13: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Rajouri Abhishek Sharma today convened a meeting to discuss arrangements for 'Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore-2025' campaign scheduled to be conducted from December 19 to December 25, 2025 along with the preparatory phase of Good Governance Week (GGW).

The meeting was held in the Conference Hall of the Deputy Commissioner's Office.

The DDC emphasized the need for quality public service delivery in a transparent manner and within stipulated timelines. Stress was laid on maximum registration of grievances on the JK Samadhan portal and their timely redressal during the campaign period.

The DDC directed the officers to ensure effective implementation and wide awareness of Central and UT Government-sponsored schemes at the grassroots level. It was informed that special joint grievance redressal camps will be organized at the tehsil level, wherein officers including Tehsildars, BDOs, TSOs, TSWOs, CDPOs along with sectoral officers from Agriculture, Horticulture, Veterinary and other allied departments, shall participate.

Each camp shall have a registration desk, services delivery desk, and a dedicated JK Samadhan counter to facilitate citizens. The DDC further directed that a calendar of activities be issued by the concerned Additional Deputy Commissioners (ADCs) along with the submission of a format detailing



the services to be delivered during the campaign.

Officers were instructed to submit daily reports on the number of service delivery

applications received and disposed of. Emphasis was also laid on providing basic citizen services including inheritance mutations, updation of Jamabandis, Aadhaar

up-dation, Ujjwala e-KYC and other essential services during the camps.

The DDC also stressed the need to organize special camps in Terayath and Khawas, with particular focus on health and education-related services to address the specific needs of the residents of these areas.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Rajouri, Malikzada Sheraz ul Haq; ADC Sunderbani, Ramkesh Sharma; ADC Kalakote, Tanvir Ahmed; ADC Koteranka, Dilmir; ACR, Mohammad Jahangir Khan; SDM Thanamandi, Abid Hussain; ACD, Auqil Naveed; DSWO, Abdul Raheem; CPO Rajouri, Maqsood Ahmed; CEO, Mohd Hafeez; District Informatics Officer (NIC); Tehsildars and other district and sectoral officers.

GCW Kathua hosts One-Day National Conference on AI Integration under NEP 2020

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KATHUA, DECEMBER 13: Government Degree College for Women Kathua today organised a one-day National Conference - "Integrating AI into Curriculum: NEP 2020's Vision for Future Skills", focusing on the integration of Artificial Intelligence in higher education in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020.

The programme commenced with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp followed by a Saraswati Vandana presented by the students. The College Principal Dr. Savi Behl welcomed the guests and highlighted the

transformative role of Artificial Intelligence in education, underscoring NEP 2020's emphasis on innovation, creativity and skill-based learning. The Chief Guest, MLA Kathua, Dr. Bharat Bhushan, appreciated the relevance of the conference theme and stressed the role of educational institutions in nurturing a technologically empowered and future-ready generation. The Guest of Honour, Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma emphasized the importance of collaboration between academia and government for fostering innovative educational ecosystem.



A major highlight of the inaugural session was the release of the Abstract Book containing

85 abstracts and the college newsletter IRAVATI (Volume 6). The keynote address was

delivered by Prof. J. N. Baliya from Department of Education Central, University of Jammu. He highlighted the strategic role of Artificial Intelligence in curriculum design and emphasized the need for capacity building among educators and students. The conference was attended by the Principals of Government Degree Colleges Mahanpur, Marheen and Hiranagar, along with the Managing Director and Principal of Spring Dales English Medium School, adding academic depth and strengthening inter-institutional collaboration.

The technical sessions featured expert lectures by Prof.

(Dr.) Nitin Kumar Puri, Executive Director, NIELIT Ranchi and Dr. Saurabh Shastri, University of Jammu. The sessions focused on emerging trends in Artificial Intelligence, skill-based education, NEP 2020, Sustainable Development Goals and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. The conference witnessed the presentation of 151 research papers, including 97 offline and 54 online presentations from institutions across the country in parallel sessions.

The valedictory session was graced by Additional Secretary, J&K Science and Technology Department, Jammu, Dr. Neelam Khajuria, who lauded the

institution for promoting academic excellence, research orientation and innovation. The programme concluded with a Dogri folk dance presented by the students, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the region.

The conference was convened by Dr. Inderjeet Kour, while the proceedings were conducted by Dr. Poonam Sambyal and Dr. Mukesh Kumari. The valedictory vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Rachna Devi. The event concluded on a successful note, reaffirming GCW Women Kathua's commitment to academic excellence, interdisciplinary dialogue and future-ready education.

Rana reviews power infrastructure, irrigation & hydropower projects in Pir Panjal region

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today chaired a meeting at the Civil Secretariat to review the status of power distribution and transmission infrastructure besides irrigation works and hydropower projects in the border districts of Poonch and Rajouri. The meeting was attended by Managing Director JKPDC, Rahul Yadav; Chief Engineer I & FC, Manoj Gupta; Chief Engineer Transmission JPDCL, Habib Choudhary; Chief Engineer, Distribution JPDCL, KK Thappa; CE Planning and Procurement, JPDCL, Vijay Kumar Balmotra; Chief Engineer Projects, Vikas Anand and other senior officers. The Minister emphasised the need to further strengthen the electricity infrastructure and ensure a reliable and uninterrupted power supply to the region, particularly in remote and border areas. He underlined that robust power infrastructure

is essential for economic growth, public welfare and improved service delivery.

During the review, the Minister held detailed discussions on the condition and expansion of distribution lines, substations and transmission corridors. He also assessed the progress of works being executed under various Central and UT-sponsored schemes. Issues related to right-of-way, erection of electric poles and clearance delays were discussed.

The Minister was informed that coordination between the Power Development Department (PDD) and allied departments is underway to resolve these bottlenecks. Directing the concerned officers to expedite the resolution of all pending issues, Rana stressed strict adherence to prescribed timelines. He cautioned that delays in infrastructure projects adversely impact the public service delivery, especially in sensitive and remote areas such as Mendhar. He also underscored the importance of regular



monitoring and prompt redressal of public grievances to enhance the consumer satisfaction.

The Minister specifically reviewed progress on the Siot-Rajouri Receiving Station, terming it a major power infrastructure project for Rajouri district. He noted that the project is vital for high-voltage power transmission and meeting the growing electricity demand of the region.

Reviewing the Parnai Hydropower Project, Rana

reiterated the Jammu and Kashmir government's focus on hydropower development and energy self-sufficiency, particularly in Poonch district. He directed the executing agency to ensure timely completion of the project, highlighting that it would significantly enhance the energy security, promote economic growth, improve living standards and support equitable development in the region.

Managing Director, JKPDC,

Rahul Yadav, informed the meeting that work on the project is progressing steadily and is expected to be completed by December 2027.

Taking serious notice of the prolonged delay in the Anas Irrigation Canal project, the Minister instructed the concerned departments to explore all feasible options for initiating work at the earliest. He emphasized that the project has the potential to deliver substantial

benefits to local communities and ensure sustainable water security.

He further directed the Irrigation & Flood Control Department and JKPDC to revisit the project parameters and work out a viable and resource-efficient solution. Once completed, the project is expected to improve the power availability, support local economic activities and enhance overall service delivery in the region.

The Minister also conducted a comprehensive review of implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in Poonch and Rajouri districts. He assessed both physical and financial progress, as well as the quality of work being executed under the scheme, describing RDSS as a critical initiative aimed at transforming the power distribution sector. He urged the officers to identify the existing challenges and adopt a proactive approach to ensure successful implementation.

It was informed during the meeting that physical progress

under RDSS stands at 58 percent in Rajouri and 19 percent in Poonch. The officials assured the Minister that all the pending works would be completed within the stipulated timelines.

Reviewing the progress on DAJGUA programme for rural electrification, Rana directed the local officials to accelerate project execution to bridge infrastructure gaps in tribal villages. He emphasized that priority must be accorded to unelectrified and underserved areas, with active monitoring to ensure that basic services effectively reach tribal communities.

The Minister stated that strengthening power infrastructure in areas such as Mendhar is crucial for boosting economic activity, improving public welfare and ensuring overall regional development. He assured that all necessary support would be extended by the government to ensure timely completion of projects and uninterrupted power supply to the people of Poonch and Rajouri.

DAHJ reviews physical, financial progress of key schemes in Jammu division

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Director Animal Husbandry Department Jammu, Sanjay Gupta today chaired a review meeting to assess the physical and financial progress of major departmental schemes including Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), CAPEX projects, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and NABARD-funded initiatives across Jammu division.

The meeting was attended by Dy. Directors, Chief Animal Husbandry Officers of all districts, officers of HADP Cell, Accounts, Planning, Publicity and Technical staff of Directorate.

During the meeting, scheme-wise progress was reviewed in detail with emphasis on achievement of physical targets, utilization of funds, infrastructure development, beneficiary coverage and timely submission of utilization certificates.

The Director stressed the importance of efficient fund utilization, transparency in financial regulations and strict adherence to timelines for completion of ongoing works while keeping in mind the curbs over budget expenditures in the last quarter of the financial



year. The Director laid special emphasis on the effective implementation of dairy, poultry and fodder development projects under HADP and the schemes being implemented under UT-capex such as Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) and Integrated Poultry Development Programme (IPDP). The officers were directed to expedite the implementation of approved projects, remove bottlenecks in execution and ensure regular monitoring at field level and alignment of physical progress with financial expenditures.

With regard to NABARD-assisted projects, officers were instructed to ensure compliance with the stipulated guidelines and to maintain close coordination for timely drawal and utilization of funds. The Director further directed that progress reports be submitted after every two weeks for effective monitoring and review.

The meeting concluded with directions to strengthen inter-departmental coordination, field supervision and beneficiary-oriented delivery so that the objectives of the schemes are achieved within the prescribed timelines.

Secretary RDD inspects development projects in Marh Block

MLA Marh seeks departmental intervention on key public issues

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, on Saturday undertook an extensive tour of the Marh constituency in Jammu district to assess the progress and impact of key developmental works being executed in the area.

Member of Legislative Assembly, Marh, Surinder Kumar, also participated in the on-site review and highlighted priority issues of the constituency, seeking intervention of the Administrative Department for resolution of important public matters.

The Secretary was accompanied by Director Panchayati Raj J&K, Sham Lal; Director RDD Jammu, Shehnaz Akhter; Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Jammu, Er. Danish Rasool Mir; Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Jammu, Mukhtiyar Ahmed and Block Development Officer Marh, Kirandeep Kaur.

During the visit, the dignitaries inspected several completed works at the Bawa Talab Complex and reviewed projects executed under the UT CAPEX programme.

Emphasising durability, quality and public utility, the Secretary

directed the field functionaries to strictly adhere to prescribed standards, ensure transparency in execution and complete all sanctioned works within stipulated timelines.

The Secretary also inaugurated a Community Sanitation Complex at Jhiri Temple, Kalyanpur.

He emphasised the importance of proper upkeep and maintenance of such facilities to sustain their long-term impact. He said the facility would significantly improve the sanitation and hygiene arrangements at the prominent religious site, catering to the needs of the devotees. He also directed that beautification works at the Baba Jitoo Temple be taken up on priority.

The Secretary also laid the foundation stone for Dewat Complex at Ganguchak Panchayat to be constructed at an estimated cost of 53.13 lakh. He observed that the project would substantially enhance the community infrastructure in the area. He instructed the executing agencies to ensure timely completion without compromising on quality.

Additionally, a newly constructed Panchayat Ghar at Panchayat Sari Rakhwalan, Marh, built at a cost of 30 lakh, was also inaugurated. The facility is



expected to further improve the functioning of local self-governance.

Interacting with the local residents and former PRI

representatives, the Secretary patiently listened to their concerns and suggestions related to ongoing and future development initiatives. He assured them that all the genuine public issues would be addressed on priority. He directed the officers to remain accessible to the public, conduct regular field inspections and ensure that planning and execution reflect local needs.

The MLA appreciated the coordinated efforts of the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj departments. He stated that such infrastructure projects are vital for improving the civic amenities and enhancing the overall quality of life in rural areas.

