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Sunday
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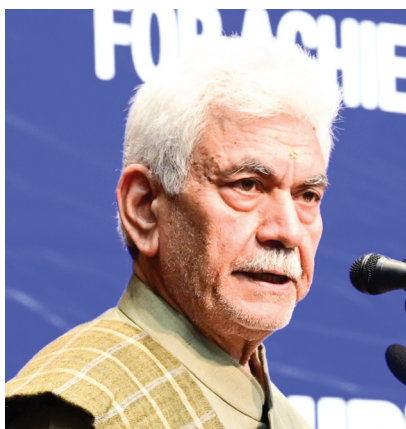
Macroeconomic Stability, Education & Health Are Pillars of Viksit Bharat: LG Manoj Sinha

Calls For Ending 'Insider-Outsider' Narrative; Stresses Digital Governance, Strategic Planning for India @2047

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, DEC 17: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that macroeconomic stability coupled with high investment in education and health is essential for achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, as he addressed the Strategic Management Forum Conference on Policy Making and Strategic Planning at IIM Jammu.

Highlighting the challenges and opportunities for India in a rapidly changing global landscape, the Lieutenant Governor underlined the critical role



of policymakers and business leaders in shaping a resilient and inclusive economy.

"Our focus should be on macroeconomic stability and high investment in education and health. Digital tools, participatory governance, transparency, accountability, speedy project implementation and effective public services for a growing population will be key for all-round development," LG Sinha said in his keynote address.

The three-day conference is being organised by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu, in collabo-

ration with the Strategic Management Forum (SMF) and NITI Aayog.

The Lieutenant Governor said that India's progress, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is unprecedented in the country's history, with strong growth in manufacturing, services, village industries, handloom and handicrafts sectors.

"Inclusive and Equitable growth lies at the core of the Prime Minister's vision. Government policies have focused on job creation, support for small businesses, increased public investment and

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J&K Poised to Emerge as Global Adventure Tourism Hub: CM Omar Abdullah

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that Jammu and Kashmir is ideally positioned to become a premier destination for adventure tourism, citing its vast natural potential and growing infrastructure. He was addressing the inaugural session of the 17th Annual Convention of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC).

The four-day national convention, being held in Srinagar from December 17 to 20, aims to project Jammu and Kashmir as a leading global hub for adventure tourism while

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Srinagar Police Attaches ₹1.5 Cr Property of Notorious Drug Peddler Under NDPS Act

■ HT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: In a significant move against narcotics trafficking, Srinagar Police on Tuesday attached an immovable property worth approximately ₹1.5 crore belonging to a notorious drug peddler under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

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Dry Spell Likely to Break as Wet Weather Expected With Onset of Chillai-Kalan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: The prolonged dry weather conditions prevailing across Kashmir are likely to ease in the coming days, with the possibility of a wet spell coinciding with the onset of Chillai-Kalan, the harshest 40-day winter period, officials said on Wednesday.

The local Meteorological Department said a western disturbance is expected to impact

Jammu and Kashmir around December 21 and 22, aligning with the beginning of Chillai-Kalan in the valley. Due to this weather system, there is a possibility of moderate to heavy snowfall over higher reaches of Kashmir, while the plains may witness light to moderate rain or snowfall.

Chillai-Kalan, which begins on December 21 and lasts until January 30, is traditionally marked by the coldest phase of winter in the region. During this period, the



chances of snowfall are at their highest and temperatures typically witness a sharp decline across the valley.

So far, Kashmir has not experienced any major wet spell this winter. Officials said the prevailing dry weather has contributed to an increase in seasonal ailments such as cough and the common cold among locals.

Meanwhile, sub-zero night temperatures continued to

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Youth Engagement Crucial for Nation-Building; North Kashmir Police Step Up Crackdown on Drugs: DIG

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: Emphasising the pivotal role of youth in shaping the future of the country, Deputy Inspector General of Police, North Kashmir Range,

Maqsood Zaman on Wednesday said that meaningful youth participation and stronger communication between young people and institutions are essential for nation-building.

Speaking to the media, the DIG

said that while young people face several challenges, their concerns often lack clarity in presentation despite the fact that many of these issues come with practical and constructive solutions suggested by the youth themselves. He

stressed the need for better platforms to bridge this communication gap.

Maqsood Zaman said the police are continuously engaging with the public, listening to

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'J&K relies on 95 percent imported power'

Local generation amounts to 4.6 percent

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: Jammu and Kashmir imports more than 95 percent of its electricity—a stark dependency that leaves the region vulnerable as it grapples with an 800 MW power deficit.

The officials informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Jammu

and Kashmir is importing electricity ranging from 2900 MWs to 3100 MWs during the peak hours.

It also said that during the other hours, the region is importing electricity ranging from 2400 MWs to 2800 MWs.

The official however clarified that the power import includes all the sources

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Special Military Train Ferries Tanks, Artillery Guns To Kashmir

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

JAMMU, DEC 17: The Indian Army achieved a major logistics milestone with the induction of tanks and artillery guns into the Kashmir valley by a special military train, demonstrating

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Kashmir heart of India's adventure growth story: ATOAI President Bajaj

Says adventure tourism now a 683 billion dollars global industry

■ HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: Asserting that Kashmir stands at the heart of India's adventure growth story, president of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) Ajeet Bajaj on Wednesday said that adventure tourism has become a 683 billion dollar glob-

al industry, outpacing even the textile sector/

Speaking at the 17th Annual Convention of ATOAI at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, Bajaj, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Jammu and Kashmir is symbolic of India's adventure

resurgence and is heart of India's adventure growth story."

Referring to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Baja said, "It's wonderful to be in a state where the CM himself is an adventurer, a marathon runner, skier, cyclist and rafter."

He said, "J&K is a second home to me. Every winter I have skied

in Gulmarg, every summer I have trekked in Kashmir's wilderness."

Bajaj said adventure tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing global sectors, valued at 683 billion dollar, compared to 667 billion dollar for the textile industry.

"According to pre-pandemic

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Div Com Reviews Process of Flood Plain Zoning along Jhelum

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department to review the notification status for delineation and demarcation of flood plain/flood basins identified post 2014 floods in Jhelum basin to regulate land use and human activity for obviating flood threats and minimise flood damages.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Central, Chief Engineer I&FC, Deputy Director Planning, Executive Engineers of I&FC, and other concerned officers.

At the outset, I&FC officials gave a detailed presentation on Flood

Plain Zoning and the notification of flood basins. The presentation covered the impact of the 2014 floods, inundation statistics of agricultural, built-up and wasteland areas, loss of floodplain storage due to urbanisation and encroachment, integrated flood management strategies including structural and non-structural measures, and regulation of activities in flood-prone areas.

Addressing the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner directed I&FC officials to reconcile flood basin expanse areas of six wetlands with the Forest & Wildlife Departments. These flood basins play critical role for flood moderation and storage of excess flood waters.

He also directed for circulation of land use classification details



includes that of private players for calling objections from public at large.

The Div Com stressed on the need to have scientific demarcation on the basis of hydrologic modelling, be done on left side of River Jhelum from Sangam to Padshahi Bagh which would further pave way for the administration to finalise the related extract revenue records reflecting land use. He further directed the modelling of a once-in-twenty-five-years flood area for the regulatory zone, freezing the boundary of regulatory zone to put the process on fast track.

Assistant Commissioner Central was asked to ensure the availability of revenue records of Anchar and Wullar lakes to the I&FC Department.

Traffic Police Step Up Enforcement in Qazigund-Kulgam; Six Vehicles Seized, ₹54,000 Fine Imposed

■ FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, DEC 17: As part of a continuous special drive against traffic violators, the Traffic Police on Tuesday conducted an extensive enforcement and awareness campaign at various locations across the Qazigund-Kulgam sector. The special drive was led by DySP Traffic Mohammad Aslam, along with multiple traffic enforcement teams, with the objective of curbing traffic violations and ensuring smooth vehicular movement. During the drive, six vehicles were seized, 122 on-the-spot challans were issued, and penalties amounting to ₹54,000 were imposed on violators.



In addition to enforcement action, the traffic department organised awareness programmes to educate drivers and the general public about the importance of following traffic rules and their strict implementation on the ground.

The drive is part of the Traffic Police's ongoing efforts to streamline traffic movement and ensure safe and smooth passage for commuters. The initiative was widely appreciated by the general public.

Meanwhile, DySP Traffic Mohammad Aslam urged vehicle drivers and bikers to strictly adhere to traffic rules for their own safety as well as the safety of others.

Mahak Dramatic Club Stages Acclaimed Theatre Play “Aedear Zaet” at Women’s College Nowakadal

Cultural Academy Lauds the Effort; Such Quality Theatre Promotes Social Awareness and Dialogue: Principal Prof. Huda

■ JAMEEL ANSARI

SRINAGAR, DEC 16: The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages organised a theatre performance at Government Women's College Nowakadal, Srinagar, where Mahak Dramatic Club, Srinagar, presented the theatre play “Aedear Zaet”, written by Ashok Kak and directed by renowned television, radio and theatre artist Farhat Siddiqui. The performance received an overwhelming response and appreciation from the audience. The play effectively exposed the regressive mindset that considers daughters a burden on society. The central character reflects the pressures of social stigma and moral decline, which compel him to interfere in the lives of others. Through powerful storytelling, the play conveyed the message that daughters are a blessing, not a burden, and that their dignity, upbringing and respect form the foundation of a healthy and progressive society.

The characters were portrayed with remarkable depth and realism by Farhat Siddiqui, Jan Majrooh, Hilal Khan, Shabir Hakak, Mehja-



been Inkisari, Ali Mehdi and Tanveer Ahmad Dar, whose performances were highly appreciated. The artists successfully communicated the core theme of the play through their natural and impactful acting.

Prior to the performance, Dr. Mohi-ud-Din Zor Kashmiri, Professor of Urdu at the college, presented the welcome address and warmly greeted the audience, artists and organisers. He highlighted theatre as a powerful medium for social reform and intellectual awakening, adding that drama festivals play a significant role in

engaging youth in positive and creative pursuits.

The event was graced by Principal Govt. Women's College Nowakadal, Prof. Dr Huda Gulzai, and Dr Mushtaq Ahmad Ganai as chief guests. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Huda appreciated the efforts of Mahak Dramatic Club and the Cultural Academy, expressing hope that such meaningful productions would continue to promote awareness and dialogue in society, especially among young audiences.

On the occasion, Mahak Dramatic Club honoured Dr. Huda Gulzai, Dr. Asmat

Ara and Dr. Mohi-ud-Din Zor Kashmiri for their support and contribution. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Ganai also shared his views regarding the significance of such cultural initiatives.

The vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Waseem Ahmad, Assistant Professor, on behalf of the college, and Dr. Syed Iftikhar Ahmad, Senior Officer of the Cultural Academy, who expressed gratitude to the college administration, faculty members, students and artists. The programme was conducted by Dr Gulzar Ahmad Rathar, Assistant Editor, Cultural Academy.

Modi govt driving transformational change in Kashmir

Ashok Koul highlights Modi Govt’s development push in Kashmir at public convention in Pulwama

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA, DEC 17: Jammu & Kashmir BJP General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, along with senior party leaders, addressed a large public convention at Patipora Lassipora in Pulwama district, where he elaborated on the BJP's vision of sustained development, lasting peace, and inclusive growth in Jammu and Kashmir, with special emphasis on the Kashmir region.

Ashok Koul was accompanied by BJP State Secretary Mudasar Wani, District President Pulwama Er. Showkat Gayoor, BJP Kisan Morcha leader and programme organiser Arshad Bhat, and senior leader Awataar Singh. The leaders also interacted with local residents and listened to their concerns, aspirations, and suggestions.

Addressing the gathering,

Ashok Koul said that under the decisive and visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Kashmir region has witnessed unprecedented development on a war footing. He stated that the Modi-led government has brought about a historic transformation by shifting the region's narrative from an era dominated by open terrorism and instability to one driven by tourism, infrastructure growth, youth empowerment, and economic opportunities.

Ashok Koul highlighted that focused attention has been given to socio-economic development, with special emphasis on tourism promotion, road and connectivity projects, education, healthcare, and employment generation. Kashmir, he said, is now hosting world-level programmes, international sporting events, cultural festivals, and global con-



ferences, showcasing its potential as a hub of peace, hospitality, and progress.

Ashok Koul said that the revival of tourism has not only strengthened the local economy

but has also restored confidence among the people, particularly the youth, who are now choosing sports, innovation, and entrepreneurship over conflict. He emphasized that peace and prosperity

are now becoming the identity of Kashmir, replacing fear and uncertainty.

Calling for greater public participation, Ashok Koul urged the people to actively support and engage with development initiatives to send a strong message of peace and harmony to the world. He said that the BJP, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, remains fully committed to the welfare of the people at the grassroots level and is implementing welfare schemes for farmers, youth, women, and the underprivileged in a mission mode.

Koul further said that the Modi-led BJP government will continue to work tirelessly to ensure inclusive growth, social justice, and lasting peace in Jammu & Kashmir, ensuring that the benefits of development reach every household.

KU celebrates Indian Philosophers’ Day with expert lectures

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 17: The Department of Philosophy, University of Kashmir (KU), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), New Delhi, celebrated Indian Philosophers' Day at the Main Campus.

The event aimed to revisit the ideas of Indian philosophers, highlight their relevance to contemporary social and ethical issues, and encourage critical engagement with India's philosophical traditions among students and scholars.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, said, “Indian philosophy offers a rich intellectual heritage that continues to shape our understanding of ethics, knowledge, and society. Engaging with these traditions helps students develop critical thinking and a deeper sense of responsibility towards society.”

Registrar KU, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, said that such



academic platforms strengthen the culture of reflection and dialogue within universities, while Dean, School of Arts, Languages and Literature KU, Prof. Aejaz Mohammed Sheikh, noted that philosophy plays a key role in linking classical thought with present-day academic and social concerns.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Prof. Tasleem War, Coordinator, Department of Philosophy KU, outlined the objective of the programme and highlighted the importance of commemorating Indian Philosophers' Day as a space for sustained academic engagement.

The day-long event featured expert lectures by Prof. Sanullah Mir, Prof. Gulshan Majeed, Prof. M. H. Zaffer, and Dr. Satish Vimal, who discussed diverse themes related to Indian philosophical thought and its contemporary relevance.

The event was attended by heads of various departments, faculty members, research scholars, and students of the University.

Tarigami Seeks Hike in Honorarium for J&K Anganwadi Workers, Helpers

■ FAROOQ RATHER

JAMMU, DEC 17: CPI(M) leader and MLA from Kulgam, M.Y. Tarigami, has urged the Jammu and Kashmir government to substantially increase the state's share of honorarium for Anganwadi workers and helpers, stating that they are among the lowest paid in the country.

Tarigami said that Anganwadi workers in J&K receive only ₹600 per month as the state contribution, while helpers get ₹300, in addition to the central assistance of ₹4,500 and ₹2,250 respectively. As a result, Anganwadi workers receive around ₹5,100 per month, while helpers



receive nearly half of that amount—significantly lower compared to most other states where the combined honorarium is close to ₹10,000 or more.

He termed the situation “deeply unjust,” pointing out that Anganwadi workers and helpers in Jammu and Kashmir perform the same duties as their counterparts in other states but are paid far less. Tarigami said he has repeatedly raised the issue with the government and was given assurances, but despite this, the workers and helpers have not received their monthly honorarium for nearly five to six months.

The CPI(M) leader demanded the immediate release of all pending honorarium payments and called upon the government to enhance its contribution to ensure dignified wages and timely disbursement for Anganwadi workers and helpers across the Union Territory.

DC Srinagar visits Gangbugh area of City to inspect developmental projects

Directs expediting works on dewatering station to improve civic amenities & Gangbugh Bridge to connect habitations

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today visited Gangbugh area of the City and conducted an on-site inspection of developmental projects to assess their progress and ensure timely completion aimed to improve civic amenities in the area. Besides, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar and Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Qureshi, Superintendent Engineers of UEED, R&B and SMC, Executive Engineers R&B & PCD-I, Tehsildar South among others accompanied the Deputy Commissioner. During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the work on the dewatering station being executed at the cost of Rs 1.16 crore to improve the civic amenities in the low-lying area of the City. On the occasion, the DC was informed that over 50 percent of the project has been completed. The DC directed the concerned



Emphasis was laid on maintaining quality standards and adhering to prescribed timelines.

The Deputy Commissioner also inspected the construction work of the truss girder Gangbugh Bridge being executed at Rs 15.53 crore.

Underlining the significance of the bridge in improving connectivity between various habitations of the area, the DC instructed the concerned executing agency to accelerate the pace of work and ensure the bridge is completed at the earliest for public convenience. The Deputy Commissioner reiterated the administration's commitment to strengthening urban infrastructure and directed officers to address bottlenecks, if any, for the timely execution of all the ongoing projects. While interacting with the locals on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner assured them that all their genuine concerns raised shall be addressed at the earliest.

departments to expedite the project to improve drainage and enhance civic amenities for local residents.

SKUAST-K KVK Bandipora Organises Technology Demonstration on Aquatic Crop Cultivation

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BANDIPORA, DECEMBER 17: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Bandipora, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), organised a technology demonstration on scientific cultivation of aquatic crops to promote aquatic plant development and livelihood opportunities through wetland-based agriculture in Kashmir.

The demonstration focused on high-potential aquatic crops including Gorgon Nut (Makhana/Fox Nut), Water Chestnut, and Lotus, which offer strong potential for agricultural diversification, income enhancement, and sustainable utilization of water-rich ecosystems around Wular Lake.

The initiative marks the first organised scientific demonstration of aquatic crop cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir and represents a significant step towards promoting wetland-based agriculture in the region.

The programme gained added significance following the MoU signed in October between SKUAST Kashmir and ICAR-National Research Centre for Makhana (ICAR-NRCM), Darbhanga, aimed at strengthening collaborative research and development in aquatic crops.

Principal Scientist, ICAR-NRCM, Darbhanga, Prof. Indu Shekhar Singh, conducted live field-based demonstrations on scientific cultivation practices of makhana and water chestnut under local agro-ecological conditions, highlighting their economic viability in Kashmir's wetlands.

Chief Scientist, AICRP on Post-Harvest Technology, highlighted the importance of post-harvest management and value addition to enhance profitability from aquatic crops.

Head, KVK Bandipora-1, informed that lotus cultivation has been successfully established at the KVK demonstration farm with high production under organic conditions, strengthening prospects for expansion of aquatic crops.

Scientists, staff, and farmers from different parts of the district actively participated in the programme.

DC Shopian chairs DLRC/DCC meeting

Stresses timely credit delivery & universal financial inclusion

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SHOPIAN, DECEMBER 17: The District Level Review Committee/District Consultative Committee (DLRC/DCC) meeting for the second quarter of the financial year 2025-26 (ended September 30, 2025) was convened today at the Mini-Secretariat Shopian, which was presided over by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the district's banking performance was carried out with special focus on credit-deposit ratio, sector-wise lending, priority sector advances, agriculture and allied sector credit, self-employment schemes and progress under government-sponsored programmes including PMJDY, KCC, PMEGP, Mudra and others.

It was apprised that the growth in deposits as on September, 30th, 2025 has shown increase of 11% on YOY basis and 3% decrease as compared to

previous quarter ended 30th June, 2025. The growth in advances as on September 30, 2025 has shown increase of 8% on YOY basis and 6% increase as compared to the previous quarter ended 30th June, 2025.

Priority sector advances have shown an increase of 8% on YOY basis and 1% decrease as compared to the previous quarter ended 30th June, 2025. Non priority sector of the district have shown an increase of 9% on YOY basis and 1% increase as compared to previous quarter 30th June, 2025.

Against the financial target of Rs. 2016.87 crore and physical target of 43814 beneficiaries under DCP 2025-26, the various banks operating in the district have disbursed Rs. 1110.37 Crore to 35242 beneficiaries ending 2nd quarter of financial year 2025-26, thereby achieving the financial targets by 55% and physical targets by 80%.

Te DC stressed the need for timely and hassle-free credit delivery,

especially to farmers, youth, entrepreneurs and Self Help Groups (SHGs) and directed banks to expedite disposal of pending credit disposal cases, improve coverage under social security schemes and strengthen financial literacy initiatives at the grassroots level.

Emphasizing inter-departmental coordination, the DC urged line departments to ensure prompt submission of viable cases to banks and resolve bottlenecks in implementation. He also highlighted the importance of increasing digital banking and ensuring saturation of eligible beneficiaries under flagship schemes.

The meeting was attended by CPO, Shopian, Mudasir Ahmad; LDM, Farooq Ahmad Dar; Cluster-Head J&K Bank, Abdul Majid; DDM, NABARD, Junaid Ahmed, representatives of RBI & RESETI, district officers of line departments and officials from various banks operating in the district.

Director Agriculture Kashmir Reviews implementation of HADP, CAPEX and CSS in district Budgam

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 17: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah on Wednesday reviewed implementation of key agriculture schemes HADP, CAPEX and CSS in district Budgam.

During a review meeting held at the Agriculture Complex Lalmandi Srinagar, the Director sought detailed updates on applications received, processed and sanctioned under the Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project and ongoing initiatives under the Holistic Agriculture



Development Programme.

Officials were asked to account for achievements recorded so far,

including progress initiatives and support to agricultural entrepreneurs. He impressed

upon concerned officers to speed up the implementation, expenditure under different

schemes and flagship programs so that the set targets could be achieved.

Officials were instructed to avoid procedural delays and ensure applications move faster from scrutiny to sanction.

The Director stressed the need for better coordination between department, farming community and financial institutions to ensure schemes translate into real support for farmers.

The meeting was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Sub Divisional Agriculture Officers and other officers of the department.

Cooperatives linking to global markets ensuring farmer welfare: Sat Sharma flags exports, govt reforms

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI, DEC 17: Jammu & Kashmir BJP President and Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament, Sat Sharma, raised an important starred question in the Rajya Sabha on cooperative exports and market linkages, underlining the pivotal role of cooperatives in strengthening agriculture and enhancing farmers' incomes across the country. Terming it his maiden question in the Upper House, Sat Sharma expressed gratitude for the opportunity and congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of Cooperation for taking decisive and result-oriented steps to revive and strengthen the cooperative sector. He emphasized that multiple agencies are working

for agricultural development and asked how the collective efforts of the government are translating into tangible benefits for farmers and citizens, particularly through cooperative exports and market access. Responding to the query, Murlidhar Mohol, Minister of State for Cooperation, said that the government is working with seriousness and commitment to strengthen key sectors such as dairy, fisheries, fertilizers, sugar, and milk production through cooperatives. He informed the House that cooperatives contribute nearly 30% of fertilizer production, 30% of sugar production, and 18% of milk production, many of which have growing demand in international markets. The Minister highlighted that the absence of

multi-state cooperative societies earlier had limited India's capacity to meet global demand. Addressing this gap, the Modi government created three new multi-state cooperative societies in 2023, promoting high-quality seeds, organic farming, and export-oriented production. He noted that NCL is currently promoting around 40 products, with 13,900 cooperative committees across 31 states now part of this initiative, ensuring fair value and profit-sharing directly to farmers. Raising a supplementary question, Sat Sharma asserted that NCL plays a paramount role in ensuring profits reach farmers and sought clarity on whether farmers could directly join NCL and what mechanisms are in place for their inclusion.

India Skills 2025 Health and Social Care Competition Held at GMC Srinagar

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 17: Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar hosted the India Skills 2025 Jammu and Kashmir competition for the Health and Social Care Skill today.

'India Skills', India's largest skill competition, the platform helps young professionals demonstrate job ready skills, covering 63 skill categories.

Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan Shah, Principal and Dean, Government Medical College Srinagar, inaugurated the event in presence of Administrator, Mohammad Ashraf Hakak. Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan Shah highlighted the technical importance of competency based assessment in health care training. She stressed adherence to standardized clinical protocols, patient safety checklists, and ethical care practices. She said skill competitions strengthen hands on proficiency, clinical decision making, and teamwork. She encouraged



participants to align their performance with national health standards and global benchmarks. The regional competition focused on Health and Social Care. Participants demonstrated skills in patient care, communication, hygiene practices, and safety procedures.

The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation from skilled youth across the UT and was conducted in accordance with national skill standard and prescribed assessment criteria.

The event reinforced GMC Srinagar's

role in promoting skill based education and preparing youth for national and international health care challenges.

Faculty members present on the occasion included Prof Dr S M Salim Khan, Head of the Department of Community Medicine; Prof Dr Rakesh Koul, Head of the Department of Medicine; Dr Mohammad Ashraf, Associate Professor, and State level Co-ordinator Syed Tabsum Geelani and also other faculty members of GMC Srinagar.

DC Srinagar reviews progress of JKCIP, HADP & KKGs in the district

Emphasis laid on accelerating implementation & enhanced service delivery across Agriculture and allied sectors

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 17: In order to review the latest status and progress in implementation of Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) and various ongoing projects under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Wednesday here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The DC also reviewed status of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) aimed at strengthening farmer-centric services, boosting agri-income and bridging gaps in scheme delivery, focusing on digital integration (CSC portal), licensing (seeds, fertilizers), financial inclusion (KCC), and increasing daily transactions/income for these farmer service centers to make them self-sustaining and



efficient delivery points for government schemes.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the latest status of applications received, processed and approved under HADP and JKCIP by agriculture and allied



departments. He also evaluated achievements related to Kisan Khidmat Ghars, including progress in farmer and farm registration and issuance of seed, fertilizer and pesticide licences to Krishi Udhayamis. The DC further assessed the status

of Daksh Kisan enrolment, establishment of units, and credit linkage progress under various allied sector schemes.