The Secretary also conducted a comprehensive review of major projects being implemented under MGNREGA, PMAY-G, SBM-G, NRLM and RGSA. He directed the officials to expedite execution, address bottlenecks at the grassroots level and ensure steady progress across all programmes for timely and effective service delivery.

Stressing that works of public importance must be prioritised, the Secretary called for focused efforts to ensure that every eligible beneficiary receives rightful entitlements under the flagship rural development schemes.

Agri-Input dealers asked to comply with regulatory provisions

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KATHUA, DECEMBER 13: Under the directions of Director Law Enforcement J&K, Balbir Singh and ADLE Jammu Kuldeep Singh, a meeting of the seeds, fertilizers and pesticides dealers of District Kathua was convened at the Sub-Division Office to review compliance with the statutory provisions governing the sale and distribution of agricultural inputs. The meeting was aimed at sensitising stakeholders and ensuring strict adherence to the existing regulatory framework.

During the meeting, explicit instructions were issued to the stakeholders to strictly comply with the provisions of the Seeds Act, the Fertilizer Control Order (FCO) and the Insecticides Act and Rules.

The dealers and retailers were directed to prominently display approved price list of the seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at their respective establishments, issue proper bills or invoices for every sale and maintain accurate and up-to-date stock and sales registers in accordance with the standing instructions.

It was categorically informed that any deviation from or non-compliance with the prescribed instructions would be viewed seriously and stringent action under the relevant provisions of the Seeds, Fertilizers and Pesticides laws would be initiated against



the erring dealers or retailers without any further notice.

The meeting was attended by Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officer, Kamal Rajan; Agriculture Extension Officer, Surinder Sharma; Law Enforcement Inspector, Anil Gupta, besides dealers and retailers dealing in seeds, fertilizers and pesticides of District Kathua.

Director Agriculture Jammu reviews progress of PMFBY enrolment for Rabi Crop 2025-26

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta today reviewed the enrolment of farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for the Rabi Crop 2025-26. He issued a series of directions aimed at ensuring smooth, timely and maximum coverage of farmers under the scheme.

The Director Agriculture directed insurance companies to work in close coordination with the field functionaries of the Agriculture Department to facilitate effective implementation at the grassroots level.

The insurance company officials were asked to intensify field-level awareness activities to educate farmers about the benefits, procedures and timelines of the scheme.

The Director Agriculture also instructed Chief Agriculture Officers of the Jammu Division to mobilize field functionaries to extend all necessary assistance to farmers in completing their enrolment, strictly as per the districts wise targets.

The status of claims disbursed to the farmers under Kharif 2025 season was also reviewed, with a focus on ensuring timely settlement and addressing pending issues in coordination with the concerned stakeholders.

The meeting was attended by Deputy



Director Planning Yaqoob Zargar; State Heads of Bajaj General Insurance and IndusInd General Insurance (Reliance General), In-charge PMFBY Cell (DoAJ) along with senior officers and staff of the department.

HT EDITORIAL

Forest Rights Act in J&K gets a booster dose

In a significant decision the Jammu & Kashmir government led by chief minister Omar Abdullah has designated the tribal affairs department as the nodal department for the implementation of Forest Rights Act of 2006 in the union territory. Up to this moment the forest department was the nodal department for the implementation of Forest Rights Act in Jammu & Kashmir and the concerned stakeholders were not happy with the same.

Jammu & Kashmir was probably the only state or union territory in the country where the forest department was designated as the nodal department for implementation of the Forest Rights Act of 2006. The replacement of the forest department by the tribal affairs department as the nodal department would go a long way in settling the claims of tribals and others over forests. Given the fact the forest department was the nodal department it seemed that the implementation of Forest Rights Act in Jammu & Kashmir was merely on papers.

The announcement about making the tribal affairs department as the nodal department was made by chief minister Omar Abdullah on social media. Tribal Affairs Minister, Javed Ahmed Rana was the first one to welcome the decision and he hailed his own government's decision to designate the tribal affairs department as the nodal department for implementation of Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 across Jammu & Kashmir. Describing the move as a historic and corrective intervention, the minister emphasized that this is a landmark step, reflecting the long-standing aspirations of tribal communities.

The minister said that the step will ensure a more community-centric, accessible and responsive institutional mechanism for implementation of FRA. He highlighted that transferring the FRA responsibilities from the forest department to the tribal affairs department will usher in fair, transparent and time-bound recognition of individual and community forest rights. He assured that every necessary step will be taken to ensure the benefits of FRA reach every eligible tribal family across Jammu & Kashmir.

It would be in place to mention here that the tribals had been demanding that instead of the forest department the tribal affairs department should be made as the nodal department for implementation of Forest Rights Act in Jammu & Kashmir. Over the years the Jammu & Kashmir Forest Rights Coalition carried out a campaign in this regard and many programmes were held so as to make the people at helm aware about the need to make the tribal affairs department as the nodal department for implementation of FRA 2006.

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Tears of Pride: A Young Brother's Unwavering Support



■ IQRA MOHIUDIN

A brother has gone to take part in an army running test. On a dusty track, where dreams are tested with elsewhere pain, a young man runs with everything he has. This is not just an army running test for him; it is a test of his courage, patience, and the future he dreams of building. Every step he takes carries the hopes of his family, the sacrifices of his past, and the silent prayers of those who love him.

On the sidelines sits his younger brother—small in age, but carrying a heart far too big for his body. His eyes never leave his elder brother. Fear, hope, pride, and anxiety all mix together in his innocent face. His hands tremble, his heart races, and his throat tightens as he watches his brother push himself beyond his limits. He does not fully understand the rules of the race, but he understands one thing clearly: his brother must succeed.

As the runner moves forward, the younger brother's eyes fill with tears. One tear falls, then another, and soon his cheeks are wet. Yet, through his crying, his voice rises again and again. "Brother, you will win. Please go ahead. You can do it. Don't stop." Each word comes from a place of pure love and belief. He is crying, but his hope is stronger than his tears. He is scared, but his faith in his



brother is unshakable.

This moment captures the true essence of brotherhood. While one brother battles exhaustion, pain, and breathlessness on the track, the other fights his own silent war on the sidelines—a war against fear, helplessness, and the possibility of failure. The younger brother cannot run for him, cannot hold his hand, cannot ease his pain. All he can do is stand there, cry, pray, and shout words of encouragement. And sometimes, that is the greatest support of all.

People often say that love between brothers fades with time, that rivalry replaces affection, and distance replaces closeness. But this single scene destroys those beliefs completely. It proves that

brotherly love can be as deep, pure, and powerful as any other bond in the world.

The tears in the younger brother's eyes are not a sign of weakness; they are a reflection of his strength, his loyalty, and his unconditional love for his elder brother. Again and again, he calls out, his voice cracking, "Brother, move forward. You can do this." Every shout is a prayer, every tear a wish. His nervousness shows how deeply connected he is to his brother's fate. If his brother stumbles, his heart stumbles with him. If his brother moves forward, hope rises in his chest like light after darkness.

This scene also speaks volumes about Kashmir, where people often talk about pain and struggle but forget to talk about love and unity. In moments like these, it becomes clear that brotherhood in Kashmir is still alive. It lives in the tears of a young child who worries for his brother. It lives in the loud encouragement that echoes from the sidelines. It lives in the silent strength of family bonds that no hardship can break.

When I witnessed this scene, I could not hold back my emotions. My eyes filled with tears, and my heart felt heavy yet warm at the same time. It reminded me that some moments do not need grand words or dramatic gestures to be powerful. A crying child, a running brother, and a few shouted words of hope were enough to move my soul.

This was not merely a scene from an army selection ground; it was a living story of love, sacrifice, faith, and unbreakable bonds. It showed that real strength is not only in strong legs that run on a track, but also in soft hearts that beat with love, courage, and endless belief in one another. And in that moment, through tears and trembling voices, the true meaning of brotherhood stood alive before my eyes.

The columnist is reading in class 11th.

The Revival Of Domestic Hamaams In Contemporary Kashmir... A Blessing Or A Silent Burden?



■ MUDASIR AHMAD NAJAR

A Deep Reflection on Heritage, Family, and Modern Life

There are moments in the story of a society when something ordinary becomes extraordinary not because it changes in shape or form but because the world around it changes so fast that the old thing suddenly feels precious again. In Kashmir the domestic hamaam that warm stone-floored room heated by firewood has always been a symbol of comfort, culture and family life. But in today's fast-moving world, where winters feel harsher and electricity feels weaker the hamaam is returning not just as a physical space to stay warm but as an emotional space many families are trying to reclaim. The revival of domestic hamaams in contemporary Kashmir looks beautiful from a distance: families gathering together elders talking softly, children playing, neighbours sharing warmth and students finding a corner to read in peace. But when we look closely, we also see a silent struggle happening inside these heated rooms a struggle between comfort and laziness, connection and isolation family bonding and digital distraction, tradition and modern habits. The same hamaam that once brought people together is today becoming a place where silence grows louder not because people are lost in thought but because everyone is lost in their phones.

There was a time not very long ago when the hamaam was meant more than heat. It meant winter stories whispered by grandparents it meant dried fruits shared among cousins, it meant lessons of life given by elders while the fire crackled gently in the corner, it meant families learning to sit together, eat together and simply exist in the same space without being pulled away by screens or notifications. Today when we step inside many homes, the hamaam is still warm, still glowing, still comforting but the people inside it are colder to each other than ever before. Families sit together physically but live in separate worlds mentally. Students who once

revised lessons here now scroll endlessly on their phones. Women who once used this space to pray or finish chores now lose hours watching videos. Men who once returned home tired now enter the hamaam and forget time, drifting into the lazy comfort of heat and endless phone-scrolling. Even children whose bodies should run and minds should grow, sit like statues, sleepy and slow, waking up late and studying less. The hamaam is still good but humans have changed. The warmth is still there but the purpose has weakened.

It is not wrong to love the hamaam. Kashmiris have loved it for centuries. It is part of our history, our architecture our survival techniques against harsh winters and even our culture of togetherness. But problems arise when a blessing becomes an excuse. The revival of the hamaam has also revived a new lifestyle waking up late because the hamaam is too warm, skipping studies because the hamaam makes one sleepy, praying less because comfort overtakes discipline and spending more time on phones because the heat makes the mind unwilling to work or move. For students, this is becoming dangerous. Many teachers across Kashmir complain that winter months bring a sudden drop in attention, motivation, and responsibility. Students who should wake up early and revise lessons before school now wake up late because the warm hamaam delayed their sleep. Their books lie untouched, while their phones glow bright. Assignments remain incomplete, but social media is updated. Exams come closer, but seriousness melts away. The hamaam does not make the student lazy, but the comfortable environment makes it easy for the student to choose comfort over effort.

Parents also notice this change. They see their children spending hours in the hamaam and yet achieving nothing productive. They see their homes filled with warmth but lacking the warmth of conversation. They see families sitting together under the same roof but emotionally far from each other. The family gathering looks beautiful in pictures but feels empty in reality. The hamaam once allowed people to talk openly, share memories and strengthen relationships. But now when everyone sits inside, their heads bend toward their screens, their fingers move rapidly, their eyes stay fixed on digital worlds and no one even notices who entered or who left. A mother may sit next to her daughter and still not

know what she is going through. A son may sit next to his father and still feel distant. The hamaam that should heal hearts sometimes becomes the room where silence grows heavy.

Women face a different kind of challenge. Winter in Kashmir is already a demanding season cooking on time, keeping the house warm, filling water buckets, managing kitchen work and taking care of children is not easy. The hamaam was always a place where women could sit for a few minutes, rest their backs and warm their cold hands and feet. But now, hours are lost scrolling through reels, laughing at videos, or chatting endlessly. Prayers get delayed. Chores pile up. Work becomes slow. A simple five-minute break becomes a two-hour distraction by the end of the day, exhaustion doubles, guilt grows and important tasks remain unfinished. The warm room becomes the place where time slips away unnoticed.