The DC directed the departments to work with added zeal ensuring speedy processing and sanctioning of beneficiary cases, enhanced beneficiary enrolment, and timely uploading and verification of data on designated portals as per laid guidelines. He also urged banks to improve the sanction ratio to ensure timely financial assistance reaches eligible beneficiaries.

Besides, Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi and Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, the meeting was attended by Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, District Agriculture Officer, Assistant Director Fisheries, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, District Sericulture Officer, District Programme Officer NRLM and other concerned.

DC Budgam Flags off Trekking Camp to Pahalgam

Says adventure sports foster physical fitness, discipline and team spirit among youth

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Uddin Bhat, today flagged off a trekking camp to the famous tourist destination Pahalgam, for boys of all age groups hailing from District Budgam.

The ceremony was held at the DC Office complex Budgam, in the presence of participating students and officials.

The trekking camp is being organized by the District Administration Budgam in collaboration with the Department of Youth Services and Sports, Budgam, as part of sustained efforts to encourage youth participation in outdoor and adventure-based activities.

While interacting with the students, the DC said that adventure sports play a vital role in building physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, and self-confidence among young people.

He stated that such exposure visit helps inculcate leadership qualities, resilience, and a spirit of cooperation, which are essential for the overall personality development of the youth.

The DC encouraged students to make optimum use of the opportunity by actively engaging in all activities planned during

the camp. He laid emphasis on following safety protocols, maintaining discipline, and respecting nature throughout the trekking expedition.

The DC extended best wishes to the participants for a safe, healthy, and enriching experience.

He also stated that the District Administration Budgam remains committed to promoting sports, adventure tourism, and healthy lifestyle initiatives as part of its broader youth empowerment strategy. Such programmes are instrumental in channelizing the energy of youth in a positive and productive direction, he said.

On the occasion, the District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO), Budgam, along with other concerned officers and officials of the department, were present and briefed the DC about the arrangements put in place to ensure the smooth, safe, and well-coordinated conduct of the camp.

The initiative aims to encourage adventure sports, promote physical and mental well-being, and provide the youth with an opportunity to explore the scenic beauty and natural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir, thereby fostering environmental awareness and a sense of belonging among the participants.

DC BUDGAM REVIEWS ACTION PLAN FOR ‘PRASHASAN GAON KI ORE’ OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Directs effective grievance redressal & doorstep service delivery at grassroots level during the week

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BUDGAM, DECEMBER 17: As part of Good Governance Week 2025, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, today chaired a meeting to review preparations for the upcoming "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" campaign, scheduled to be held from December 19 to December 25.

During the meeting, the DC outlined a comprehensive action plan aimed at ensuring effective grievance redressal and delivery of public services at the grassroots level. He directed all departments to ensure that public grievances received during the campaign period are resolved on a priority basis, and that a daily report on grievance redressal be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner's office without fail.

The DC directed the Revenue Department to conduct revenue

grievance redressal camps in every revenue village, with special emphasis on resolving issues related to Mutation by Inheritance (Virasati Intikal), Jan Sugam, JK Samadhan, and other revenue-related services.

Similarly, the Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Budgam and all Block Development Officers (BDOs) were instructed to organise camps for registration of births and deaths, IHHL registration, issuance of new job cards, and other related services.

The DC emphasized that the Rural Development Department (RDD), being the nodal department, will coordinate with all line departments at the Panchayat level to ensure doorstep delivery of services.

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Budgam, was directed to ensure the organisation of health camps in every tehsil during the campaign period to provide basic healthcare services and medical consultations,



besides increasing registration of ABHA IDs.

The Handloom and Handicrafts Department was directed to conduct on-the-spot artisan registrations.

The Agriculture and Allied Departments were instructed to enhance coverage under Kisan Credit Card (KCC), update farmer details on the Kisan Daksh Portal, facilitate new FPO registrations,

and intensify beneficiary enrolment during Sushasan Saptah.

The Social Welfare Department and the Lead District Manager (LDM) were directed to increase beneficiary coverage under various social security and welfare schemes in every Panchayat of the district.

Further, the DC directed all departments to hold special camps and seminars on good governance, aimed at creating awareness among citizens about government initiatives, service delivery mechanisms, and best practices in governance.

The meeting was attended by ADC Budgam Mehraj-ud-Din Shah; CPO Budgam, Javed Ahmad; ACD Budgam, Hilal Ahmad; CMO Budgam, all SDMs, CEO Municipality Budgam, District Information Officer, District Informatics Officer, all Tehsildars, BDOs, and other concerned officers and officials of the district.

DC Kupwara directs R&B to make Drugmulla-Hatmulla Bridge operational at earliest

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KUPWARA, DECEMBER 17: On the demand of local residents, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, today visited Drugmulla to review the issue of the non-operational bridge between Drugmulla



and Hatmulla.

He was accompanied by the Tehsildar Drugmulla and other concerned officers.

During the visit, the DC interacted with the local residents who apprised him of the hardships they face due to the non-functional bridge, compelling them to travel through a longer and inconvenient route.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned engineers of the R&B Department to expedite the pace of work of approach road to the bridge. Executive Engineer R&B Handwara assured that the bridge would be made operational by the end of March 2026.

The Deputy Commissioner assured the public that all genuine issues would be addressed on priority to improve infrastructure and public services in the area.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar inaugurates Common Room and Cafeteria for Stakeholders at High Court

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 18: In a significant step towards strengthening judicial infrastructure and enhancing facilities for court stakeholders, Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Judge, High Court of J&K and Ladakh and Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, inaugurated a Common Room and Cafeteria within premises of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh today.

The facilities were inaugurated in the presence of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul, Justice Sanjay Dhar, Justice Waseem Sadiq Nargal, Justice Rajesh Sekhri and Justice Sanjay Parihar.

On the occasion, Justice Sanjeev Kumar highlighted that these facilities form part of the continuous and visionary efforts of Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, to modernize and strengthen judicial infrastructure across the Union Territory, with a focus on dignity, accessibility and efficiency in the administration of justice.

The newly inaugurated Common Room and Cafeteria have been designed to provide comfortable, accessible and functional spaces for Judges, advocates, litigants and court staff, thereby fostering a more humane, efficient and inclusive court environment. These utilities are aimed at ensuring convenience, facilitating meaningful interaction, and improving the overall court experience for all stakeholders.

The event was graced by the presence of Shazia Tabassum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority; Khurshed-ul-Islam, Registrar Judicial; Mohsin ul Qadri Sr. Additional Advocate General; Tahir Majeed Shamsi, Deputy Solicitor General of India; Jahangir Ahmad Bakshi Joint Registrar Judicial, learned Senior Advocates; officers of the Registry; and members of the Bar.

DYSS Baramulla Commences 5-Day Trekking Expedition for Girls at Pahalgam

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 17: Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS), District Baramulla, commenced the 5-Day Trekking Expedition for Girls at the picturesque destination of Pahalgam, marking another significant step towards promoting adventure sports and outdoor learning among young girls of the district.

The trekking expedition was flagged off on Monday from Karipa Park, Baramulla. A total of 47 girl students from various parts of District Baramulla, accompanied by 10 escort



teachers, are participating in the programme with great enthusiasm and zeal.

The trekking expedition aims to promote adventure tourism, physical

fitness, environmental awareness, and self-confidence among girls, while encouraging their active participation in outdoor and challenging activities.

SKUAST-K kickstarts Workshop on Data Analytics and Policy Insights

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 17: To bridge the gap between academic research and data-driven governance, a three-day intensive workshop on "Applied Data Analytics and Policy Insights" was inaugurated today at SKUAST-K.

The workshops was organized by the SKUAST-K's Institute of Business and Policy Research (IBPR), Faculty of Horticulture under the aegis of Mission Yuva and HADP-04. The program aims to provide a robust platform for students and youth to know the evolving landscape of data science.

The inaugural ceremony was

presided over by Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who encouraged the participating youth to step into their roles as the leaders of tomorrow. He emphasized that leadership in the 21st century is inextricably linked to the ability to interpret complex information and make evidence-based decisions. Prof. Ganai stressed that the workshop should focus on practical, "hands-on" mastery of innovative techniques. He specifically called for a rigorous assessment of the learning outcomes, ensuring that every participant has knowledge of tangible skills that can be applied to real-world policy challenges.

In the welcoming remarks, Prof. F.A. Shaheen, Head, Institute of Business and Policy Research, underscored the critical role that data now plays as the "new fuel" of the global economy. He emphasized that understanding data is no longer a niche skill but a fundamental requirement for shaping modern economic policies and driving institutional growth. Expanding on this global perspective, Prof. S. A. Wani provided a detailed analysis of how developed nations, have achieved unprecedented international market dominance by leveraging sophisticated data insights to inform their trade and

manufacturing strategies. Prof. R.H. Kanth, Dean Faculty of Horticulture, highlighted the urgent need to integrate data analytics into the core academic curriculum. She noted that proficiency in these tools is a significant driver of employability, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for the demands of the modern workforce. Prof. Altaf A. Bhat, Director Education, further enriched the discussion by addressing the technical complexities of modern data handling. He urged participants to move beyond traditional methods and embrace the innovative software packages and

analytical platforms. Dr. Ubair Nisar, Organizing Secretary of the program, highlighted the significance of the workshop in today's data-driven world, noting that data science has emerged as a critical skill across nearly all sectors of the economy. He emphasized that the workshop is particularly relevant as it enables participants to acquire essential competencies in collecting, managing, analyzing and interpreting large volumes of data, thereby supporting informed and effective decision-making. The workshop's interdisciplinary appeal was evidenced by the diverse participation of scholars.

HT EDITORIAL

Make AIIMS Kashmir operational as early as possible

Some years back in order to give a push to the quality healthcare for the people of Jammu & Kashmir it was decided that two All India Institutes of Medical Sciences would be constructed. While one AIIMS was envisaged to be constructed in the Jammu division the other one was going to be constructed in the Kashmir valley. For the Kashmir valley Ganderbal area was selected for the construction of AIIMS but the plan was shelved.

Awantipora area was later on selected as the site for the construction of AIIMS of Kashmir. As far as AIIMS Jammu is concerned Vijaypur area was selected and there was no change in the same. It has been observed that hardly few construction works are completed on time in Kashmir and the deadline for the same gets revised every now and then. Same has happened with the construction work on AIIMS and for the same deadline has been revised on a regular basis.

While the AIIMS Jammu has already started functioning the work on AIIMS Kashmir is going on at a snail's pace. According to the latest reports only 70 percent of work has been completed and it will take many more months for the work to be completed on the project. The AIIMS Jammu is working at a full throttle and as many as 34 departments are carrying out the work at the tertiary medical facility. People coming from different areas of the Jammu division are making optimum use of the facilities at AIIMS Jammu.

The people of the Kashmir valley are not so fortunate enough since it will take many more months for AIIMS Kashmir to become functional. As almost one third of work is to be completed on AIIMS Kashmir there are maximum chances that it may take a year or so for AIIMS to become operational. In such a scenario the people of Kashmir valley would have to wait for some more time before AIIMS Kashmir starts working.

The AIIMS Kashmir would not only benefit the people of the valley but also those living in some of the districts of Jammu division. People living in multiple areas of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts of Jammu division would be entitled to quality healthcare once the AIIMS Kashmir becomes operational. Keeping this thing in mind it is imperative that a push is given to the completion of work on AIIMS Kashmir without any further extension of the deadline.

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A Memorable Journey Through Historical Mughal Road

"One has to go to the place for experiencing the real nature and wish that place remains the same even when tourists start visiting it frequently"



■ DR. TASADUK HUSSAIN ITOO

Although it has been almost four years since then, but some reminders could pen-me-up to write about that amazing journey. In comparison to our planned trips so far, that trip came out of the blue. It was most probably month of July 2015, in the holy month of Ramadhan, when we had to go home on the eve of Eid Ul Fitr. As the main Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was closed due to rainy weather, my good friend and batch mate, Dr. Syed Manzoor Ali found an opportunity and told me to do a marathon trip from Jammu to our back home via historical Mughal road. We were a group of friends including my brother, Aubaid Itoo, a civil engineering student in Jammu.

As we most owe to feel adventure of nature, so any opportunity to visit the Himalayas and higher reaches of the state is always welcome. Given the best time of the year, we agree to make this a really amazing trip, so we club out for the day-long trip. We had managed a Tavera car a day before, so we asked a common friend driver to join us. Given the driving involved and the distances to be covered, photography for a change was given second priority. So here we set out for a journey starting from our medical college, passing through Akhnoor, Nowshahra, Rajouri, Thana Mandi and finally through old historical Mughal road. Apparently the latter was the alley way from where the ancient Mughal armies of Humayun and Babar would invade India. Akbar, the great to conquer Kashmir in 1586 and his son Jahangir died while returning from Kashmir on this road at somewhere in Rajouri.

The first, though hallucinating but fascinating thing were those sharp and blind turns. While the surfacing was good, every bend was a blind turn and we found ourselves face to face with local taxis on many occasions during the journey. We drove through some of most narrow and remote mountain roads I have ever seen. However we saw none of that aggression that you tend to see on Jammu-Srinagar National highway. As we drove to the higher reaches of the road, we started finding



black on the road in the areas where the sun-rays could not reach, typically on U-bends. We witness a bunch of fog on the higher reaches which was creating a sort of hindrance to drove smoothly. On the way many times we were amazed by clouds. Looking through these deep valleys was an amazing experience which is not possible to simulate through photographs. Through out the journey, we were amazed with lush green hills all around, with shining white snow on the tops. Water stream and water-fall flowing all around. It was really amazing to see those cool-watery clouds all around and simulate their freshness.

There is an iron bridge after Rajouri town from where this Mughal Road actually starts so popularly called Bafliaz Bridge. We stopped here and clicked some photographs. Whole Mughal road is very lucrative and amazingly beautiful, snow-capped hills all around, with various white water streams flowing through them which can't be expressed in photographs. It is pertinent to mention here that Mughal Road, 84 kilometres long passes over the Pir Panchal mountain ranges, forms an alternative road-route to Kashmir valley from the rest of India, other than over-crowded Jammu-Srinagar National Highway through two tunnels- old Jawahar Tunnel and the new one though lucrative, Chinani-Nashri Tunnel. The road passes through Bafliaz, Poshana, Chattapani, Peer Ki Gali, Aliabad, Zaznar, Dubjan, Herpora & Shopian.

The amazing feel of chilled wind is always worth freshening and calm to simulate. At many spots we clicked photographs, though it was difficult to resist from stopping the Tavera car at frequent intervals. Every turn on Mughal road was coming with pleasant surprises. After Rajouri, elevation level started increasing continuously till we reached Pir Ki Gali, the highest elevation at around 11500 meters above the sea-level. Here we stopped for a while and took some photographs, with freshness of cool-watery clouds touching our minds amazingly. After high hills of Peer Ki Gali, we start driving towards the valley which passes through Shopian. At Shopian we de-seated ourselves from Tavera car and finally reached towards our respective home places.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to mention some inferences drawn from the journey:

- One has to go to the place for experiencing the real nature and wish that place remains the same even when tourists start visiting it frequently.
- Getting lost in the natures beauty to find the exit to this historical road.
- Black ice along bends that caught us off guard on many occasions.
- Historic relevance of places along the route dating back several centuries and eras.

From Small Town Dreams to the IPL Stage Aquib Nabi Becomes a Pride of J&K



■ SHOIAB MOHAMMAD BHAT

Aqib Nabi's journey from the local cricket grounds of Baramulla to the prestigious grounds of the Indian Premier League marks a historic moment for Jammu and Kashmir. His auction to the Delhi Capitals team for ₹8.40 crores is a momentous occasion that will inspire and motivate generations of aspiring cricketers across the Valley and the country.

Jammu & Kashmir has produced plenty of cricketing talent, but many of these players have struggled due to a lack of exposure. Aqib Nabi has changed that narrative. His move from grassroots level cricket to domestic tournaments and finally making it to the IPL demonstrates that with proper attention, dedication, and hard work, cricketing talent can achieve heights. His story represents every aspiring player who starts on humble grounds yet dreams of achieving far beyond.

Aqib Nabi's career received shape and recognition through his performances in domestic cricket and the

Ranji Trophy. Representing Jammu and Kashmir, he delivered consistent performances and showed that he has the right competitive spirit to excel in the game of cricket. The Ranji Trophy served as a launching pad for Aqib to convert his talent into expertise through which he could become successful in international cricket.

Aqib has been attracting the attention of national selectors and cricket experts with consistent quality performances in Ranji matches. Each over he bowled brought the result of hours of practice and steel in his mind. Aqib has laid a solid foundation for himself with this performance and has earned entry into the Indian Premier League. The transition from being a quality Ranji performer to being acquired for ₹8.40 crores in the IPL is a justified process.

Moving on from Ranji Cricket to IPL requires passion, confidence, and preparation to deliver in a superior manner. Aqib proved himself in this transition with dedication and humility. Being chosen by the Delhi Capitals is a gesture of confidence in his calibre and a nod towards his domestic performance. This is a moment to realize that perfection in domestic matches is a great prequel to performing well on a larger stage.

Throughout this incredible experience, there has been a commitment and sacrifice from his family. Aqib's father talks proudly about how his life has been affected. "Now people recognize me because of my son's identity. They say, "Dekho Yeh Aqib ka Baap hai". Such an expression of satisfaction for his son and his endeavours brings out his role as a father and his hard-fought contributions towards his dream.

What is equally moving is the presence of Aqib's grandmother, whose dream was simple yet very strong. Her wish was to see her grandson one day on television, representing himself with dignity and pride. This has now been accomplished. Each time Aqib performs before the camera, he does so with the blessings and prayers of his grandmother accompanying him. This is an epitome of how dreams, with strong effort, always accomplish their objectives.

The ₹8.40 crore deal in the IPL refers to more than just sounding successful on a monetary level. It reflects years of hard work, dedication and relentless pursuit of excellence. The progression from a Ranji player to an IPL player demonstrates the importance of patience and continuing to work on improvements. This accomplishment has brought pride to the entire Jammu and Kashmir region. Aqib Nabi has emerged as a ray of hope for sports persons who wish to make it big in the region. His achievement proves that cricketers from Jammu and Kashmir have the potential.

Being someone very concerned about the future of our youth, I would like to share my personal thoughts

inspired by the life journey of Aqib. The parents and grandparents of our community always have dreams for our next generation. They predict the future when our brothers and sisters will make our families, our community, and our nation proud.

The responsibility is on the young shoulders to ensure that these dreams are fulfilled through positive choices and dedicated action. The youth who are surrounded by distractions in abundance are blessed with copious opportunities. However, a direction is apparent in the life of Aqib. Sports, education, and constructive activities bring dignity and success. They will soon carry the flag of their community and nation, and make its name shine through their actions.

The young generation should understand that they are the future of their country. Their energy and talent should be directed towards developing skills, morals, and confidence. One day, these youngsters will make their families and their nation proud and dedication and honesty are the true foundation of achievement.

His success motivates and inspires an entire new generation to pursue their dreams with integrity and confidence that their capabilities are just as powerful as Aqib Nabi's success story. His story would be remembered as a source of inspiration for generations to come.

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The Story of Theatre — In Fatima's Voice

■ SHEIKH FATIMA BASHARAT

Theatre is not only a subject for me; it is a journey into emotion, truth, and human connection. As you listen, I hope these words touch you the same way this art form has touched generations before us.

"Somewhere between silence and sound, between breath and heartbeat,

The origins of theatre go back thousands of years, from ancient rituals to Greek tragedies, from Sanskrit dramas in India to folk performances of Kashmir. Each culture shaped theatre as a lifeline, a tradition carried forward through voices, rhythms, and movements. Ancient Greek theatre used masks to express the extremes of human emotion, while Indian classical theatre blended music, dance, and storytelling. In Kashmir, the folk theatre form Bhand Pather carried satire, wisdom, and social commentary. These performances were not merely shows — they were community gatherings, educational spaces, and emotional experiences. Theatre has always been more than entertainment; it is awareness, reflection, healing, and transformation.

theatre is born." This simple truth has followed humanity from the moment we first gathered around firelight, telling stories of love, loss, creation, and hope.



Theatre is not merely an art form; it is a mirror, a witness, a confession, and a celebration of human existence. When a performer stands beneath a dim spotlight, and the world grows quiet enough to hear even a trembling breath, something sacred awakens — a connection deeper than language, older than history, and stronger than time. Theatre is the place where emotions find structure, stories find life, and the audience finds a reflection of their own hidden truths.

**"Nazar mila kar kehna, tujhe bhi dard hota hai?
Manch par jo roti hoon, woh kahani sach hoti hai."**

The origins of theatre go back thousands of years, from ancient rituals to Greek tragedies, from Sanskrit dramas in India to folk performances of Kashmir. Each culture shaped theatre as a lifeline, a tradition carried forward through voices, rhythms, and movements. Ancient Greek theatre used masks to express the extremes of human emotion, while Indian classical theatre blended music, dance, and storytelling. In Kashmir, the folk theatre form Bhand Pather carried satire, wisdom, and social commentary. These performances were not merely shows — they were community gatherings, educational spaces, and emotional experiences. Theatre has always been more than entertainment; it is awareness, reflection, healing, and transformation.

**"A stage is small, but the world inside it is endless.
Ek manch, aur hazaar kahaniyan.
Ek awaaz, aur laakh ehsaas."**

Theatre evolved across time, adapting to society's changes, yet never losing its essence. The Renaissance gave us Shakespeare, whose characters still breathe with astonishing life. Realism introduced raw human psychology, while modern theatre embraced experiment and bold themes.

Today, theatre expresses politics, identity, relationships, dreams, and the quiet struggles often hidden behind smiling faces. It remains the only art where the creator and viewer breathe the same air



and share a moment that will never exist again. Human beings are emotional creatures, and theatre is the home of emotion. A stage allows a performer to cry without shame, laugh without restraint, and confront the feelings we hide in daily life. Theatre tells us: you are not alone. The tears you hide, someone has cried before you. The battles you fight, someone has stood on a stage and spoken them aloud.

**"Manch par jo toot'ta hoon,
Wahi tootna mujhe jod deta hai.
Jo dard bol nahi sakta,
Theatre usse awaaz deta hai."**

Theatre and society are inseparable. Every social movement and cultural shift has echoed through plays. Whether the fight for justice, equality, or freedom, theatre has always been a courageous voice. In Kashmir and across India, theatre has shaped education by teaching moral values, empathy, and confidence. Technical elements like lighting, costumes, makeup, stage design, and sound create emotional landscapes. A single spotlight can create loneliness; a warm light can create comfort; a blackout can create fear. Everything is intentional and meaningful.

**"Light jab mujhe choo kar girti hai,
Tab main actor nahi, ek zinda kahani ban jaati hoon."**

The actor remains the heart of theatre. Their body becomes the canvas, the voice becomes the instrument, and emotions become the paint. A trembling hand, a long pause, or a tear can shake the audience's heart. Honest acting does not come from pretending but from living the character's truth. Theatre teaches empathy — when we watch a character suffer, we feel their suffering; when they rise, we feel our own strength return.

**"Tumhara dard, mera bhi tha.
Jo kahani tumne boli, usmein kahi meri rooh bhi thi."**

Theatre is the breath held behind the curtain, the silent prayer before entering the spotlight. It is the director's vision, the writer's dream, the actor's courage, and the audience's faith merging into one living force. In a world full of screens, theatre remains the one space where humans meet without filters. Every performance is unique, born and gone the same night. That is why theatre is sacred — it exists only in the present moment.

**"Har show ek zindagi hai,
Har curtain call ek mauz.
Theatre sikhata hai — Jo pal hai,
bas wahi sach hai."**

Theatre's importance in education cannot be measured. It builds imagination, presence, teamwork, leadership, and emotional intelligence. It becomes healing for many — a way to release pain and confront truth. In modern times, theatre adapts but never loses its soul. As long as there are stories to tell and hearts to hear them, theatre will remain alive.

**"Jab tak kahaniyan zinda hain,
Theatre zinda hai.
Aur jab tak theatre zinda hai,
Insaaniyat zinda hai."**

CONCLUSION

In the end, theatre is not just a stage — it is a heartbeat. It lives within every story that refuses to be forgotten, every truth that dares to be spoken, and every emotion that finally steps into the light. Theatre reminds us that even in silence we are heard, even in darkness we are seen, and even in brokenness we are understood. It teaches that human connection is the greatest performance of all. As the curtain falls, what remains is not the dialogue or the lights, but the echo of feeling — the quiet realization that art changes us. If even one heart leaves the theatre softer or braver, the performance has fulfilled its purpose. Theatre survives because we need it — to heal, to question, to remember, and to dream. And as long as there are stories to tell and voices willing to speak, theatre will continue to breathe through time.

The author from Ellahi Bagh
Srinagar

Kashmir's Hope Became a Star Overnight Through the IPL



■ SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

India holds a unique position in the world as the second most densely populated country after its neighbouring nation, China. This vast population is enriched by immense diversity in culture, languages, traditions, and art forms. Over the years, India has made remarkable progress in almost every sector, including technology, education, infrastructure, and healthcare. Among all these, the sports sector has witnessed exceptional growth and has emerged as a strong symbol of national pride and unity.

In recent times, Indian sports have achieved several historic milestones. One of the most inspiring achievements has been the success of the Indian women's

cricket team, which recently won the Women's World Cup title under the dynamic leadership of Harmanpreet Kaur. This victory not only strengthened India's position on the global sporting map but also encouraged young girls across the country to pursue sports with confidence and determination.