The criticism here is not against the hamaam. Kashmir needs it. It is a blessing in harsh winters. The criticism is about human habits, human choices and human weaknesses. We have allowed comfort to win over discipline. We have allowed screens to win over relationships. We have allowed laziness to win over productivity. The hamaam is only a room what happens inside it depends on the people. If people enter with purpose, they came out better. If they enter with phones, they came out empty.

There is also a psychological angle to this problem. Human beings naturally choose warmth and relaxation during winter. The body becomes slower, the mind becomes softer and motivation decreases. But what makes the situation worse today is the over touch of smart-phones. When a person sits in a warm room with nothing to do, the phone becomes the easiest escape, once the phone enters the hamaam, the hamaam becomes a trap. The heat relaxes the body, the phone captures the mind and both together create a dangerous mix of comfort and addiction. Hours pass without movement. Minds become dull. Creativity dies. Conversations disappear and families lose a chance to connect deeply.

Students especially are suffering the most from this lifestyle. Winter should be a time of focus, reflection, revision and improvement. It is a season when the outside world slows down giving enough opportunity to study, read books, work on skills and plan the future. But

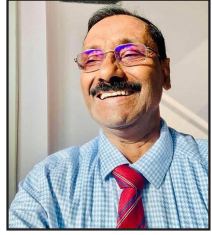
many students use winter as an excuse to escape from hard work. Instead of using the hamaam as a quiet study corner, they use it as a digital playground. Instead of using the warmth to comfort their minds for learning, they use it to sleep for long hours. Instead of waking up early, they stay in bed until late morning because the cold outside scares them. When the results come they blame winter for their failure, not their habits.

If this continues the revival of hamaams will bring warmth to our homes but coldness to our progress. We will raise a generation that knows how to stay comfortable but does not know how to struggle how to read, how to think deeply, or how to build discipline. Laziness is not created by stone floors or warm fires rather it is created by the mind that chose ease over responsibility again and again.

To save the beauty of the hamaam and the strength of our society we need to change how we use this space. Let the hamaam remain a place for bonding not addiction. Families should set simple rules at least one hour every day in the hamaam without phones, where everyone talks, shares, laughs, or simply sits together in peace. Students should bring their books instead of their phones. Women should use it for rest but not let it consume their entire day. Men should use it to relax but not to disconnect from family responsibilities. Everyone should remember that warmth is only useful when it gives energy not when it steals time. The true revival of the hamaam will not come from firewood and stone alone but from the choices we make inside it choices that decide whether this ancient room becomes a sanctuary of discipline or a shelter for distraction a space that strengthens families or silences them, a place where children learn resilience or lose it and ultimately a reminder that the future of Kashmir will never be shaped by the heat under our feet but by the strength of our minds the sincerity of our habits and the courage of our families to reclaim connection, conversation, purpose and responsibility before comfort quietly replaces everything that once made us strong, because as Kashmiris often say, the walls may hold the heat, but only intention can hold a life together, and only discipline can hold a nation upright.

The author from Dandmoha, Kreei, Baramulla

International Mountain Day and Ecological Consciousness in Mountain Writing



DR RATAN
BHATTACHARJEE

Jahangir's famous declaration—"If there is heaven on earth, it is here"—owes much to the enthralling mountain backdrop that cradles Kashmir like a natural amphitheatre. Ancient scriptures referred to the Himalayas as Devabhumi—the land of gods—and their peaks as the abodes of Shiva, Parvati, and other deities. The Mahabharata narrates journeys through icy passes and forests, while Kalidasa's Kumarasambhavam vividly paints Himalayan flora, fauna, and divine presences. These early texts treat mountains as spiritual stages where human emotion and cosmic play intersect. In modern Indian literature, mountains appear in varied forms. The works of Rabindranath Tagore, Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, and Mahasweta Devi include Himalayan landscapes as metaphors of purity and inner awakening. Writers like Manjushree Thapa, Ruskin Bond, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, and Temsula Ao portray mountains with ecological sensitivity, highlighting both their beauty and fragility. Bond's Mussoorie, for instance, captures the innocence of Himalayan life, while Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss explores the tensions of postcolonial mountain societies. Kashmir occupies a special place in mountain literature due to its geographical setting and its centuries-old literary heritage.

The valley, encircled by the Himalayas, Pir Panjal, Karakoram, and Zabarwan ranges, has inspired poets, mystics, historians, and travelers. Classical Sanskrit poets described Kashmir as the "abode of spring" and the "emerald set in the Himalayas." Kalhana's Rajatarangini documents the region with a keen sense of landscape. Persian and Mughal chronicles—from Abul Fazl to Jahangir—overflow with admiration, recording how the mountains create the valley's climate, charm, and agricultural abundance. Kashmir's mountains are central to its spiritual literature. The songs of Lal Ded and Sheikh Noor-ud-din (Nund Rishi) often carry images of mountain meadows, icy rivers, forests, and mist. Their mystical verses use the mountain as a metaphor for inner ascent, discipline, and renunciation. Rishi literature portrays hermitages, caves, and high-altitude retreats as places of meditation and self-discovery. In Indian thought, mountains are not mere physical formations; they are sacred symbols. With climate change altering Himalayan landscapes, Indian mountain literature has become increasingly ecological. Writers express concern over melting glaciers, loss of biodiversity, landslides, and over-tourism. Kashmir's literature reflects similar anxieties: disap-

pearing snowlines, shrinking lakes, deformed slopes, and erratic weather. For Kashmiri Pandit writing—such as the works of Nilkanth, Hari Krishna Kaul, and contemporary diaspora poets—the mountains often appear as symbols of longing, home, and exile. The snow peaks stand as witnesses to cultural displacement.

Similarly, Muslim writers from the valley portray mountains as sites of resilience and continuity. Across Indian literature, mountains often embody memory—ancestral heritage, forgotten histories, and timeless wisdom. Kashmir's mountain narratives combine all these layers. Travel writing on Kashmir—from British colonial accounts to contemporary journalism—often romanticizes mountain landscapes. From Walter Lawrence's The Valley of Kashmir to modern travel memoirs, writers describe the dazzling whiteness of Harmukh, the slopes of Gulmarg, the meadows of Sonamarg, and the alpine lakes like Gangbal and Tarsar. These writings contributed to the global imagination of Kashmir as a paradise encircled by divine mountains.

In Kashmiri literature, snow is not just meteorological; it is emotional and philosophical. Snow signifies purification, silence, erasure, and sometimes mourning. Writers use snow to mirror personal states—love, separation, nostalgia, or despair. In Agha Shahid Ali's poetry, snow becomes a metaphor for memory frozen in time, as well as for the silence of suffering. Since the late twentieth century, mountain literature in Kashmir has also absorbed themes of conflict. Mountains appear as both shelters and witnesses, as hiding places and barriers. Fiction and memoirs describing the conflict often include descriptions of mountain passes, remote valleys, and snowy borders. Here, the mountain becomes both a topographical and political character. In many works, the calm snow-covered peaks stand in stark contrast to human turmoil below—creating a powerful literary tension between eternal nature and temporary violence. Mountain literature in India is not a single genre but a vast, evolving tradition. It blends mythology, travelogue, nature writing, poetry, ecological consciousness, and cultural memory. Within this tradition, Kashmir holds a luminous position. In modern poetry and fiction, Kashmiri writers evoke mountains to capture beauty, longing, memory, and conflict. The works of Agha Shahid Ali transform mountain landscapes into powerful symbols of identity and loss. His metaphors of snow, peaks, and winter reflect both ecological and emotional coldness. Poet Dina Nath Nadim and Rehman Rahi use mountain imagery to depict cultural continuity and political turbulence. Kashmir's mountains also feature in travel literature. Writers like V.S. Naipaul, Rahul Sankrityayan, and contemporary essayists have chronicled the valley's fragile ecology. Many describe how seasonal changes—spring bloom, summer clarity, autumn chinar glow, and winter snow—are choreographed by the surrounding peaks.

Kashmiri literature transforms mountains into symbols of beauty, spiritual

ascent, ecological fragility, cultural identity, and emotional depth. The Himalayas around Kashmir are not simply scenery—they are participants in the narrative, shaping the valley's literary voice. On International Mountain Day, therefore, Kashmir becomes a crucial point of reflection as to how we sustain such landscapes while respecting the needs of its people. Sustainable mountain development in Kashmir must combine traditional knowledge with modern ecological understanding. The valley has always been home to communities—Gujjars, Bakarwals, shepherds, farmers—whose lifestyles evolved in harmony with mountain rhythms. For centuries, their grazing cycles, water usage patterns, and agricultural practices worked in tandem with nature's limits. This indigenous wisdom, if revived and integrated into contemporary policy, could guide present conservation efforts.

International Mountain Day emphasizes responsible tourism. In Kashmir, this translates into developing eco-friendly infrastructure, promoting waste-management systems, encouraging off-season tourism to reduce peak pressure, and educating tourists about the fragility of mountain ecosystems. Small steps—from banning plastic in certain zones to promoting trekking routes that follow low-impact guidelines—could significantly alleviate stress on the environment. Moreover, engaging local communities as custodians of eco-tourism initiatives ensures that the benefits remain within the region while fostering a sense of collective responsibility. Today, as climate change and modern pressures threaten these fragile environments, mountain literature becomes more crucial than ever. It preserves memory, inspires stewardship, and reminds us that mountains—silent, majestic, and eternal—are central to India's ecological and cultural imagination.

In celebrating International Mountain Day, one must inevitably hear Kashmir's call—a voice woven of snow, stone, forest, river, and human longing. Kashmir's mountains are more than scenery; they are identity, memory, and livelihood. The Pir Panjal, the Zabarwan, the Karakoram—all form an unbroken ring of presence around the valley, shaping its climate, culture, and collective consciousness. The mountains determine everything: the crispness of winter, the softness of spring, the fertility of soils, the abundance of orchards, and the quiet retreat of glaciers that once defined the seasonal rhythm of life. For centuries, poets, mystics, travelers, and soldiers have looked upon these mountains and felt humbled. The valley itself evolved around the moods of mountains—from the myths of Satisar to the geopolitics of modern borders. But to appreciate Kashmir on International Mountain Day, one must look beyond postcard aesthetics.

One must understand the valley as a living mountain ecosystem facing unprecedented stress. Across the Himalayas, climate change has accelerated warming at twice the global average. Glaciers retreat faster here than in many other parts of the world, rivers swell unexpectedly or shrink

unpredictably, rainfall patterns destabilize, and extreme weather events become frighteningly common. Kashmir, with its unique mountain ecology, finds itself on the front line of this planetary upheaval. The mountains, once symbols of permanence, now seem delicate and vulnerable. The forests of the Himalayas are among the richest repositories of biodiversity, and Kashmir's slopes nurture countless plant species, medicinal herbs, and animal life. The musk deer, the Hangul, the brown bear, and the snow leopard inhabit these upper zones—creatures whose survival depends on the integrity of the region's forests and alpine meadows. International Mountain Day is not only a call to protect landscapes but also the lives that flourish within them, including species whose existence is now a silent plea for conservation.

The theme of International Mountains Day varies each year, but the underlying philosophy remains: mountains matter—and their protection is an essential component of global environmental health. In Kashmir, this philosophy acquires sharper contours. The valley's economy—built upon tourism, horticulture, pastoralism, and handicrafts—relies heavily on the stability of mountain ecosystems. The mountains of Kashmir have always supported a delicate balance of ecological relationships. Yet challenges are immense. Deforestation, though reduced in recent years, remains a historical wound. Overgrazing in sensitive meadows, unregulated construction in fragile zones, pollution from expanding towns and tourism hubs, and climate-induced degradation collectively strain the resilience of mountain ecosystems. In many parts of Kashmir, the once-clear streams now bear sediment load from erosion, while wetlands—the natural sponges of mountain hydrology—shrink under pressure from encroachments. Dal Lake, for example, symbolizes both the breathtaking beauty of the valley and the consequences of ecological neglect. Any disruption in snowfall patterns affects water availability; any retreat of glaciers alters river flow; any degradation of forests destabilizes slopes and increases vulnerability to landslides. Thus, the health of Kashmir's mountains is inseparable from the social and economic well-being of its people.