India's sports ecosystem has grown to such an extent that teams and athletes from all over the world actively participate in various leagues and international tournaments hosted in the country. Today, India is home to some of the most talented, hardworking, and passionate cricketers. Cricket, often considered a religion in India, has gained immense popularity and professional recognition, especially after the emergence of leagues like the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The Indian Premier League has become one of the most famous and influential cricket leagues in the world. Known for its high-quality competition, global participation, and massive fan following, the IPL is also regarded as the richest cricket league globally. It has

revolutionised the way cricket is played, watched, and commercialised. Young players from different regions of India now dream of performing on this grand stage, where talent meets opportunity.

Indian cricket is governed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), which is currently the richest cricket board in the world, with an estimated net worth of nearly ₹20,000 crore. The financial strength of the BCCI has enabled it to invest heavily in infrastructure, training facilities, grassroots development, and player welfare, thereby strengthening the future of Indian cricket.

Recently, the IPL created history and sparked celebrations across Kashmir with the selection of a young Kashmiri cricketer, Aqib Dar, for the upcoming edition of the league. His selection marked a proud and emotional moment for the entire Kashmir Valley. Aqib Dar was sold for a staggering amount of ₹8 crore and 44 lakh, making him the highest-priced player from the region and creating a historic milestone in IPL auctions. For the first time, a player from Kashmir achieved such recognition on

a global cricketing platform.

Social media was flooded with congratulatory messages, pride-filled posts, and celebrations by Kashmiri cricketers and sports enthusiasts. Aqib Dar's success is not just an individual achievement; it represents hope, inspiration, and a new beginning for thousands of young athletes in the valley who aspire to make their mark in national and international sports.

Over the last decade, the sports sector in the Kashmir Valley has shown steady growth. Players from even the remotest corners of the region are actively participating in district, state, and national-level competitions. Despite limited resources and challenges, these athletes continue to showcase their talent, discipline, and dedication. Many young players are working tirelessly with dreams of entering prestigious international leagues such as the IPL.

The IPL has emerged as a powerful platform that identifies and nurtures raw talent from every corner of the country. It offers equal opportunities to players regardless of their background and provides them with exposure to interna-

tional standards of cricket. For regions like Kashmir, the IPL acts as a bridge between local talent and global recognition.

There is no shortage of talent in the Kashmir Valley. The region has produced exceptional players across various sports disciplines, including cricket, football, athletics, and winter sports. What is needed now is strong institutional support. The Government of India should focus on developing international-standard stadiums, training academies, and sports infrastructure in the valley. Preparing local staff and coaches will not only enhance skill development but also generate employment opportunities and provide healthy entertainment for the local population.

In conclusion, Aqib Dar's journey from Kashmir to the IPL is a story of hope, resilience, and success. It proves that with the right opportunities, talent from any region can shine on the world stage. Kashmir's rising stars are ready to make history, and the future of sports in the valley looks brighter than ever.

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Tips For Travelling In Winter



■ SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

Winter is upon us. The season of blankets, quilts and snow is finally here!

Well, several people must have already planned their winter travel to experience snow-covered landscapes, festive vibes, and cosy moments.

As the weather tends to change quickly, especially during winter, travelling during the season can make the skin dry and dull.

The drop in temperature, low humidity levels, and harsh winds strip moisture from the skin, leading to dryness, irritation, and worsening of existing skin conditions.

Winter vacations sound delightful, yet your travel plans may throw unexpected and unpleasant surprises if you are not sufficiently prepared.

Whether you're exploring picturesque mountain towns or bustling winter markets, taking care of your skin and hair should be your top priority.

Winter air is notoriously dry, and dehydration can sneak up on you. The changing weather during travel can affect the skin, causing allergies, dryness, chapping, and conditions like eczema.

Hydrations

Proper hydration in winter is just as important as in warm weather. Contrary to popular belief, the cold doesn't spare your body from water depletion, and the risk of dehydration is just as high. Dry air, heating, and low temperatures contribute to silent dehydration.

Carry an insulated bottle that keeps drinks warm and opt for herbal teas (ginger, chamomile), warm water with lemon, soups, and water-rich foods (citrus, soups) to hydrate comfortably.

Drink water first thing in the morning to rehydrate after sleep. Flavoured seltzer, herbal tea and milk are all excellent alternatives to plain water if you're looking to mix things up. These flavoured waters allow you to vary your fluid intake.

Citrus fruits (lemon, grapefruit, clementine, etc.), apples, cabbage, carrots, and pumpkin naturally provide water to the body. Incorporating these foods into your diet is a simple first step to staying well-hydrated.

Satisfy the urge to snack with hydrating

foods such as sliced fruit, precut veggies or a container of yoghurt.

Avoid dehydrating caffeine/ tea/ alcohol, which increases urine production and leads to additional fluid loss. But they should be consumed in moderation only.

To hydrate your skin during cold weather, apply a rich moisturising cream daily. Opt for oils or balms for sensitive areas (lips, hands). Humidify the indoor air with a bowl of water or a humidifier. Wear soft, non-irritating clothing to limit skin water loss and protect the skin from the cold.

Facial scrub:

Winter can leave your skin in a catch-22 situation. If you are going for a longer duration of 10-15 days, then carry a facial scrub that will exfoliate the skin, remove the dead cells, remove impurities, and lighten dark spots and blemishes. Strictly choose the products as per the expert's recommendation.

A good exfoliator or face scrub will gently remove the dead skin cells, purify and cleanse away grime and revitalise dull skin for a healthy glow; all this while retaining the skin's natural oil content, and further enhancing the properties of your moisturiser.

Pamper your skin with some skin-loving sugar scrubs that fight dryness, flakiness and dullness, and leave your skin healthy, hydrated and happy even if it is freezing outside.

While using a physical scrub, wet your fingers and massage them over your face. Once you've worked the exfoliator into your skin in small, circular motions, rinse using lukewarm water and pat your face dry.

Think about travel essentials and how to limit your grooming needs, so that you look pleasing and enjoy your trip. Travelling light is an advantage, so you need items that are compact and portable. Get yourself a spacious shoulder bag and two small, plastic-lined cases for your toiletries and make-up. Your beauty aids should be within easy reach, so that you can freshen up your make-up and alight from your journey looking attractive and self-confident. Searching for a lipstick or comb in a cluttered handbag can really test your patience.

A short hairdo that you can just brush and arrange is good, while for long hair, take along a headband and hair clips, to keep your hair tidy. Remember to take a scarf along to protect your hair from over-exposure to the sun, as well as from wind and dust. You will need it if you are out motoring, boating or even walking by the seaside or hills.

The make-up items and clothes you carry depend on what your trip entails. If you are holidaying in a big city and expect to meet people, you will need a few good clothes and

accessories for dining out. Take a few in-between outfits that are neither too casual nor too dressy. You will also need makeup cosmetics for the night. The lighting at night demands more colour, so include darker shades of lipstick, blush-on, eye-shadow and mascara. A hairpiece can provide instant glamour. Don't forget to take your perfume, one or two good accessories and a neutral evening purse that goes with your dressy outfits. These will help to add the finishing touches.

If you are on a sightseeing trip or on a vacation by the sea or mountains, the emphasis will be on comfort. Casual wrinkle-free clothes, lightweight shoes and sunglasses will be needed. On a vacation, one probably needs to carry more skin care cosmetics and fewer makeup aids. An anti-tan sunscreen or sunblock would be good. The effects of sun exposure are greater by the waterside or near snow, because water and snow are reflective surfaces. By the sea, avoid sun-exposure between noon and 3 p.m. Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen when out in the sun, not only on the face, but on all exposed areas. Apply the sunscreen 20 minutes before going out. If you are out in the sun for more than an hour, reapply the sunscreen. Use a high SPF of 30 or above for sensitive skin.

Apart from sunscreen, you need skin and hair care essentials, like cleanser, moisturiser, leave-on conditioner and hair serum. For your make-up, carry a powder compact, eye pencil, kajal stick and lipsticks that are suitable for day wear. Perhaps a lip gloss will do. By the beach, you need makeup products that are "waterproof" or "long lasting" and provide a matte finish.

Remember to pack lip balm, saline nasal spray and travel-size hand cream, too. If you usually wear contacts, opt for a pair of glasses on the plane to avoid dry eyes.

You will also need pressed powder (compact) and powder blush-on. Remember to take a few tissues. If you have oily skin, pre-moistened tissues are what you need. Carry them in your handbag when you go out, to clean and refresh your skin. Apart from these, take a deodorant and talcum powder.

Travel adds a wonderful dimension to one's life and personality. It enriches our experience and broadens our outlook. Travel also means a time that is refreshing and renewing. There is nothing more enjoyable than getting away from everyday and unwinding. If you have taken care of your travel needs, all you have to do is relax and enjoy!

The author is international fame beauty expert and is called the Herbal Queen of India



Dr. Tasaduk attends RCPE-accredited international webinar on Professionalism in Medicine



Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, Physician and public health expert, recently attended an international webinar titled "Professionalism in Medicine: Successful Self & Successful Teams", organized by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE).

The webinar focused on strengthening professional values in medical practice, effective teamwork, leadership, and personal development in healthcare settings. It provided a platform for clinicians from different regions of the world to engage with contemporary perspectives on professionalism in medicine.

A certificate of participation was awarded to Dr Itoo, which has been approved by the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom for 2 Category 1 (External) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits, underscoring its academic and professional credibility.

Dr. Itoo's participation reflects his continued commitment to lifelong learning, professional ethics, and quality improvement in patient care. He regularly engages in internationally accredited educational activities to remain aligned with evolving standards of clinical practice and medical professionalism.

Year-End Party Season May Increase Your Heart Attack Risks, Doctor Warns

■ SHREYA GOSWAMI

The year-end party season is often associated with celebration, indulgence and relaxation. However, cardiologists are increasingly sounding the alarm over a worrying trend: a surge in young adults reporting heart palpitations, sudden blood pressure spikes and even heart attack-like symptoms during the festive period. Traditionally considered a low-risk group for cardiovascular events, people under 45 are now appearing more frequently in emergency rooms around Christmas and New Year's with acute cardiac complaints.

This phenomenon, widely referred to as Holiday Heart Syndrome (HHS), was first described in relation to alcohol-induced heart rhythm disturbances. Today, experts say it has evolved into a multifactorial problem driven by binge drinking, excess salt intake, sleep deprivation and heightened psychological stress. According to Dr. Nityanand Tripathi, Principal Director & HOD, Cardiology & Electrophysiology at Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, the festive season creates a "perfect storm" for the heart, particularly among young people who may not perceive themselves to be at risk.

"The young heart is not invincible," Dr. Tripathi warns. "Acute lifestyle excesses over a short period can disrupt heart rhythm, spike blood pressure and unmask previously silent heart disease."

The strongest driver of Holiday Heart Syndrome is binge drinking. Medical research defines binge drinking as consuming five or more standard drinks for men, or four or more for women, within a short time. Studies published by the National Institutes of



Health (NIH) and the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) show that even a single episode of heavy alcohol intake can disrupt the heart's electrical system, regardless of prior heart health.

"Atrial fibrillation is the most common presentation we see," explains Dr. Tripathi. "Young patients come in with sudden palpitations, breathlessness and anxiety after a night of heavy drinking."

Alcohol acts as a myocardial toxin and overstimulates the sympathetic nervous system, the body's fight-or-flight response, especially during the hangover phase. This leads to a higher resting heart rate and a shortened atrial refractory period, creating ideal conditions for arrhythmias. Data published in Circulation indicates that the odds of an atrial fibrillation episode rise significantly after just two or more drinks.

Clinical case reports documented by the U.S. National Library of Medicine

describe otherwise healthy individuals in their early 20s presenting with new-onset atrial fibrillation following festive binge drinking, underscoring how abruptly these events can occur.

While alcohol primarily drives rhythm disturbances, festive food and stress play a major role in sudden blood pressure surges. Party snacks, processed meats and restaurant meals are typically loaded with sodium. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adults should limit sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg per day. During a single party night, this limit is often exceeded several times over.

"Excess sodium causes the body to retain water, increasing blood volume and forcing the heart to pump harder," says Dr. Tripathi. "This can cause sharp, transient spikes in blood pressure even in people who are not diagnosed with hypertension."

Adding to this is emotional and physical stress, late nights, poor sleep,

financial pressures and social obligations. Elevated levels of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline cause blood vessels to constrict and heart rate to rise. The American Heart Association notes that this combination significantly increases myocardial oxygen demand, potentially triggering chest pain, palpitations or fainting.

The festive spike in cardiac events, often called the "Christmas Coronary Effect", has been consistently observed in population studies, including data published in The Lancet. While older adults account for most cases, cardiologists caution that young people are not immune.

"The stress of the party season can unmask silent conditions such as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, inherited rhythm disorders or early atherosclerosis," Dr. Tripathi explains. "What was previously a minor vulnerability can suddenly become a medical emergency."

Manage stress: Deep breathing, short walks and mindful breaks help counter adrenaline surges.

Don't ignore symptoms: Palpitations, chest discomfort, dizziness or unusual fatigue warrant immediate medical attention.

The year-end party season may be short-lived, but its impact on heart health can be serious, especially for young adults who underestimate their risk. Holiday Heart Syndrome, blood pressure spikes and stress-induced cardiac events are no longer rare exceptions. As Dr. Nityanand Tripathi emphasises, "Moderation and awareness are the best safeguards. Celebration should not come at the cost of your heart." A mindful approach can ensure the festive season remains joyful, and safe.

Courtesy Healthline

Ganderbal Police Bust High-Value Drug Racket, Seize Cocaine Worth Over ₹10 Crore

HT NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL, DEC 17: In a major breakthrough against organised drug trafficking, Jammu and Kashmir Police in Ganderbal have intensified their crackdown on high-value narcotics, leading to the recovery of cocaine worth over ₹10 crore in the international market.

The operation marks a significant blow to drug networks operating in the region and underscores the police's zero-tolerance approach towards narcotics trade.

J&K Police at Ganderbal has launched a focused targeting the procurement and sale of high-value narcotic substances such as Cocaine and Heroin, thereby striking a major blow to the drug networks operating in the region.

During a series of special Naka checking operations conducted on 08-12-2025, Ganderbal Police apprehended 01 Drug Peddler, Mohd Irfan Bhat, S/O Ghulam Nabi Bhat, R/O Kharbagh Wakura, Gan-



derbal, it reads.

Accordingly, FIR No. 200/2025, under relevant sections of the NDPS Act was registered at Police Station Ganderbal, and further investigation was set into motion, it reads.

Statement reads, Considering the gravity of the offence and contacts of the accused, a special investigation team was constituted by SSP Ganderbal Shri Khalil

Ahmad Poswal-JKPS, under the supervision of Addl. SP Ganderbal Shri Owise Loun-JKPS, with a mandate to trace backward and forward linkages of suppliers involved in trafficking similar high-value narcotics. Investigating Officer of the case SI Gulzar Hussain, (I/C PP Shadipora) has put in strenuous and sustained efforts to unearth the nexus of drugs, it reads.

Pursuant to Court-obtained search warrants, coordinated searches were conducted at multiple locations including Sumbal, Shadipora, Zakura, and other suspected places of drug concealment, it reads.

As a significant outcome of sustained investigation, the police team identified and detained one more notorious drug peddler, namely Maqsood Hussain Khan,

S/O Abdul Majeed Khan, R/O Hazratbal, Srinagar, A/P Gooripora, Sanat Nagar. During searches conducted at his rented accommodation in Gooripora, Sanat Nagar on 16/17-12-2025, Police recovered 02 packets of Cocaine-like substance weighing approximately 01 kilogram, valuing more than Rs.10 Crore in the international illicit drug market. Moreover, 01 vehicle, cell phones and other electronic gadgets were also seized, it reads.

In the instant case, in-depth investigation is underway to identify the actual source, supply chain, and inter-state/international linkages of this high-value narcotic substance. More arrests and recoveries are likely in the coming days.

Ganderbal Police reiterates its zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking and appeals to the public to cooperate by sharing any information related to drug abuse or peddling for a drug-free society, the statement reads. (KNC)

Public Notice

I, Shakeela Begum, W/O Naseer Ahmad Mir, residing at BAKIAKHER HANDWARA J&K, do hereby declare that my correct name is Shakeela Begum. My name has been incorrectly recorded as Shakeela Bano in some documents. Both names, Shakeela Begum and Shakeela Bano, refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, I shall be known as Shakeela Begum for all purposes. My name must be written as SHAKEELA BEGUM in my all documents and passport also. If anyone has any objection, they may contact the Passport Office, Srinagar, within seven days. After that no objection will be accepted by the concern office.

Name, Shakeela Begum,
W/o, Naseer Ahmad Mir,
R/o. BAKIAKHER HANDWARA, Kupwara J&K,

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:

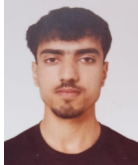
Name: Furqan Ahmad Pandith

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



MVD Kulgam Organises Medical-Cum-Road Safety Awareness Camp at Laroo Kulgam

FAROOQ RATHER

KULGAM, DEC 17: To promote safer roads and better public health, the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Kulgam on Tuesday organised a medical-cum-road safety awareness camp at Laroo.

The programme was conducted in collaboration with the Health Department, District Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Kulgam, and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) Kulgam. The initiative aimed to sensitise the general public about safe driving practices while providing free medical check-ups to participants.

During the camp, officials educated attendees on key road safety measures, including the 'Good Samaritan' guidelines, encouraging bystanders to assist accident victims without fear of legal repercussions. Participants were also briefed on technical precautions for winter driving, keeping in view the challenges posed by adverse weather conditions.

Adding a practical dimension to



the programme, the SDRF team conducted live demonstrations, highlighting first-aid techniques and emergency response drills. These demonstrations were intended to equip the public with essential life-saving skills to be used during road accidents and other emergencies.

Addressing the gathering, ARTO Kulgam, Dr. Showkat Ahmad Bhat (JKAS) emphasised the need for

strict adherence to traffic rules to prevent road mishaps, especially during the upcoming winter season. He underscored the increased risks associated with winter commuting and urged drivers to exercise maximum caution. The event witnessed active participation of MVD officials, including Inspectors, Traffic Assistants and other staff members, along with a sizeable presence of the general public.

J&K Bank organizes Stakeholders' Meet to streamline implementation of High Density Plantation Scheme

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, DEC 17:

With a view to further strengthen and streamline the implementation of its flagship High Density Plantation (HDP) Scheme, J&K Bank today organised an interactive session with Private Enterprises (PEs), at its corporate headquarters, to seek first-hand feedback and enhance coordination among key stakeholders. Pertinently, the Private Enterprises (PEs) are responsible for providing plantation material and carrying out high-density plantations on the ground.

The session was chaired by General Manager (Retail, Agriculture & MSME) Rakesh Magotra and was attended by Deputy General Manager Aneet Kanwal Singh, representatives of Private Enterprises and senior officers of the Bank. Cluster Heads from across the region joined the deliberations through video conferencing, ensuring wider participation and alignment at the field level.

The interactive meet was aimed at streamlining communication between the Bank's Cluster Offices and Private Enterprises to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the High Density Plantation



Scheme on the ground. Emphasising the importance of stakeholder collaboration, the Bank designated two officers as Nodal Officers for the scheme, who will act as single-point contacts to inform, guide, clarify and handhold the Private Enterprises and farmers during various stages of implementation.

The Bank also decided to organise joint awareness and facilitation camps along with the PE's at cluster and zonal levels to sensitise farmers about the significant benefits of the High Density Plantation Scheme and to promote wider adoption of the initiative.

Addressing the participants, GM Rakesh Magotra said, "Our ultimate goal is

the growth of the economy, and J&K Bank sees immense potential in the High Density Plantation Scheme. If implemented in its true spirit, Kashmir can even emerge as one of the largest apple-producing regions in the world."

He further emphasised the need for collective efforts, stating, "It is important for all stakeholders to work in tandem to expedite high density plantations on the ground and bring the desired transformation. We believe in a multi-stakeholder approach and welcome inputs and feedback from all concerned to further strengthen the scheme."

Highlighting the critical role of Private Enterprises, he added, "Private Enterprises are the important stakeholders and key driv-

ers of the High Density Plantation initiative, as they are working tirelessly at the grassroots level to make the scheme a success." Assuring them of the Bank's continued support, he reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to facilitate smooth execution of the scheme.

During the session, GM Rakesh Magotra gave a patient hearing to the concerns and suggestions raised by the Private Enterprises and assured them that the feedback would be duly considered to make the implementation of the High Density Plantation Scheme more efficient, farmer-friendly and impactful.

Earlier, while initiating the deliberations DGM Aneet Kanwal Singh said, "The High Density Plantation Scheme is a transformative initiative for J&K's horticulture sector, and close coordination with Private Enterprises is vital to translate its objectives into tangible outcomes on the ground."

The Private Enterprises appreciated the Bank's proactive initiative and expressed their willingness to work in close coordination with the Bank's clusters and branches for successful implementation of the scheme.

Public Notice

I, Rehman Sheikh, S/o Lass Sheikh, R/o Pahalgam, District Anantnag, Jammu & Kashmir, holder of Aadhaar No. XXXX-XXXX-6163, hereby inform the general public that my Date of Birth has been wrongly mentioned as 15/08/1958 in my Aadhaar Card and other records.

My correct Date of Birth is 19/03/1959.

This notice is published for information of all concerned.

Place: Pahalgam
Sd/- Rehman Sheikh

IN THE COURT OF ADDITIONAL SESSIONS JUDGE TADA/POTA SPECIAL JUDGE DESIGNATED UNDER NIA ACT SRINAGAR

CNR No: JKSG01-003281-2025

Filing No: 3281/20

R.No: 637/2025

DOI: 04.10.2025

DOD: 06-12-2025

In the case of

UT of J&K through Police Station CIK/SIA:

In case FIR No. 15/2022 US 13,18,19,38 UA(P) Act r/w 121,121-A,120-B IPC.

V/S

Mursaleen Tantray and others

accused persons.

In the matter of: Application on behalf of applicant (Addl. Superintendent of Police Police SIA, Kashmir) seeking Issuance of PROCLAMATION U/S 22 CrPc in respect of absconding accused persons Mursaleen Tantray S/O Ab Rahim n Tantray R/O, Ring Payeen Machil, Kupwara, 2. Sher Ali Khan S/O, Ghulam Khan R/O, Ring Payeen Machil Kupwara, 3. Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh @ Shakoor S/O. Wali Mohammad Sheikh R/O, Gabra, Karnah Kupwara, 4. Qazi Mohammad Khushal S/o, Qazi Sayed Ud Din R/O. Dani Karmah, Kupwara.

PROCLAMATION U/S 82 OF CR.P.C

Whereas the above titled case FIR No. 15/2022 for offences made punishable U/Ss 13,18,19,38 UA(P) Act r/w section 121,121-A,120-B IPC is under investigation in which Mursaleen Tantray S/O Ab Rahim Tantray R/O, Ring Payeen Machil, Kupwara, 2. Sher Ali Khan S/O, Ghulam Khan R/O, Ring Payeen Machil Kupwara, 3. Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh @ Shakoor S/O. Wali Mohammad Sheikh R/O, Gabra, Karnah Kupwara, 4. Qazi Mohammad Khushal S/o, Qazi Sayed Ud Din R/O. Dani Karmah, Kupwara are arraigned as an accused persons and it has been returned to warrants of arrests issued by this Court and accused persons cannot be found at the given addresses;

Whereas on verification it was found that despite of best efforts made by the police, the presence of the aforesaid accused persons could not be secured for the purpose of investigation and it has been shown to the satisfaction of this Court, that the said accused persons are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the warrants.

Therefore, proclamation is hereby made that the accused persons, namely 1, Mursaleen Tantray S/O Ah Rahim Tantray R/O, Ring Payeen Machil, Kupwara, 2. Sher Ali Khan S/O, Ghulam Khan R/O, Ring Payeen Machil Kupwara, 3. Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh Shakoor S/O. Wali Mohammad Sheikh R/O, Gabra, Karnah Kupwara, 4. Qazi Mohammad Khushal S/o, Qazi Sayed Ud Din R/O. Dani Karmah, Kupwara are required to appear before this court on 22.01.2026 at 10:00 am sharp, failing which proceedings U/s 83 Cr.P.C shall be launched against them.

Given under my hand and seal of this court today on 06.12.2025 at Srinagar.

Announced
06.12.2025

Sd/- Addl. Sessions Judge TADA/POTA
Spl. Judge Designated Under NIA Act Srinagar.

DIPK: 9024/25 | Dated: 17-12-2025

Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla

e-mail, ID: xenmhd.bla@jk.gov.in

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: EXTENTION OF CRITICAL DATES OF e-NIT Nos. 74 of 2025-26 Dated 04.12.2025.

Reference: Tender IDs:- 2025_PWDJK_297250_1

Due to inadequate response in reference to above cited e-NIT, the Critical Dates are extended as under:

S. No	Description	Re-Scheduled date
1	Date of Downloading	04-12-2025 (06:15 PM) to 22-12-2025 (06:00 PM)
2	Date of uploading	04-12-2025 (06:15 PM) to 22-12-2025 (06:55 PM)
3	Due date of opening of tender	23-12-2025 (01:00 PM)

No: M&HDB/TS/3695-97 | Dated: 16-12-2025

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla

DIPK: 9061/25 | Dated: 17-12-2025

Satish Sharma reviews development projects, flagship schemes in Bandipora

Holds public outreach programme at Kupwara

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

BANDIPORA/KUPWARA, DECEMBER 17: As part of government's public outreach programme, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, IT, Youth Services & Sports and ARI, Satish Sharma, today held an interactive session with the district level officers to assess the implementation of various schemes.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib; Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zaffar Hussain Shawl and other senior officers.

The Minister undertook a comprehensive review of departmental activities, including Youth Services & Sports, Food Supplies, Transport and other allied sectors. While reviewing the Youth Services & Sports Department, Satish Sharma emphasized promotion of sports activities, particularly skiing and water sports. He reviewed the ongoing works being executed under the J&K Sports Council besides assessing the approved new development works under the Council.