Tourism is another dimension of Kashmir's mountain narrative. The valley has long been celebrated as "Paradise on Earth," attracting travelers drawn to its serene lakes, snow-laden slopes, and lush meadows. But tourism, unless managed responsibly, becomes a double-edged sword. The beauty that draws people is precisely what can be destroyed by unregulated visitor flow. Waste accumulation in Gulmarg, Sonamarg, and Pahalgam; traffic congestion in once-quiet mountain roads; construction of hotels in ecologically sensitive areas—all signal a need to balance economic opportunity with environmental sustainability. The cultural dimension of Kashmir's mountains is equally profound. Mountains are central to Kashmiri folklore, Sufi mysticism, poetry, and spiritual imagination. Habba Khatoon's hill, the Shankra-

charya peak, the Harmukh revered in lore, the passes once used by caravans—all stand as cultural monuments shaped by both nature and human story. On International Mountain Day, celebrating Kashmir means honoring this cultural heritage alongside ecological preservation. Mountain cultures often embody principles of coexistence, balance, and humility—values the modern world desperately needs. Another critical issue is the necessity for peace and stability. Mountains in the Himalayan region, including Kashmir, are often entangled in geopolitical complexities. But mountains thrive on harmony—between people and land, between communities, and across borders. Environmental cooperation can become a powerful avenue toward soft diplomacy. Shared glaciers, rivers, and biodiversity corridors demand collaborative management. International Mountain Day is a reminder that mountain conservation can transcend political divisions and encourage shared ecological stewardship.

The future of Kashmir depends on thoughtful environmental governance. Policies must integrate climate adaptation, biodiversity protection, sustainable tourism, forest preservation, and disaster risk reduction. Investment in scientific research, particularly in glaciology and hydrology, will be crucial. Strengthening community participation ensures that solutions are grounded in local realities. On International Mountain Day, as the world celebrates these towering sentinels of Earth, Kashmir offers itself as a luminous reminder that mountain conservation is not merely an environmental necessity—it's a cultural, emotional, and existential imperative. The mountains call, and we must answer. Mountain literature in India represents a unique confluence of geography, culture, imagination, and spiritual quest. From the towering Himalayas to the verdant ranges of the Western Ghats, Indian writers have long viewed mountains as living presences—timeless, wise, and deeply symbolic. Mountains have served as sites of mythology, pilgrimage, exile, romance, terror, and ecological reflection. Among all mountain regions in India, Kashmir stands out as the most lyrically celebrated and historically mythologized. Its literature has produced some of the richest portrayals of mountains as aesthetic, cultural, and emotional landscapes.

Mountains remain among the oldest storytellers on Earth. They rise with solemn dignity, carrying the memories of civilizations, the echoes of past climates, and the lessons of ecological balance. Every year, on International Mountain Day, which falls on Dec 11, the world pauses to listen to these ancient guardians—yet nowhere does their message feel more urgent, more intimate, and more heart-stirring than in Kashmir, the crown of the Himalayas.

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Mountains: The Water Towers of the World



■ MOOL RAJ

The theme for International Mountain Day 2025 is "Glaciers matter for water, food and livelihoods in mountains and beyond," aligning with the UN's declaration of 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, highlighting glaciers' crucial role in water security, food, clean energy, and cultural identity, and the urgent need for their protection. International Mountain Day is an international observance day whose goal is to raise awareness about the role that mountainous regions play in the lives of people and their importance to our planet. Mountains are home to 15% of the world's population and host nearly half of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

As of 2003, International Mountain Day has been observed every year on 11 December to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring



positive change to mountain peoples and environments around. As places of power and heavens on high, mountains serve as abodes of gods and goddesses, often situated at the center of the cosmos, world, or region. Temple or place of worship: Mountains often appear in the form of temples housing the deities who reside on or within them. Unlike traditional holidays with fixed customs, Mountain Day is more about personal and communal connection to nature. Mountains are more than just tall landforms; some are



growing taller due to tectonic activity, while the world's tallest is actually Mauna Kea, not Everest, when measured from its base underwater. They also play a critical role in providing freshwater for the planet, are home to diverse ecosystems, and can even be formed by volcanic eruptions.

Today, on International Mountain Day 2025, let's shine a spotlight on the crucial role glaciers play in sustaining life on Earth. Glaciers are more than just frozen landscapes—they're lifelines for ecosystems

and communities, providing freshwater, food, and livelihoods for billions of people.

The rapid melting of glaciers poses a significant threat to our planet, impacting agriculture, clean energy, water security, and the lives of vulnerable mountain communities. Glaciers hold around 70% of the world's freshwater, and their accelerated melting is a stark indicator of the climate crisis.

Rising global temperatures are driving glacier retreat, increasing risks like floods, landslides, and erosion, and endangering downstream populations and critical infrastructure. It's time to take action and prioritize glacier preservation for the health of our planet and its inhabitants.

Economically, sectors like agriculture, hydropower, mountain tourism and transportation feel the strain of glacier changes. For many Indigenous Peoples, glaciers are sacred, and their disappearance signifies a loss of identity and connection to nature. Let us appreciate the beauty, importance, and vulnerability of mountains. Mountains cover about 27% of the Earth's land area and are home to around 15% of the global population. Let's work together to preserve the beauty and importance of mountains for future generations and continue to inspire action and awareness about the need to preserve and appreciate mountains worldwide.

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Health Benefits of Pineapple



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Literally, during winters our body becomes weak because we do not take sufficient water and other healthy food components regularly. One more unfortunate thing is that during winters we do not get fresh fruits and vegetables, and the prices of basic commodities in the Kashmir Valley skyrocket. As a result, people live according to what their pockets allow.

We have a healthy horticulture sector here in the Kashmir Valley. We can grow seasonal fruits and should also grow winter fruits under greenhouse sheds. Such initiatives may allow us to play an important role in the economy as well as in sustainable development.

Every individual wants to look good and wants to remain healthy and fit. Everyone among us wants to live longer on this earth. Some people are lucky enough to have all luxurious means of lifestyle, while others have to struggle and some are deprived. However, in reality, we all need adequate

Pineapple has numerous health benefits, including proper digestion, prevention of asthma and diabetes, and lowering the risk of cancer. Pineapple helps in healing inflammation and also affects the fertility of both males and females, as it is rich in vitamin C and antioxidants. Pineapples are packed with useful nutrients, minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants.

food items for proper body growth. The combination of organ systems in our body functions for our survival and keeps us healthy and happy. There are many factors responsible for good health; these include a balanced diet, exercise, medical check-ups, good hygiene, etc.

In this article, I am going to explore the health benefits of pineapple. Pineapple is a tropical fruit found in different parts of the world such as India, China, Thailand, etc. Pineapple is available in most grocery shops in fresh, dried, and juice forms. Doctors suggest that we eat fresh and healthy food items, as they contain fibre, nutrients, vitamins, and minerals, which are very vital for good health and proper growth.

Pineapple has numerous health benefits, including proper digestion, prevention of asthma and diabetes, and lowering the risk of cancer. Pineapple helps in healing inflammation and also affects the fertility of both males and females, as it is rich in vitamin C and antioxidants. Pineapples are packed with useful nutrients, minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants.

Pineapple contains an enzyme called bromelain, which plays an important role in providing health benefits. Pineapples are an excellent source of antioxidants. Antioxidants combat the formation of free radicals, which can cause cancer. Pineapple also strengthens our skin and prevents wrinkles.

Gynaecologists suggest antioxidant-rich food items to patients complaining of infertility disorders because free radicals damage the reproductive system of those who are trying to conceive.

sahilmanzoor411900@gmail.com



Cold weather concerns: Doctor explains how winter affects children's immunity and growth

■ HEALTHLINE

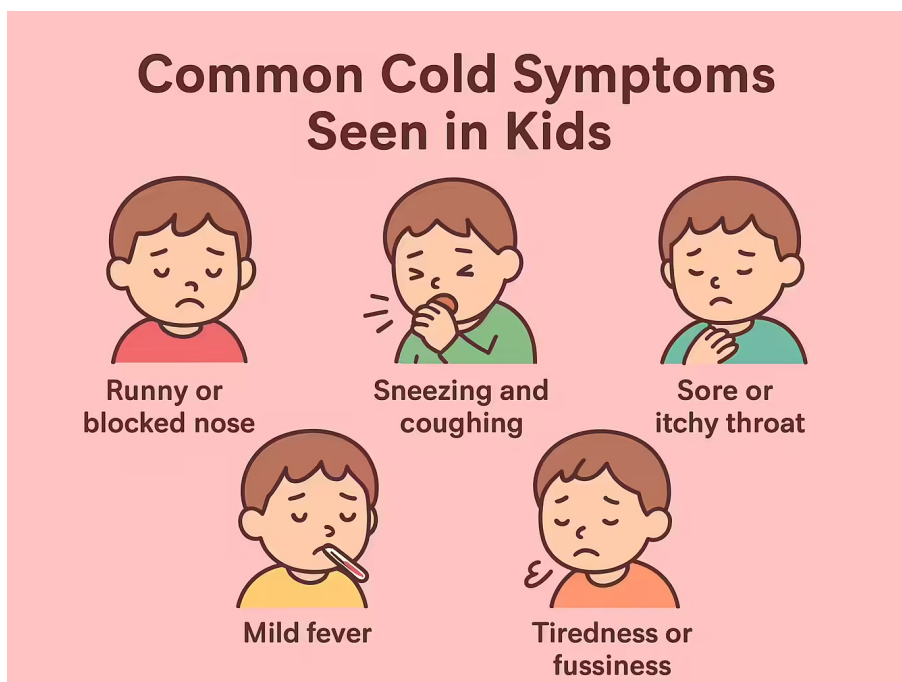
LONDON: Winter is not just about cozy sweaters, hot chocolate, and extra blankets. For kids, the cold season can quietly change the way their bodies cope and grow. Many parents start noticing the same pattern every year. One cold turns into another, sniffles seem nonstop, and school absences increase. This happens not only because children spend more time indoors, but also because winter puts extra pressure on their still-growing immune systems.

Cold weather gives germs a better chance to hang around and spread. Viruses survive longer in winter, and crowded indoor spaces make it easier for infections to pass from one child to another. On top of that, shorter days mean less sunlight. That often leads to lower vitamin D levels, which play an important role in keeping immunity strong and bones healthy. When kids don't get enough sunshine or outdoor play, their bodies may find it harder to fight off everyday bugs. Winter eating habits can add to the problem too. Heavier foods and fewer fresh options sometimes mean children miss out on key nutrients their immune systems need.

Growth can also take a quiet hit during the colder months. When outdoor play is reduced, kids move less, burn less energy, and may even feel less hungry. This can affect muscle strength, coordination, and overall physical development. Sleep patterns can shift as nights get longer and routines change, and since growth hormones are closely tied to good sleep, this matters more than many parents realize. Frequent illnesses can also dull appetite and interfere with nutrient absorption, both of which are essential for healthy growth.

The good news is that small, thoughtful changes can make winter easier on children's bodies. With the right balance of food, sleep, movement, and a bit of sunlight whenever possible, parents can help their kids stay strong, active, and growing well, even during the coldest months.

"Winter is that time of the year when children eagerly wait to celebrate Christmas, go on a vacation, and enjoy themselves with their parents and friends. That pleasant winter season is also loved by children, just like adults. They eagerly wait for the exciting gifts from Santa, that cup of hot chocolate, and fun. During winter, children tend to suffer from various health problems such as colds, coughs, flu, sinusitis, pneumonia, and throat irritation. Even those



children with existing asthma and bronchitis need to exercise caution during winter," says Dr Shruti Ghatalia, Paediatrician, Zynova Shalby Hospital Mumbai.

"The child may end up missing school and classes, and this can lead to poor academic performance. Dry air can also induce respiratory tract irritation and make it easy for the virus to enter the body and create havoc on the overall well-being of the child. Moreover, the child's immunity can take a hit during winter. Shorter daylight hours reduce exposure to sunlight and lead to low vitamin D levels. The child should maintain optimal vitamin D levels to boost immunity and bone health. A majority of children also stay indoors when the weather outside is cold, and this can further increase the infections when they are in enclosed spaces. Hence, take charge of the child's health," she adds and shares important tips to take care of children's health.