The Minister laid special



emphasis on construction of the prefab Indoor Hall at S.K. Stadium, directing the concerned officers to complete the remaining works at the earliest and make the facility fully functional. He also reviewed upgradation of playfields at S.K. Stadium Bandipora, Sadunara, Dawar (Gurez), Naidkhai and Ajas.

Satish Sharma further directed for installation of lighting facilities at the prominent and popular stadiums, besides at the important shrines, temples and gurdwaras across the districts to enhance the

accessibility and public convenience.

Stressing the importance of inter-departmental coordination, the Minister called for synergy among the departments to ensure effective implementation of development initiatives. He also reviewed the initiatives related to drug de-addiction, including establishment of de-addiction centres. He appreciated the ongoing efforts under Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

The Minister encouraged the organization of sports events,

marathons and youth engagement activities to promote healthy lifestyle and channel youth energy in a positive direction.

While reviewing functioning of the Motor Vehicles Department, the Minister directed the ARTO Bandipora to conduct regular medical examinations of drivers to enhance road safety. He also asked the Assistant Director Food, to hold consultations with the local residents to strengthen the public distribution system.

Satish Sharma exhorted upon

all the departments to work with renewed commitment to ensure holistic, inclusive and sustainable development of Bandipora district.

While interacting with media, the Minister said that a comprehensive review of the district Bandipora will be taken after some time. He said that necessary mechanism is already in place to ensure that the pace of development in the district is speeded up.

Later, the Minister held a public outreach programme at Kupwara which was attended by various deputations from different areas of Kupwara district.

The deputations highlighted different issues related to sports infra, supply positions, IT related and other issues.

Satish Sharma assured the deputations that the issues raised by them will be addressed within the shortest possible time. He said that the government is committed towards ensuring uninterrupted supply chain and people centric governance.

"We will also ensure that the benefits of various schemes percolate to the grass root levels benefitting the targeted populace," the Minister maintained.

Estimates Committee reviews functioning of I&C Department

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 17: The Committee on Estimates today held a meeting at Assembly Complex here to review and examine the functioning of Jammu & Kashmir Industries & Commerce Department.

The meeting was presided over by the Chairperson of the Committee, Legislator, Shamim Firdous.

The meeting was attended by Legislators, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Abdul Majid Bhat Larmi, Pawan Kumar Gupta, Prof. Gharu Ram Bhagat, Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani, Chander Prakash Ganga and Arjun Singh Raju; members of the Estimates Committee besides, Secretary, JKLA, Manoj



Kumar Pandit.

The Committee discussed various issues of Industries and Commerce department as well as initiatives taken to address the challenges faced by the young entrepreneurs like licensing exercises and difficulties in land acquisition for opening of new industrial projects.

The issues related to unemployed local youth/young entrepreneurs who have applied for registration of different schemes and availing loan facilities for establishing the industrial units in last two years and initiatives taken to revive the sick/defunct industrial units across the UT of Jammu & Kashmir were also deliberated upon during the meeting.

The meeting also discussed measures taken to address the pending issue of withheld emoluments in favour of retirees of JK Cements, and status of land and infrastructure of the said unit at Khrew. The committee also sought details of industrial land allotted to non-locals for the last seven years across the UT of Jammu & Kashmir as well as details of new schemes introduced under JKEDI.

Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Vikramjit Singh briefed the Committee about the steps being taken for development of industrial sector besides, physical and financial activities of the department.

The Committee emphasized upon the senior authorities of Industries and Commerce Department to facilitate the local unemployed youths for providing jobs in various industrial units.

The Chairperson of the Committee directed the concerned officers to aware the unemployed youth about the various central sponsored schemes in Industrial sector in Jammu and Kashmir so that they can get benefit from these schemes and earn their livelihood.

The Committee also stressed on concerned officers to promote single window system for providing loans and other assistance for setting up of new ventures by the unemployed youths so that they could not any inconvenience in this regard.

Members of the Committee gave their valuable suggestions and highlighted various issues regarding further improvement in I&C Department for the welfare of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Secretary in Industries & Commerce, Khalid Jahangir; DG, Budget, Finance Department, M S Malik; Directors of I&C Jammu/Kashmir; Directors, Handloom & Handicrafts, Jammu/Kashmir; Directors, Finance/Planning, I&C; MD, SIDCO/SICOP; Secretary/CEO, KVIB and other senior officers of I&C and Assembly Secretariat were also present in the meeting.

Health Secretary reviews winter preparedness; emphasizes seamless patient-care

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 17: Secretary Health & Medical Education Department, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, today conducted a comprehensive review of department's winter preparedness plan to ensure uninterrupted healthcare delivery across Jammu & Kashmir, particularly in snow-bound and hard-to-reach areas.

Emphasising that healthcare delivery in difficult terrains during winter remains a top priority, Dr. Abid Rasheed issued a series of clear and time-bound directives aimed at safeguarding the public health during the forthcoming winter months.

The Secretary directed the Managing Director, Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Limited (JKMSCIL), to continuously monitor the DVDMS portal. He asked them to ensure adequate stocking and timely distribution of the Essential Drug List (EDL), with special focus on high-altitude and snow-bound areas.

He stressed that all possibilities of drug shortages during winter must be completely ruled out and a proactive approach is maintained to ensure an uninterrupted medicine supply chain.

Calling for immediate measures to strengthen the healthcare manpower, Dr. Abid directed for augmentation of staff through NHM in these districts. The Managing Director, National Health Mission (NHM) was instructed to rationalise the staff to critical locations, ensuring 24x7 functioning of all health institutions.

The Secretary further underscored the need for a robust and well-coordinated patient evacuation plan, with special attention to pregnant women and other high-risk patients.

He directed to ensure that ASHA workers and Female Multipurpose Health Workers (FMPHWs) of the Family Welfare Department undertake Expected Date of Delivery (EDD)-based priority line listing of expecting mothers to facilitate timely referrals and evacuations.

Dr. Abid Rasheed emphasised the importance of clearly defined and pre-identified referral pathways, to be established well in advance in coordination with the higher health facilities and medical colleges, ensuring timely and hassle-free referrals during adverse weather conditions. He also directed that all health institutions be equipped with adequate heating arrangements, reliable power backup and other essential winter-related infrastructure to ensure patient safety and uninterrupted services.

He impressed upon the Directors of Health Services, Jammu and Kashmir, to maintain close coordination with the respective Medical Colleges for specialist support and seamless healthcare delivery. Any gaps in service delivery, he said, must be promptly addressed through regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure strict compliance.

Reiterating the commitment towards public health, Dr. Abid Rasheed maintained, "Healthcare delivery in snow-bound areas is a non-negotiable priority. We must leave no stone unturned to ensure medicines, manpower, ambulances and infrastructure are in place well before snowfall."

DC KATHUA HOLDS PUBLIC GRIEVANCES REDRESSAL CAMP AT MANDLI

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

KATHUA, DECEMBER 17: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma today chaired a public grievance redressal camp at Mandli in Billawar sub-division where he listened to the grievances of locals and ex-PRI representatives from surrounding panchayats.

Former PRI representatives and locals from Mandli, Kohag, Durang and Lower Dungara projected issues pertaining to drinking water supply under JJM, road connectivity, rain-related damages, school infrastructure gaps, irrigation needs, monkey menace, ration card bifurcation and completion of Sub-Divisional Hospital Billawar building.

While interacting with the public, the DC assured that the pending works under JJM will be taken up for early execution once funding concerns are resolved at the contractor level. On road connectivity issues, he informed that a majority of allotments under



PMGSY and PWD stand issued and execution is underway, while the remaining works will be proposed in the next phase.

Responding to concerns over damages due to recent rains, the DC informed that restoration measures are already in progress and permanent proposals have been submitted to higher authorities. He directed the revenue staff to ensure timely verification so that genuine relief cases are catered to.

Regarding school-related issues, the DC instructed the Education Department to examine demands

pertaining to infrastructure and the staff position and submit a field-based report for further action.

On the Sub-Divisional Hospital Billawar building, the DC shared that the project is in its final stage and targeted for completion and commissioning by end of March.

The DC also highlighted the benefits of Mission Yuva and Labour Card initiatives, urging youth and workers to avail opportunities under the schemes. He also assured support to organise special facilitation camps wherever required.

DDC Nagrota Gujroo Narayan Dutt Tripathi, DDC Mandli Neeru Rajput, PO ICDS Kathua, Mohd Sayed Khan, ADC Billawar Vinay Khosla, CPO Kathua Ranjeet Thakur besides other district and sectoral officers were present during the camp.

Later, the DC visited Varun Dev Shrine near Ludera Ujh Bridge and reviewed arrangements for the annual Bhandara, besides paying obeisance at the holy site.

Secretary RDD reviews RGSA, SBM-G progress; directs time-bound completion of Panchayat Ghars, Sanitation works

■ HT NEWS DESK / DIPR

JAMMU, DECEMBER 17: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the implementation, progress and on-ground impact of the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) and the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by District Development Commissioners from various districts, Director RDD Kashmir Shabir Hussain Bhat, Director Panchayati Raj Sham Lal, Director RDD Jammu Shahnaz Akhter, Deputy Secretary RD&PR Tahir Ahmad Magray, Deputy Directors Rural Sanitation Jammu and Kashmir, Superintending Engineers REW Jammu and Kashmir, Assistant Commissioners Panchayat, Executive Engineers and other concerned officers.

Reviewing RGSA, the Secretary took a detailed stock of the physical and financial progress of Panchayat Ghars for the financial year 2025-26. He directed officials to expedite execution, particularly in districts where land identification remains a major bottleneck. Data presented during the meeting revealed that

while the Kashmir Division has achieved 99 per cent land availability, the Jammu Division stands at 72 per cent, with districts such as Jammu, Poonch and Ramban facing significant shortfalls.

The Secretary directed District Development Commissioners to fast-track land identification for the remaining Panchayats and ensure early resolution of bottlenecks. He also advised exploring relocation options in cases where suitable land is not available within the Panchayat jurisdiction.

Emphasising timely execution, the Secretary instructed all DCs to accord top administrative priority to the construction of Panchayat Ghars and to conduct regular district-level reviews to closely monitor both physical and financial progress. He further directed Assistant Commissioners Panchayat and Executive Engineers to ensure timely completion of all ongoing works and to proactively address issues such as land disputes, tendering delays and administrative hurdles to prevent project stagnation.

On the co-location of Common Service Centres (CSCs), it was informed that 86 per cent of the annual target has already been achieved during the current



financial year. While appreciating the progress, the Secretary urged field officers to bridge the remaining gap expeditiously to ensure universal digital access across all Panchayats. He also directed that Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) be made fully functional and developed as model Panchayat Ghars to promote learning, innovation and best practices.

Reviewing performance under SBM-G, the Secretary took stock of Individual Household Latrines

(IHHLs), Community Sanitary Complexes, Community Compost Pits, Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs), Segregation Sheds, DEWATS and GOBARdhan Biogas Plants. He issued strict instructions to ACPs and Executive Engineers, stating that any negligence or delay in the completion of works would not be tolerated.

He informed that under the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2025-26, SBM-G has gained significant momentum in tendering sanitation assets. Against a total target of 9,505 SBM-G assets, tenders have been floated for 8,873 assets, achieving 93 per cent tendering coverage.

The Secretary directed that all IHHLs and Community Sanitary Complexes be completed within stipulated timelines and properly geo-tagged. He further instructed that targets under Community Compost Pits be achieved, and directed both Directors to personally conduct regular reviews to ensure strict compliance. He stressed that work on all other sanitation components must be expedited, with ACPs ensuring daily field-level monitoring.

Highlighting the national importance of SBM-G, the Secretary noted that the mission is reviewed at the highest levels. He made it

clear that lack of seriousness in implementation would not be accepted and asserted that accountability would be fixed, with visible improvements required within the next two weeks.

The Secretary also emphasised the need to accelerate the transition of Non-ODF Model villages to ODF Plus status by ensuring effective solid and liquid waste management, sustained toilet usage and visible cleanliness outcomes at the grassroots level. He directed districts to focus on lagging Panchayats, strengthen behaviour change communication and optimally utilise SBM assets to sustain ODF gains.

Underscoring the vision of SBM-G 3.0, the Secretary said the mission signifies a shift from asset creation to outcome-based sanitation governance, with emphasis on circular economy principles, sustainable waste processing solutions, community ownership, technological integration and robust operation and maintenance mechanisms for long-term sustainability.

Earlier, Director Panchayati Raj Sham Lal made a detailed presentation on RGSA and SBM-G, highlighting physical and financial progress, key achievements and district-wise challenges.



India summons Bangladesh High Commissioner over threats to Dhaka mission

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 18 : The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday summoned Bangladesh's High Commissioner to India, Riaz Hamidullah, to lodge a diplomatic protest over recent threats to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and inflammatory anti-India statements by Bangladeshi political leaders.