The child should be given a well-balanced diet: Parents need to include seasonal vegetables such as spinach, carrots, peas, beetroot, whole grains, and soups. The child needs to avoid junk, oily, canned, and processed foods. Vitamin C-rich foods such as oranges, guava, amla, and strawberries help boost immunity and should be added to the diet without fail. The child should drink enough water, opt for warm milk to strengthen the immune system.

Sleep well: A good night's sleep improves immunity and aids the growth of the child.

Vitamin D exposure: The child should be exposed to the sun for at least 20 minutes in the morning to be able to maintain appropriate vitamin D levels.

Physical activity can help to stay healthy during winter: The child should be encouraged to walk and stay healthy. Even yoga and stretching can be done at home.

Dress children in layers to help them stay warm and protect them from the harsh weather.

Don't ignore personal hygiene: The parents should focus on the child's personal hygiene to manage infections and illness. Follow cough/cold etiquette, cover the mouth while sneezing.

Parents should follow a vaccination schedule designed by the doctor: Vaccinations, such as the flu shot, can provide additional protection during winter. Don't avoid vaccination in children due to side effects such as pain and soreness at the injection site, fever, and headaches. Ignoring the child's health is a strict no-no.

Handwashing is also important to prevent germs. The child should maintain good personal hygiene, avoid being around sick people or crowded places, and wear a mask while venturing out of the house.

Parents should report symptoms such as dehydration, constant coughing, and breathlessness to the doctor for timely management and care. So parents, make sure that the child stays safe and happy during winter by following these tips.

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BJP Reaches Out to Kashmiri Migrants at Purkhoo Camp

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 13: In a strong reaffirmation of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) unwavering commitment to the welfare and development of Kashmiri migrants, BJP Leader Chetan Wanchoo, accompanied by BJP Kashmir Displaced District Mandal President Shri K.K. Koul and senior party functionaries Shri Som Nath Saraf, Smt. Shashi Bhat, Shri Ram Ji, Shri Avtar Krishan Koul Ji, and Shri Kamal Ji, today conducted an extensive visit to the Purkhoo Kashmiri Migrants Camp.

During the visit, BJP leaders directly interacted with the residents of the camp, taking stock of their long-pending demands. Addressing a key community need, he oversaw the donation of a wall-to-wall carpet for the Community Hall, a long-standing request of the camp residents, aimed at enhancing facilities for social and cultural gatherings.

BJP leaders also visited the Primary Health Centre (PHC) at the camp, where they held detailed discussions with the Medical Officer regarding healthcare delivery. The shortage of essential medicines and infra-



structure gaps were noted for urgent action.

At the Mata Saraswati Pustakalaya Library-cum-Skill Development Centre, BJP leaders engaged with members of Mahila Shakti, gaining insights into ongoing skill development initia-

tives and community welfare activities. The women apprised them of challenges they face, which were duly noted for future interventions.

Addressing the community, Wanchoo emphasized, "The Kashmiri Pandits community has

endured years of hardship and neglect. Today, it is only the Bharatiya Janata Party that stands with the displaced, ensuring their dignity, welfare, and rehabilitation. Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, long-pend-

ing issues are being acknowledged and addressed with seriousness, reflecting BJP's commitment to justice, development, and security for the migrant community."

Shri K.K. Koul, Mandal President, praised the visit and stated, "The presence of senior BJP leaders at Purkhoo Camp demonstrates the party's genuine concern for Kashmiri Pandits. Their engagement brings hope and assures the community that their issues will be addressed seriously and with immediate action."

Concluding the visit, BJP leaders assured residents that all genuine concerns would be prioritized. They reaffirmed BJP's sustained efforts to improve healthcare services, community infrastructure, and opportunities for women empowerment and skill development, signaling a continued grassroots commitment to the holistic development of the Kashmiri migrant community.

The visit underscored BJP's resolute dedication to addressing long-standing issues, reinforcing the party's role as a true partner in the welfare and rehabilitation of displaced Kashmiri Pandit families.

Public Notice

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that my name and my father's name were incorrectly published earlier.

Incorrect Details:

Name: Furqan Ahmad Pandit

Father's Name: Manzoor Ahmad Pandit

Address: Booh, Awantipora

Correct Details:

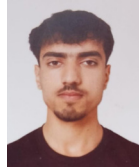
Name: Furqan Ahmad Pandith

Father's Name: Manzoor Ahmad Pandith

Address: Booh, Awantipora

All concerned are requested to take note of the above correction for all official and legal purposes.

Sd/- Furqan Ahmad Pandith
Booh, Awantipora



Public Notice

I have lost my Date of Birth certificate of class 10Th Session Annual Regular 2020 under roll no 12430225, registration number 192100000520027. Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may Contact Board of School Education (BOSE) Srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

MOHAMMAD UMAR MIR S/O GHULAM MOHI UD DIN
MIR R/O LALPORA KHARKHAL KUNZER KUNZER
Pin code 193404



Public Notice

Notice is hereby given that I, Farooq Ahmad Bhat S/o Mohammad Sultan Bhat, resident of Kalantra Payeen, Kreeeri, Baramulla, intend to apply for a fertilizer/seeds license under the name MS BHAT TRADERS, located at Kalantra Payeen, Tehsil Kreeeri, District Baramulla. The application will be submitted to the Chief Agriculture Office, Baramulla. If Anybody has any objections or concerns regarding this application should be filed at the Chief Agriculture Office, Baramulla, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Objections received after this period will not be considered.

FAROOQ AHMAD BHAT
Proprietor, MS BHAT TRADERS
Kalanatra Payeen, Kreeeri, Baramulla

Public Notice

I have lost my 10Th pass marks card under roll no 13125265 session Annual Regular 2020. Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may contact Board of School Education (BOSE) Srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

ULFAT RASHID RESHI S/O ABDUL RASHID RESHI
R/O SHEIKHPORA KREEERI

Public Notice

I have lost my Date of Birth certificate of class 10Th Session Annual Regular 2020 under roll no 12430225, registration number 192100000520027. Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may Contact Board of School Education (BOSE) Srinagar within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained.

MOHAMMAD UMAR MIR S/O GHULAM MOHI UD DIN
MIR R/O LALPORA KHARKHAL KUNZER KUNZER
Pin code 193404

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that Irfan Ahmad Wani, S/o Rashid Wani, R/o Charepora, Tehsil Sangu, District Anantnag, has been wrongly recorded as Irfan Rashid Wani in school records.

The correct name is Irfan Ahmad Wani.

Objections, if any, may be raised within 7 days of publication of this notice. Thereafter, no claim shall be entertained.

Public Centric Development is the Right of Every Citizen: Dr. Devender Kumar Manyal

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

RAMGARH, DEC 13: Dr. Devender Kumar Manyal, MLA Ramgarh and Former Minister for Health and Medical Education, J&K, today kick-started and inaugurated multiple development works at different locations across the Ramgarh Assembly Constituency, reiterating that development is the fundamental right of the people and a key pillar of good governance. At Ramgarh, Dr. Manyal kick-started the construction of a Volleyball Ground with an estimated cost of ₹9 lakh, aimed at promoting sports culture, channelising youth energy in a

positive direction, and encouraging physical fitness among young people.

Under the Municipal Committee Ramgarh, the MLA also kick-started the construction of a Self Point and Passenger Shed at an estimated cost of ₹4 lakh, which will provide shelter and basic facilities to commuters and the general public.

In Village Sanoora, Rajpura Block, Dr. Manyal kick-started the construction of two sheds at an estimated cost of ₹5 lakh and also inaugurated lane and drain works amounting to ₹2.50 lakh. These works are focused on strengthening basic civic infrastructure, improving

sanitation, and enhancing the overall quality of life for the local residents.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Manyal said that these development initiatives are being executed in line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who believes that development must reach every doorstep and is the rightful entitlement of every citizen. He added that priority is being given to need-based, inclusive, and sustainable development, especially in rural and municipal areas.

Prominent among those present on the occasion were DDC Rajpura Ms. Asha Rani, DDC Ramgarh Ms. Anita Choudhary, Executive

Officer, Municipal Committee Ramgarh Mr. Amit Choudhary, Executive Member and Former BDC Chairman Mr. Radha Sham, OBC District President Mr. Harvinder Singh, President Rajpura Ms. Asha Rani, President Ramgarh Ms. Nancy Choudhary, Former Vice Chairman, Municipal Committee Ramgarh Mr. Anil Gupta, Ms. Kamlesh Kumari, Mr. Gurdail Rana, besides a large number of local residents and officials.

The public appreciated the proactive approach of the MLA and expressed gratitude for his consistent efforts towards ensuring equitable development across the Ramgarh constituency.

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Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt. Ground Water Division Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Detailed e- NIT No: 68/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2025-26

For and on behalf of Government of UT - J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Production Tube wells" as per details given below. The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

(Table - I)

S. No	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money	Cost of Tender Document	Class of contract	Time of completion	Technical Sanction	Major Head /Programme	Tender Call
1.	Construction of 01 No. 250 mm Nominal Dia Casing Gravel Packed Production Tube Well for WSS Venkara Under U.T Capex District Baramulla.	Rs.40.00 Lacs	Rs.1,20,000/-	Rs.2000/-	Registered for Construction of Production Tube Wells	45 Days (after identification on of the site by the concerned)	JS-PHE/GWD S/ U.T Capex Budget/219 of 12/2025, Dt: 11-12-2025	U.T Capex Budget (Languishin g / JKIDFC)	1 st

- Position of Funds:- Available.
- Re-appraisal statement for WSS Venkara under Languishing / JKIDFC Programe forwarded to the Distt Superintending Engineer Hyd. Circle Bla/ Bpr, H.Q: Sopore by the Executive Engineer PHE Jal Shakti Department Division Baramulla vide Letter No. PHE/DB/Bla/ 54387-41, Dated: 09-12-2025
- Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Superintending Engineer Hyd. Circle Sopore Vide Order No: SE/DB/PHE/BLA/AAA/42 of 2018-19 of 10/ 2018, issued vide endorsement No: Se/Hyd./7971-77, Dated: 19.10.2018.

The Bidding Documents and other details can be downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in> From 13.12.2025 (05:00 PM) UPTO 22.12.2025 (02:00 PM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in> As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below

1.	Publishing Date	13-12-2025 (05:00 PM)
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids	13-12-2025 (05:00 PM) upto 22-12-2025 (02:00 PM)
3.	Period of Submission of bids	13-12-2025 (05:00 PM) upto 22-12-2025 (02:00 PM)
4.	Date of opening of Tender.	23-12-2025 (01:00 PM)
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011	
6.	Cost of Tender Document : Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/e-challan/ via online deposited to Account Head 0215 or in the below mentioned account Number in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar (at Saddar Treasury Srinagar) (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)	
	Name of Bank	Jammu & Kashmir Bank
	Name of Branch	Residency Road, Lal Chowk-190001
	Name of Account	Executive Engineer PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar.
	Account Type	Current Accounts Government.
	Account Number	0005 0405 0004 7709
	IFSC Code	JAKA0CHINAR
	MICR Code	190051056
7.	NOTE: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of of DD /TR/ e-challan/ via online, the hard copies shall have to be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2 nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT	
8.	Bid Validity Period: 180 Days	
	The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www.jktenders.gov.in	

Bids must be accompanied by bid security viz: Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR and (The date of CDR/FDR etc must not be prior to 03 months from the date of issuance of this e-Nit and Treasury Receipt (mentioning therein the NIT No. S. No. of work and Advertised Cost as per the NIT) as cost of Tender Document under Account Head 0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Ground Water Division Srinagar (as specified in the table (I) (Page 1st). Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for 180 Days after opening of bid. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Division Srinagar (H.Q. Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar) on 23.12.2025 at 01:00 PM. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

No: JS-PHE/GWDS/25-26/Camp./15988-16005 | Dated: 11-12-2025

Sd/- Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE (Deptt.)
Ground Water Division, Srinagar

DIPK: 8994/25 | Dated: 14-12-2025

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE OFFICE OF THE MUSHROOM SPECIALIST, LALMANDI SRINAGAR

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Sealed short tender affixed with Revenue Stamp worth ₹6, on behalf of the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, UT of Jammu & Kashmir, is invited from registered authorized dealers/firms for the supply of the following items required for research trials of *P. eryngii* and *Cordyceps* mushroom culture and preparation of mushroom compost.

The Tenders must be deposited by hand in the tender box kept in the office up to 18-12-2025, 2:00 PM. Tenders received by post/courier shall be accepted only if received within the scheduled date and time. Tenders received after 2:00 PM on 18-12-2025 shall not be entertained. Tenders will be opened on 19-12-2025 at 12:30 PM by the committee to be constituted in presence of those tenderers who wish to remain present.

Items Required

S. No.	Name of Item	Quantity
1.	Stainless Steel Water Distillation Unit Capacity 2 litres per hr	01 No.
2.	Potato Dextrose Broth	500 ml
3.	Malt Extract Broth Base	500 ml
4.	Coco peat	15 qtls
5.	Poultry Manure	33 qtls

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- If the last date of receipt of tenders happens to be a Gazette holiday, the next working day shall be treated as the last date.
- Tenders must be neatly typed/ink-written. Cutting/overwriting disqualifies the tender. Rates must be written in words and figures and sealed with cello tape.
- The committee reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.
- Conditional tenders shall not be accepted.
- Rates shall be inclusive of all taxes and FOR Agriculture Department, Lalmandi Srinagar.
- The supplier shall ensure proper transportation and safe delivery. Any shortage/damage shall be borne by the supplier. Damaged/defective material must be lifted back at supplier's cost. Payment will be made only after verification and satisfactory completion.
- The successful tenderer shall execute an agreement on Judicial Stamp Paper of ₹20 before issue of supply order.
- Quantity may be increased or decreased at the time of issuing supply order.
- GFR rules regarding government procurement shall apply.
- These terms apply as per rules/law and extend to State/Central/Semi-Government/Autonomous Bodies.

Sd/- Mushroom Specialist
Department of Agriculture, Lalmandi Srinagar

DIPK: 8969/25 | Dated: 13-12-2025

Satish Sharma inaugurates Indoor Stadium with multi-sports facility at Khour

Inaugurates 5KW Hybrid Solar Power Plant at Thakur Dwara Mandir

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 13: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, today inaugurated the Rs 3 crore Indoor Stadium with multi-sports facility at Khour, Jammu, marking a significant milestone in strengthening the sports infrastructure in border areas of the Union Territory.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the government is working earnestly towards providing modern, accessible and inclusive sports facilities to the youth.

The focus is being accorded to the rural and border belts, to promote sports culture, discipline and healthy lifestyle. He emphasized that quality infrastructure at the grassroots level plays a crucial role in identifying and nurturing the sporting talent.

The multipurpose indoor hall has been designed to host multiple sports disciplines, including



Badminton (3 courts at a time), 6 table Tennis courts, Volleyball court, 2 Judo courts besides 2 Wrestling and Kabaddi courts.

Satish Sharma also interacted with the local youth and sports persons and urged them to make optimal use of the facility.

He assured that the government will continue to focus on sports infrastructure development, youth engagement and talent promotion across Jammu & Kashmir.

The inauguration of this indoor stadium is expected to provide a major boost to sports activities in the Khour area and surrounding regions, offering young athletes access to world-class facilities at their doorstep.

The Minister also inaugurated 5 Kilo Watt hybrid solar power plant at Thakur Dwara Mandir. The plant has been installed by Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency.

Later, Satish Sharma also inaugurated black topping at Salinwali in the area.

91,750 cases settled in 4th National Lok Adalat held across UT of J&K

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 13: Reaffirming the commitment to provide quick, affordable, and amicable resolution of disputes, the Last National Lok Adalat of the year 2025 was successfully organized today across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir under the patronage of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority) and the dynamic mentorship of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, as well as under the able guidance of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Chairperson, High Court Legal Services Committee.

The initiative aimed to promote amicable settlements in cases including MACT, matrimonial disputes, cheque bounce cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act, money recovery, commercial disputes, and compoundable criminal cases.

To ensure the maximum resolution of disputes, pre-Lok Adalat sittings and pre-counseling sessions were conducted well in advance, providing the parties with ample opportunity to engage in dialogue and reach a consensus for a permanent resolution. Additionally, webinars and virtual meetings were organized to sensitize stakeholders, officers of Legal Services Institutions, LADCs, Panel Lawyers, PLVs, and others involved in the promotion of Alternate Dispute

Resolution (ADR). These sessions emphasized the significance of Lok Adalats and encouraged parties to take full advantage of the opportunity.

As per the information received from various Legal Services Institutions working in different districts of UT of J&K, out of total 1,05,784 cases taken up by 186 Benches in the day long National Lok Adalat across the UT of J&K, 91,750 cases were amicably settled and disposed off involving an amount of Rs. 76,65,59,134 as compensation/settlement amount in cases like Motor Accident Claims, civil, criminal, labour disputes, Electricity and Water Bills, Land Acquisition, Family matters, cheque dishonor and Bank Recovery etc.

Special efforts were made to enhance participation, streamline pre-litigation settlements, and encourage litigants to opt for out-of-court resolutions.

The J&K Legal Services Authority will continue to strengthen the ADR mechanism, ensuring that justice reaches the doorstep of every individual, particularly the marginalized and underprivileged sections of society.

The Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority expressed gratitude to the Judiciary, Legal Services Institutions, District Administration, Advocates, and other stakeholders for their collective efforts in making the National Lok Adalat a success.

DLSA Budgam Conducts 4th National Lok Adalat of 2025 in District; 751 cases amicably settled

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 13: Under the aegis of NALSA and the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam successfully organized the 4th National Lok Adalat at the District Court Complex Budgam, as well as in the Taluka Courts across the district.

The 4th National Lok Adalat was held under the overall supervision of Chairman District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, O.P. Bhagat, (PD&S) Budgam.

For smooth disposal, cases were pre-identified by the respective courts and placed before Eight dedicated benches constituted by DLSA Budgam for settlement.

The 1st bench was presided over by O.P. Bhagat (Principal District & Sessions Judge, Budgam) and Lateef Ahmad Khan (Chief LADC). The 2nd bench was presided over by Abdul Bari (Chief Judicial Magistrate) Budgam, Shaber Ayaz Sub-Judge/Principal Magistrate, Juvenile Justice Board Budgam and Tasneem Kawoos, 1st Class/Munsiff Budgam.

Likewise, 3rd bench was presided over by Easar Ul Nabi, Special Mobile Magistrate, Budgam and Nazir Ahmad Wagay, Deputy LADC, Budgam. The 4th bench was presided over by Shafeeq Ahmed Malik, Sub-Judge, Chadoora) and A.R. Hanjura, Pro Bono Lawyer.

Similarly, 5th bench was presided over by Tayoub Bukhari, Judicial Magistrate 1st Class/Munsiff Chadoora and Adv. Syed Rafiq Rashid, Panel Lawyer Chadoora. The 6th Bench was presided over by Towfeel Ahmad Mir, Special Mobile Magistrate, Beerwah and Javid Ahmad, Panel Lawyer. 7th Bench was presided over by Rabyia Snober Gulzar, Judicial Magistrate 1st Class/Munsiff Magam and Hilal Ahmad Malla, Panel Lawyer.

Similarly, Aiman Amin, Judicial Magistrate 1st Class/Munsiff, Charar-i-Sharif and N.A. Mashooq, Panel Lawyer presided over the 8th Bench.

The cases taken up for settlement included a wide range of matters such as civil disputes, compoundable criminal cases, cheque bounce cases, bank recovery matters, MACT claims, land compensation cases, matrimonial disputes, pre-litigation cases, social welfare disputes, labour cases, revenue disputes, BSNL-related issues, municipal cases, and other matters related to government schemes.

In total 1,433 cases were taken up before the benches, out of which 751 cases were amicably settled. A total settlement amount of Rs 2,97,86,069 was awarded/realized as compensation and recovery during the Lok Adalat.

DLSA Ganderbal conducts National Lok Adalat, settles 1670 cases

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

GANDERBAL, DECEMBER 13:

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal, under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and Jammu and Kashmir Legal Services Authority, successfully conducted the 4th National Lok Adalat for the year 2025 in district Ganderbal.

The National Lok Adalat was inaugurated by Abdul Nasir, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal. The inauguration ceremony was attended by several distinguished judges, including Fozia Paul, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Ganderbal; Nusrat Ali Hakak,

Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ganderbal; Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal, and Mahoor, Munsiff/JMIC, Ganderbal. Other notable attendees included, Bar members, LADCs, Panel Lawyers, Adhikar Mitras, bank officials, representatives of various departments, litigants etc.

For effective disposal of cases, four benches were constituted. The 1st bench was presided by Fozia Paul, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Ganderbal, along with Mahoor, Munsiff/JMIC, Ganderbal as bench member. The 2nd bench was presided by Nusrat Ali Hakak, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ganderbal, with Burjeena Hamid, Assistant LADC, Ganderbal, as



bench member. The 3rd bench was presided by Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary DLSA, Ganderbal, along with Sajid Irfan, Deputy LADC, Ganderbal, as bench member

and 4th bench was presided by Moonis Wahid, Munsiff/JMIC Kangan, along with Advocate Suhail Ahmad Mir, as bench member, who worked tirelessly to dispose

of a large number of cases.

During the Lok Adalat, a total number of 1765 cases were taken up, out of which 1670 cases were amicably settled, resulting in a settlement amount of Rs 72,68,208. The cases disposed of included matrimonial cases, NI Act Cases, Civil Cases, Criminal compoundable cases, bank recovery cases, labour disputes, pre-litigation cases, BSNL Bill cases, etc.

The National Lok Adalat aimed to provide a platform for amicable settlement of disputes, promoting justice and reducing pending cases. The DLSA Ganderbal, has achieved this objective by settling a significant number of cases through the Lok Adalat.

DC Budgam Chairs DLIC Meeting; Approves Multiple Cases under HADP, JKCIP, ISDS, IDDS

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 13: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, today chaired a District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) meeting regarding the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement in Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP), Integrated Sheep Development Scheme (ISDS), and Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) at the New Conference Hall, DC Office Complex, Budgam.

The meeting was convened to review the implementation of key agriculture and allied sector schemes, evaluate pending applications, and approve eligible projects received from various agriculture and allied departments.

During the session, the DC approved

906 new cases under HADP, bringing the total number of approved cases under the programme to 25,801, including 24,895 cases approved earlier. Under JKCIP, the District Level Committee (DLC) sanctioned 780 new cases, raising the cumulative total to 2,133 approved projects across Budgam district. Similarly, under the Integrated Sheep Development Scheme (ISDS), 140 cases were approved, taking the cumulative total to 544, while 47 new cases under Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) were sanctioned, raising total approvals to 186.

Speaking in the meeting, the DC emphasised that agriculture and allied sectors continue to be the backbone of Budgam's rural economy.

He highlighted that these government interventions provide direct livelihood support, facilitate adoption of modern technology,

strengthen value chains, and enhance market competitiveness for farmers, youth, and livestock rearers.

He noted that effective utilization of these schemes is crucial for sustainable growth, rural prosperity, and employment generation.

The DC directed all concerned officers to ensure timely implementation of sanctioned projects, provide handholding support to beneficiaries, and maintain close coordination to ensure transparency and efficiency at every stage. He stressed that every project should be executed on the ground without delays, maintaining strict adherence to guidelines and quality standards.

Highlighting Budgam's potential in horticulture, livestock, fisheries, and dairy sectors, the DC observed that tapping these resources effectively can significantly transform the district's socio-economic landscape.

Workshop on District-Level Youth Club Awareness under JKCIP held in Budgam

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 13: district-level awareness workshop for Youth Clubs was organized today, at Sheikh ul Alam Hall, Budgam, under the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP).

The workshop was inaugurated by the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat.

Besides, ADC Budgam, CPO budgam, CAO, employees of agriculture department Budgam, representatives from KVK budgam, the event witnessed participation from youth members across the district.

The workshop aimed at creating awareness regarding the objectives of JKCIP, with a focus on skill development, entrepreneurship, innovation, and active participation of youth in socio-economic and environmental development. The programme also emphasized the importance of youth engagement in promoting sustainable development initiatives at the grassroots level.

During the event, resource persons delivered informative sessions highlighting the opportunities available under JKCIP, government schemes for youth empowerment, and the role of collective youth action in driving sustainable development. Interactive discussions were held, providing a platform for participants to share their ideas, aspirations, and innovative solutions for community improvement.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC encouraged the youth to take active interest in sustainable agricultural practices. He stated that efficient usage of water, adoption of organic manures, crop rotation, soil conservation, and modern technology can significantly enhance agricultural productivity.

He emphasized that Krishi Vikas Kendras (KVKs) are being leveraged to educate youth and farmers about the latest innovations and scientific techniques in agriculture and farming.

He further stressed that environment-friendly farming, renewable energy in agriculture, and resource-efficient practices should be promoted at the local level.

He added that youth involvement in these initiatives can foster innovation, improve food security, and contribute to sustainable growth in the district.

The DC highlighted that youth should also focus on community-led initiatives such as cleanliness drives, water resource management, and eco-friendly development projects, which can create a positive impact while building leadership and teamwork skills.

4th National Lok Adalat 2025 Held at Srinagar, Justice Delivered with Dignity

Lok Adalat Promotes Amicable Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice for All

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 13: In a significant stride towards delivering timely and amicable justice, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) in collaboration with the District Judiciary Srinagar successfully organized the 4th National Lok Adalat 2025 at the District Court Complex Mominabad, Srinagar, and at the Court of the Additional Special Mobile Magistrate/JMIC Panthachowk.

The Lok Adalat was held under the guidance of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh (Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority) and overall supervision of Haq Nawaz Zargar Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA) Srinagar, and Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority.

The Lok Adalat was inaugurated by the Principal District & Sessions Judge Srinagar, in presence of judicial officers, members of the bar, court staff and DLSA Staff.

During an interaction with the media, Adnan Sayeed, Spl. Judge Anti-corruption CBI Cases, Srinagar, emphasized that the National Lok Adalat provides an effective and economical platform for dispute resolution. He stated that it ensures a win-win situation where both parties get their concerns heard and settled amicably.

To facilitate the amicable settlement of cases, 13 benches were constituted, in which overall 62451 cases were taken up for settlement out of which 61767 cases were amicably settled and Rs. 86838275 was awarded as settlement amount.

The First Bench was presided over by Adnan Sayeed, Spl Judge

Anti Corruption CBI Cases Sgr and Fayaz Ahmad Qureshi, Presiding Officer, MACT, Court Srinagar in which 102 cases were taken out of which 50 cases were amicably settled and Rs. 31773953 was awarded as settlement amount.

The 2nd Bench was presided over by Kusoom Pandita, Additional District Judge, Bank Cases and by Anjum Ara, 1st Additional District & Sessions Judge Srinagar. The 3rd Bench was presided over by Farooq Ahmad Bhat, Additional District & Sessions Judge Srinagar and Tabasum, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar.

Likewise, the 4th Bench was presided over by Ms. Renu Dogra, Principal Judge Family Court) Srinagar and Preet Simran Kour, 4th Addl. Distt. & Sessions Judge Srinagar and 5th Bench was presided over by Naushad Ahmad Khan, 2nd Additional District &

Sessions Judge Srinagar and Fida Hussain Nayek, Municipal Magistrate, Srinagar. The 6th Bench was presided over by Massarat Jabeen, PT& E Magistrate and Shayesta Nazir, City Munsiff) Srinagar, the 7th Bench was presided over by Raja Arshid, Principal Magistrate JJB Srinagar and Vikas Bhardwaj, 2nd Additional Munsiff Srinagar, the 8th Bench was presided over by Shabir Ahmad Malik, Spl. Mobile Magistrate Traffic and Mufti Nahida, Addl. Special Mobile Magistrate Traffic Srinagar, the 9th Bench was presided over by Mohammad Ishtiaq Alam Baba, Forest Magistrate Srinagar and Kamiya Singh Andotra, Spl. Mobile Magistrate/Railway Magistrate Srinagar, the 10th Bench was presided over by Nazia Hassan, 4th Addl. Munsiff Srinagar and Zirgham Hamid, 1st Add. Munsiff/JMIC Srinagar, the 11th Bench was

presided over by Mainaz Qadir, Additional Spl. Mobile Magistrate/JMIC Panthachowk Srinagar and Adv. Baba Sajad, the 12th Bench was presided over by Dr. Farah Deeba, Officiating President District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Srinagar and Shabnum Munshi, Member District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Srinagar and the 13th Bench was presided over by Varun Kumar, 3rd Additional Munsiff/JMIC, Srinagar and Adv. Mir Naveed Gul, Panel Lawyer DLSA Srinagar.

The Chairman DLSA Srinagar distributed compensation cheques to the tune of Rs. 2,50,000 among the survivors of violence sanctioned by J&K Legal Services Authority.

The 4th National Lok Adalat of 2025 witnessed a huge participation of officers and officials from different departments; litigants.



ASEAN- India tourism exchange kicks off in Guwahati, puts NE at heart of regional travel plans

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 13 : Guwahati hosted the opening of the ASEAN-India Tourism Professionals Exchange Programme 2025, bringing together tourism professionals from India and ten ASEAN member countries for a week-long engagement aimed at strengthening regional travel linkages and positioning the North East as a key connector in ASEAN travel circuits.

The programme, organised by the Assam Tourism Development Corporation Ltd under the aegis of the Ministry of External Affairs, is being held from December 12-17 across Guwahati, Kaziranga and New Delhi. It focuses on building practical partnerships through business meetings, trade interactions and on-ground exposure to tourism products, with an emphasis on community-led and sustainable models.

The exchange follows India's participation at the MATTA Fair 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, where Assam and the North East were showcased as emerging destinations during the ASEAN-

India Year of Tourism. The current initiative seeks to convert that interest into tangible outcomes by giving ASEAN stakeholders a first-hand experience of the region's tourism infrastructure, heritage and natural assets.

A total of 41 delegates from ASEAN countries are participating, representing Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam.

They are joined by representatives from Indian tourism industry bodies and regional organisations. The opening days in Guwahati featured formal sessions, B2B meetings and experiential activities designed to encourage collaboration between tour operators and policymakers.

The programme began with the arrival of delegates in Guwahati on December 12, followed by a sunset cruise on the Brahmaputra that highlighted Assam's river tourism and community-based experiences. On December 13, the exchange was formally inaugurated at Hotel Mayfair, Guwahati, with structured business meetings



between tour operators from the North East, other parts of India and ASEAN countries. The day concluded with a cultural evening showcasing Assamese music, dance and cuisine.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for External

Affairs and Textiles Pabitra Margherita said the exchange reflects India's belief in tourism as a tool for regional cooperation and people-to-people ties. He noted that collaboration among tourism professionals helps create itineraries and partnerships that

endure beyond individual events, adding that closer ASEAN-India cooperation can lead to travel routes that respect culture, protect ecosystems and support local entrepreneurs.

Assam Tourism Minister Ranjeet Kumar Das said the

programme marks an important step in Assam's evolving tourism journey. He highlighted the state's focus on structured growth backed by infrastructure development, digital promotion and community participation, with the objective of building a competitive and responsible tourism economy that aligns with global standards.

Assam Tourism Development Corporation Managing Director Kumar Padmapani Bora described the exchange as a move to convert long-standing cultural links between India and ASEAN into working tourism partnerships. He said the programme allows delegates to experience Assam's wildlife, tea heritage and river tourism while engaging directly with local operators and communities, helping ensure that tourism growth is both meaningful for travellers and economically beneficial for host regions.

The design of the programme underlines the North East's role as India's natural bridge to ASEAN. Delegates are visiting Kaziranga National Park and nearby tea gardens, engaging with guides, lodge operators and entrepreneurs

involved in conservation-led tourism, reinforcing Assam's positioning as a gateway for nature and heritage experiences.

Discussions during the opening phase also focused on improving regional connectivity, including new air routes, upgraded highways and the upcoming terminal at Guwahati International Airport, which is expected to ease access for international visitors. Participants explored multi-destination itineraries linking Assam with other North Eastern states and ASEAN destinations, supported by coordinated marketing and digital outreach.

The positive momentum from the Guwahati leg is expected to carry forward to the remaining sessions in Kaziranga and New Delhi, where policy-level consultations with central ministries and ASEAN missions will take place. The engagements are expected to lead to familiarisation tours, joint promotions and collaborative product development, strengthening tourism flows between ASEAN countries and India's North East in the years ahead. UNI

UDF triumphs in Kerala local body polls, claims mandate 'precursor' to assembly win

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 13 : The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) Friday celebrated the significant victory in the Kerala local body elections, as a trailer to upcoming state assembly polls with top party leaders, including Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi, enthusiastically framing the outcome as a clear precursor to winning the upcoming Assembly elections.

The UDF's surge saw the alliance: Reclaiming major corporations, including Kochi, Kollam, and Thrissur. Surging ahead in a majority of municipalities and panchayats across the state. Injecting a fresh wave of confidence into its campaign machinery, marking a strong turnaround from

its struggles in the 2020 local body polls. The results are widely viewed by political observers as a major setback for the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) and a significant morale booster for the UDF. Congress President Kharge took to social media to express profound gratitude, viewing the results as a strong endorsement of the UDF's agenda.

"The Indian National Congress extends its heartfelt gratitude to the people of Kerala for the decisive verdict given to the UDF in local body elections," Kharge wrote on X. He added that the alliance is fully prepared to carry this momentum forward. "We are confident that our alliance – UDF, will receive a similar mandate in the Assembly Elections slated in the next few months too."

Echoing the sentiment, Congress



leader Rahul Gandhi described the win as a "decisive and heartening mandate."

"Asalute to the people of Kerala for placing their trust in the UDF in the local body elections... These results are a clear sign of growing confidence in the UDF and point

the way towards a sweep in the upcoming Assembly election. The message is clear: Kerala wants accountable governance that listens, responds, and delivers."

Gandhi also outlined the immediate focus for the UDF representatives: "Our focus now

is unwavering – standing with the common people of Kerala, addressing their everyday concerns, and ensuring transparent, people-first administration."

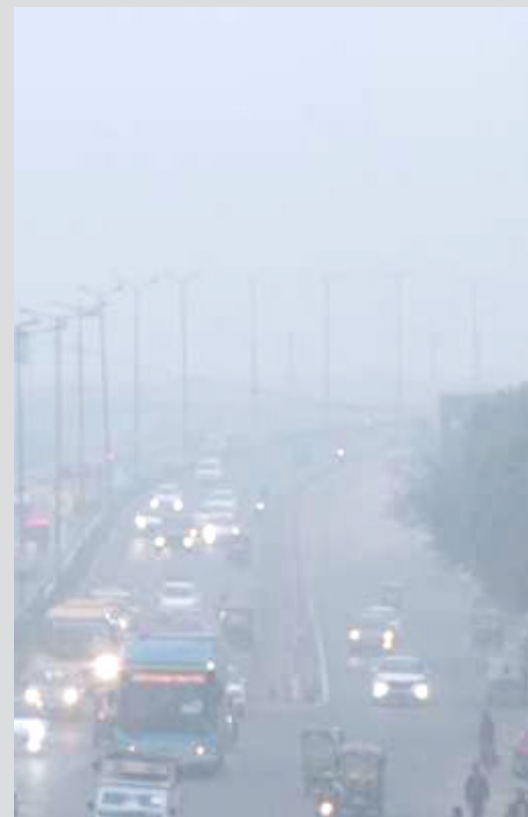
While the UDF's performance was the dominant story, the results also saw a significant breakthrough for the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance. The NDA registered a historic victory in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, securing their first-ever win in a Corporation council in the state. The coming months will witness a high-stakes campaign. Bolstered by the local body mandate, the UDF will now work to translate this momentum into an Assembly victory, mounting a strong challenge to the LDF's bid for a consecutive term in the 2026 Kerala Legislative Assembly elections. UNI

Toxic air grips Noida as it tops India's pollution list, AQI touches 455

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 13 : Noida woke up to the worst air in the country on Saturday, topping India's pollution charts as its Air Quality Index (AQI) soared to a hazardous 455, leaving residents of the National Capital Region (NCR) gasping for clean air.

A thick blanket of smog engulfed Noida and its neighbouring cities, as stagnant winds and falling temperatures trapped pollutants close to the ground, sharply degrading air quality across the region.



Air quality in the national Capital slipped into the 'severe' category, with Delhi recording an AQI of 431. Other NCR cities also figured among the most polluted in the country: Greater Noida at 442, Ghaziabad at 430, and Panipat at 426, according to the 4 pm national bulletin released by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on Saturday.

The deterioration has been swift. On Friday, Noida AQI stood at 386 in the "very poor" category, but surged dramatically over the last 24 hours due to calm winds and nipping cold that prevented the dispersal of pollutants.

Experts warned that the situation could worsen in the coming days. Dense fog is likely to prevail over Delhi during the morning hours on Monday and Tuesday, officials from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said, further hampering air quality.

Forecasts indicate that pollution levels are likely to remain in the "severe" category over the weekend, with the likelihood of improvement from Monday onwards slipping back to the "very poor" category. The Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi (EWS) has projected severe conditions for Saturday and Sunday, with AQI expected to stay above 450.

As per the CPCB classification, air quality readings between 300-400 fall under the 'very poor' category, which causes respiratory illness on prolonged exposure, while AQI levels above 400, in the 'severe' category, affect healthy people and seriously impact those with existing diseases. UNI

GRAP-3 kicks in; non-Delhi vehicles barred from Delhi-NCR

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 13 DEC : As Delhi's air quality slipped to the severe category, Graded Response Action Plan 3 (GRAP 3) measures were rolled out across the national capital and neighbouring cities by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Saturday.

Low wind speeds over the past three days have sharply worsened Delhi's air quality, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) rising from 259 ('Poor') on December 10 to 307 ('Very Poor') on December 11, and further to 349 ('Very Poor') on December 12. The deteriorating conditions pushed air quality into the 'severe' category during the early hours of Saturday.

Noting the sharp increasing trend of pollutants with the persistence of unfavourable weather conditions, in the coming days, the pollution watchdog announced GRAP 3 measures for Delhi-NCR.

CAQM noted that PM2.5 is the primary pollutant trapped near the surface, with almost all air quality monitoring stations in Delhi reporting PM2.5 as the predominant pollutant. The city's AQI stood at 387 at 6 am, worsened to 393 by 8 am, and touched 401 at 10 am on Saturday, breaching the 'severe' category. The emergency measures were invoked to prevent further deterioration of air quality in the region, which had declined drastically in the last few days.

"Keeping in view the prevailing trend of air quality and in an effort to prevent further deterioration of air quality in the region, the CAQM GRAP Sub-Committee today has taken the call to invoke all actions as envisaged under Stage-III of extant GRAP – 'Severe' Air Quality (DELHI AQI ranging between 401-450), with immediate effect, in the entire NCR," CAQM said.

Stage 3 restrictions include a ban on non-essential construction, the closure of stone crushers and brick kilns, and restrictions on the use of diesel generators, among other

emergency steps aimed at preventing further deterioration. Entry of diesel and petrol vehicles of different, below BS-IV norms in Delhi and the neighbouring NCR region, including Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, is not permitted under GRAP 3.

"GNCTD to not permit BS-IV diesel-operated LCVs (goods carriers), registered outside Delhi, to enter Delhi, except those carrying essential commodities / providing essential services," read the official order.

These measures are in addition to the GRAP 1 and 2 measures, which were enforced on October 14 and October 19, as the pollution levels peaked ahead of Diwali eve owing to bumper-to-bumper traffic snarls, stagnant winds, and bursting of crackers during the festive time. Earlier on November 22, CAQM, under the Supreme Court's directive to take proactive measures to curb the air pollution woes in the national capital, modified the GRAP measures, imposing stricter measures in earlier phases.

According to the revised protocol, two key Stage 4 measures that allow residents of Delhi-NCR to work remotely will now apply under GRAP Stage 3. The order states that NCR state governments and the GNCTD may permit public, municipal, and private offices to operate with 50% staff strength, with the remaining employees working from home. The Central government may also allow work-from-home arrangements for its employees in Delhi-NCR, it added.

Meanwhile, the CAQM issued strict enforcement measures across the NCR to curb air pollution, targeting sectors such as traffic congestion, road dust, and municipal solid waste management, including the prevention of waste burning.

To prevent the entry and movement of banned vehicles in Delhi and the NCR, the monitoring agency ordered intensified surveillance using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras at fuel stations. UNI

More restrictions as air quality slips to 'severe category' with AQI at 401

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 13 : In a bid to stop further deterioration of air quality, the subcommittee of GRAP decided to invoke the 9-point action plan as per Stage-III of extant Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in the entire National Capital Region (NCR) with immediate effect.

This follows an earlier order that barred non-Delhi vehicles from entering the NCR-Delhi.

The Sub-Committee said it will be keeping a close watch on the air quality scenario and review the situation from time to time for further appropriate decision depending upon the Air Quality in Delhi and forecast made by IMD and IITM.

Delhi's average Air Quality Index (AQI) has shown a sharp rise and was recorded 401 at 10 AM on Saturday bringing it into "Severe" Category which has AQI ranging between 401-450.

The decision follows meeting of Sub-Committee on GRAP convened on Saturday morning to take stock of current air quality scenario.

The Sub-Committee ruled out the local emissions and said the sharp rise AQI was owing to "calm winds, stable atmosphere, favourable meteorological conditions and lack of dispersal of pollutants."

"Actions under Stages-I, II & III of the extant GRAP shall be implemented, monitored and reviewed by all the agencies concerned in the entire NCR to ensure that the AQI levels do not slip further. All implementing agencies shall keep strict vigil and intensify measures of the extant schedule of GRAP," the Sub-Committee said in a statement here.

It urged "citizens to cooperate and adhere to the Citizen Charter of GRAP" while calling for a "strict implementation of actions under Stage-III of extant GRAP

in addition to actions under Stage-I and Stage-II of extant GRAP in NCR."

Stage 3 restrictions include a ban on non-essential construction, the closure of stone crushers and brick kilns, and restrictions on the use of diesel generators, among other emergency steps aimed at preventing further deterioration. Entry of diesel and petrol vehicles of different, below BS-IV norms in Delhi and the neighbouring NCR region, including Gurugram, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, is not permitted under GRAP 3.

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Keshav to lead Pretoria Capitals at SA20

Pretoria Capitals have a revamped squad and support staff for the upcoming SA20 season

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

SYDNEY: Keshav Maharaj has been appointed Pretoria Capitals (PC) captain for the upcoming season of the SA20 league, replacing Rilee Rossouw. He was captain of Durban Super Giants until last season. "Maharaj brings a wealth of international pedigree across formats, along with a proven track record of guiding teams with composure, clarity and intent," Capitals said in a statement on Friday. "Having captained South Africa in white-ball cricket and served as a senior figure within the national setup for several years, Maharaj's leadership experience, tactical understanding and consistency make him an invaluable addition in this role. His presence strengthens the balance and direction of the Pretoria Capitals squad as the team heads into the new season." Capitals have a revamped set-up this season, with Sourav Ganguly, the former India captain, taking over as head coach. Ganguly replaced Jonathan Trott and will be assisted by former South Africa captain Shaun Pollock.

The franchise went into the auction in September with the biggest purse - 32.5 million Rand (US\$1.85 million approx.) - and also the most slots to fill: 16. They splurged on Dewald Brevis, breaking the SA20 pay record by bidding 16.5 million Rand (US\$945,000 approx.) on the batter.

Maharaj was one of their big buys at the auction, where they also acquired Lungi Ngidi, Lizaad Williams, Craig Overton, Saqib Mahmood and Codi Yusuf, among others. Andre Russell, who recently retired as a player from the IPL before signing on as Kolkata Knight Riders' (KKR) power coach, was acquired as a wild card, while Will Jacks and Sherfane Ruthvenford were their pre-auction signings.



Nazir Ahmad Lone; A Torchbearer of Sports Activities in Kreeri Muradabad

■ HT SPORT DESK

MURADABAD KREERI: Nazir Ahmad Lone, Popularly known as Nazir Kreeri or Nazir Sir PET, has emerged as one of the most respected sports mentors of North Kashmir. A retired Physical Education Master from Thindima Kreeri, Baramulla, he devoted nearly forty years of his service to shaping the lives of young boys and girls through sports and discipline.

Throughout his remarkable career, Lone guided hundreds of students toward brighter futures and played a pivotal role in producing hundreds of national-level players across various sports disciplines. His dedication, passion, and commitment made him a household name



among students, parents, and sports enthusiasts of the region.

Even after retiring in 2018, Nazir Kreeri continues to remain deeply connected to the sports community. His tireless efforts in organizing cricket coaching camps and training young aspirants have made him a constant source of inspiration for the youth. Many budding players from Kreeri and adjoining areas now look up to him as a mentor who helps them prepare for higher national platforms.

In recognition of his exemplary service in the field of sports, the District Administration Baramulla has honored him with several Best Sports Teacher Awards during his tenure. His contributions continue to illuminate the path of thousands of students, making him a true torchbearer of sports and youth development in the region.

Warner: Head at No. 5 'a worse result' for England

■ ESPNCRICINFO

BRISBANE: David Warner has backed his former opening partner Usman Khawaja to return to the top of the order for the third Ashes Test in Adelaide, believing that having Travis Head at No. 5 is the option that can give England the most problems.

If Khawaja is passed fit following his back spasms, Australia's selectors face a huge call ahead of the match where the home side could secure the Ashes. Since Khawaja was unable to open in Perth, Head and Jake Weatherald, the latter in his first Test series, have produced two

impactful partnerships.

Opinions are divided over the best way for Australia to go, and coach Andrew McDonald suggested that using Khawaja in the middle order could be an option. But Warner is of the view they should revert to their original plan.

"I think Uzzy comes back in, slides to the top, and Trav goes down," Warner told reporters ahead of captaining Sydney Thunder in the BBL. "That's probably a worse result for England, Travis Head going back down the order."

Head averages 41.46 at No. 5, where he has made eight of

his ten Test centuries including three on his home ground at Adelaide Oval. Warner added that Head opening could remain an option when Khawaja retires, although he said there was no guarantee it would work in the longer run.

"At the end of the day, Travis put his hand up to bat in the situation he was in," Warner said. "He came out and batted in the way Travis Head does. You see plenty of interviews from Trav saying that is Uzzy's spot, and if when the time comes they ask him to go up the order, he wouldn't mind to do that."

"We didn't have that aggres-

sor down in the middle order [in previous years]. Australia has that now as well, and moving forward with whatever Uzzy decides to do, if he hangs them up, they can look that way."

"But then it's on all of us to understand that potentially might not work and Travis will have to go back down the order. And then they are going to have to look for another replacement. The selectors have a headache."

Warner endorsed Queensland's Matt Renshaw as the long-term option to open when Khawaja steps away.

"We've got a lot of young [opening] talent there at the mo-

ment that's coming through," he said. "But what I will say to George Bailey and the selectors is to show faith in their 31-year-old, Jake Weatherald. I think experience is key as well."

"So credit to them if they've picked him. But moving forward, Renshaw could be one. I think he'll slide straight back in there. He's had a taste of Test cricket."

Australia have not had a settled opening combination since Warner retired in early 2024. Prior to Khawaja's injury, he had gone in with five different opening partners across 15 Tests.

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