The MEA said India expects "the interim government to ensure the safety of Missions and Posts in Bangladesh in keeping with its diplomatic obligations."

Conveying India's strong concerns over the deteriorating security situation in Bangladesh, the High Commissioner was apprised of New Delhi's serious apprehensions, particularly regarding the activities of certain extremist elements that have announced plans to create a security situation around the Indian Mission in Dhaka.

India firmly rejected what it described as a false narrative being propagated by extremist groups in connection with recent developments in Bangladesh.

"It is unfortunate that the interim government has neither conducted a thorough investigation nor shared meaningful evidence with India regarding the incidents," the MEA



said.

Reiterating the close and friendly ties between the peoples of India and Bangladesh—rooted in the 1971 Liberation War and reinforced through sustained developmental cooperation and people-to-people exchanges—India underlined its commitment to peace and stability in Bangladesh. New Delhi said it has consistently advocated free, fair, inclusive and credible elections conducted in a peaceful environment.

"It is unfortunate that the interim government has neither conducted a thorough investigation nor shared meaningful evidence with India regarding the incidents," MEA said. India also stressed that it expects

the interim government in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of all diplomatic Missions and Posts in the country, in accordance with its international and diplomatic obligations.

The interim government, which took office after promising a short transition, has now been in power for over 15 months. Its rule has been marked by persistent violence, vigilante justice, and the re-emergence of Islamist groups previously contained through arrests and proscriptions.

Several leaders once jailed on terrorism-related charges have been released, and intelligence sources warn that they are now regrouping

for another possible bout of violence and bomb attacks of the kind South Asia once experienced.

Elections are slated for February 2026, but their credibility may be doubtful. The Awami League, the country's largest political force, has been barred from contesting.

Many of its leaders are imprisoned or in exile, largely in India. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which initially benefited from Hasina's downfall, has seen its popularity erode amid allegations of widespread extortion by its cadres. Jamaat-e-Islami, long ostracised for its wartime role, is now positioned to be a major electoral player.

A voter boycott proposed by Sheikh Hasina in one of her many speeches remains a distinct possibility.

The interim leadership appears particularly wary of the Awami League's enduring popularity among rural voters, women, and the poor. Against this backdrop, the summoning of India's envoy takes on added significance.

By framing Sheikh Hasina and her supporters as the primary sources of unrest, and by implicitly implicating New Delhi, the new rulers of Dhaka appear to be constructing a political alibi, a fall-back option in case elections falter or be indefinitely postponed. UNI

SC transfers suo motu RG Kar rape-murder case to Calcutta HC for monitoring compliance

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

New Delhi, Dec 17 : The Supreme Court on Wednesday transferred to the Calcutta High Court the suo motu proceedings initiated by it in the rape and murder of a woman doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata, for monitoring the implementation of the directions issued in the case.

A bench comprising Justice M M Sundresh and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma directed that the Calcutta High Court would hereafter oversee compliance with the orders passed by the Supreme Court while dealing with the matter.

"We deem it appropriate to refer the matter to a division bench of the Calcutta High Court, with a request to the Chief Justice to place the matter before an appropriate bench. The Registry is directed to transmit all records to the Calcutta High Court," the bench directed.

The court also directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to furnish copies of the status reports submitted before it to the parents of the victim.

The Supreme Court had taken suo motu cognisance of the incident in August 2024, which had triggered nationwide protests by doctors and medical associations demanding accountability and enhanced safety at medical workplaces.

During the proceedings, the court passed several directions relating to the investigation and broader issues concerning the safety and working conditions of medical professionals. On August 20, 2024, the court had flagged serious deficiencies in public hospitals, including the absence of resting



rooms for doctors on night duty, lack of separate duty rooms for men and women, excessively long duty hours without basic hygiene facilities, shortage of security personnel, inadequate toilets and poor transport facilities for doctors living away from hospitals. To address these systemic concerns, the Supreme Court constituted a ten-member National Task Force headed by Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, Director General Medical Services (Navy), to make recommendations on the safety, working conditions, and well-being of medical professionals. The court had also urged states not to take coercive action against protesting doctors and had sought periodic status reports on the progress of the investigation and compliance with its directions.

With the transfer of the suo motu case, the Calcutta High Court will now monitor the implementation of the Supreme Court's orders. The High Court had earlier transferred the investigation in the case to the CBI.

In January this year, a sessions court at Sealdah, Kolkata, sentenced the prime accused, Sanjoy Roy, to life imprisonment after convicting him under Sections 64 (rape), 66 (causing injury resulting in death of the rape victim), and 103(1) (murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. UNI

Rahul arrives in Berlin for 6-day visit to strengthen ties with Germany, diaspora

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 : Congress leader Rahul Gandhi landed at Berlin airport on Wednesday to commence a six-day visit to Germany, organized under the aegis of the Indian Overseas Congress (IOC).

Accompanied by IOC chairperson Sam Pitroda, Gandhi, who serves as the leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, will engage in a series of diplomatic and community events aimed at reinforcing connections with the global Indian diaspora and highlighting India's democratic and economic landscape internationally. The visit's highlight is a major interaction with the Indian diaspora scheduled for December 17 in Berlin, expected to unite IOC presidents from across Europe. Vikram Duhan, General Secretary of IOC UK, emphasized the visit's significance, stating it will provide a valuable platform for dialogue on India's global role and foster the exchange of ideas and opportunities with German legislators. In addition to diaspora engagement, Gandhi will hold discussions with senior German government ministers and legislators. These meetings will focus on shared democratic values, enhancing economic cooperation, and addressing social priorities, according to party sources.

The Congress describes the tour as a "strategic outreach" initiative designed to build international support.

However, the visit has sparked political controversy at home, as it coincides with the concluding week of the winter session of Parliament, ending on December 19. The BJP criticized the timing, with spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla dubbing Gandhi the "Leader of Paryatan" (leader of tourism). Congress leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Gaurav Gogoi, defended the trip, asserting that the leader of Opposition is fulfilling important international responsibilities and pointed out that Gandhi's parliamentary interventions have challenged the ruling party effectively. The Germany visit follows Gandhi's recent outreach efforts in the United States, United Kingdom, and Southeast Asia. By engaging with diaspora communities and European lawmakers, the Congress aims to broaden its ideological influence abroad and address Non-Resident Indians' concerns about India's political environment. During his trip, Gandhi shared on social media his visit to BMW Welt and the BMW Plant in Munich, describing it as an "incredible look at world-class manufacturing." He highlighted the TVS 450cc motorcycle, developed in partnership with BMW, as a proud example of Indian engineering. Gandhi underscored the importance of manufacturing for economic strength, lamenting its decline in India and calling for the creation of robust manufacturing ecosystems to accelerate growth and generate quality jobs at scale. UNI

India and Argentina sign ICAR-INTA work plan 2025-2027 to boost agricultural collaboration

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 : The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Argentina's National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) have formalised the ICAR-INTA Work Plan 2025-2027, a strategic initiative to strengthen bilateral cooperation in agricultural research, technology exchange, and capacity building.

Argentine Ambassador Mariano Caucino called the agreement a direct outcome of the historic summit between President Milei and PM Modi, emphasising the complementary strengths of the two economies.

The Work Plan was exchanged today by the Secretary of the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of ICAR, alongside the Ambassador of Argentina to India, marking a key

milestone in India-Argentina agricultural collaboration.

Argentine Ambassador Mariano Caucino said, "This important step is the result of the historic summit between President Milei and PM Modi during the Indian PM's visit to Argentina in July 2025." He highlighted the "high degree of complementarity between both economies" and credited the efforts of Agriculture Attaché Mariano Beheran since the opening of the Argentine agriculture office in Delhi in 2019.

The agreement outlines cooperation across areas including natural resource management, sustainable agronomy with zero tillage, mechanisation, micro-irrigation and fertigation, crop and animal biotechnology, livestock improvement, production technologies for temperate and tropical crops, digital agriculture, biosafety and phytosanitary



measures, and value chain development. Implementation will involve joint research, germplasm exchange, expert engagements, and structured training and study visits.

Planned study visits and training programmes will cover greenhouse vegetable production, floriculture, temperate fruits, post-

harvest physiology, functional food development, veterinary diagnostics, precision livestock farming, waste-to-wealth technologies, microbial feed enhancement, digital agriculture, and sanitary and phytosanitary systems. Germplasm exchanges will include soybean, sunflower, maize, blueberry, citrus, wild

papaya species, guava, and selected vegetable crops.

The partnership will also strengthen cooperation in oilseeds and pulses value chains, agricultural mechanisation—including zero-tillage, cotton harvesting machinery, and drones and horticulture value chain development, including infrastructure and planting material exchanges. In plant and animal health, the Work Plan envisions region-specific strategies for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) elimination and enhanced collaboration on locust surveillance and management through technical exchanges and best-practice sharing.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the India-Argentina scientific partnership, agreeing to annual monitoring and review to ensure effective implementation and progress. UNI

The West is playing with fire in Bangladesh

■ BY R K RAINA

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 : Bangladesh was created as a rejection of the political model that Pakistan represented. Its independence in 1971 affirmed that language, culture, and democratic choice could not be subordinated to religious ideology or military control. Bengali nationalism was not an abstract sentiment; it was a civilisational assertion forged through repression, neglect, and genocide.

That founding logic is now being tested again.

This time, however, the danger is not emerging in isolation. It is being enabled, and in some cases quietly legitimised, by Western governments in the name of political convenience.

The political rupture of 2024, which resulted in the removal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has been widely portrayed abroad as a correction to

democratic excesses. That framing ignores what followed on the ground. Radical Islamist groups, operating under the cover of student movements, moved swiftly to attack symbols of Bangladesh's liberation struggle. Statues and memorials of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were vandalised. These acts were not expressions of reformist politics. They were ideological assaults on the foundations of the Bangladeshi state.

Any honest assessment must place these developments in historical context. Pakistan's relationship with East Bengal was defined by contempt. From 1947 onward, political power and economic resources were systematically denied to Bengalis. The world watched this indifference during the Bhola cyclone of 1970, when hundreds of thousands died while relief was delayed and aid remained unfulfilled.

When Bengalis asserted their

democratic will through the ballot box, Pakistan responded with violence. Operation Searchlight, launched on March 25, 1971, was a calculated attempt to dismantle Bengali society.

The genocide that followed was not an accident of war but a conscious policy. Pakistan has never fully accounted for these crimes, nor has it settled outstanding financial and legal obligations to Bangladesh.

Yet today, Western capitals appear willing to treat Pakistan as a normal regional actor while encouraging Bangladesh to "move on" from its own history. This selective amnesia is dangerous.

Recent military and diplomatic engagement between Dhaka and Islamabad, including the docking of a Pakistani naval vessel at Chattogram for the first time since 1971, has taken place without any reckoning with the past. Western governments have responded with studied silence.

Kharge slams 'Political Vendetta' following Court ruling, reaffirms faith in Judiciary

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 : Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday launched a blistering attack on the central government, characterising the ongoing legal proceedings against the party's top leadership as a calculated "political vendetta."

Speaking to reporters following a significant court judgment, Kharge maintained that the legal challenges facing the Gandhi family are devoid of merit and designed specifically to harass political opponents.

In a latest ruling a Delhi court had refused to take cognisance of

the Enforcement Directorate's money laundering charge against senior leaders Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and five others in the National Herald case. Kharge emphasized that the lack of a First Information Report (FIR) in the initial stages of the proceedings proves the hollow nature of the allegations.

"They are doing this for political vendetta," Kharge stated. "This case is only to trouble the Gandhi family. There is no FIR in this case. Our slogan is 'Satyamev Jayate' (Truth alone triumphs), and we welcome the judgment in the case."

The Congress President's remarks come amidst a long-



standing legal battle involving high-ranking party members. While the latest and specific

judgment has offered a moment of reprieve or procedural victory for the party, Kharge was quick to pivot back to the broader narrative: that the ruling dispensation is using investigative agencies to stifle the opposition.

The case in question has been a flashpoint in Indian politics for several years. It centers on allegations of financial irregularities involving party-linked entities. While the government and investigative agencies have maintained that they are simply following the rule of law, the Congress party has consistently labeled the probe as "procedural tyranny."

Congress leaders have frequently pointed out that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) initiated investigations based on private complaints rather than a formal police FIR. The party alleges that the timing of summons and court filings often coincides with major elections or parliamentary sessions.

Kharge's defiant tone signals the party's strategy to turn legal hurdles into a rallying cry for "truth and justice." By invoking the national motto, "Satyamev Jayate", the Congress President sought to frame the legal victory, and the party's broader struggle, as a moral crusade against state overreach.

Delhi announces 50 pc Work-From-Home from Dec 18

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, DEC 17 : Delhi Labour Minister Kapil Mishra on Wednesday announced advisory for all government and private institutions in the national capital to ensure 50 pc work-from-home from December 18.

The directive will not apply to essential services, including hospitals, fire services, jail administration, public transport, power and water departments,



disaster management, and the environment department.

The advisory also stated that registered construction workers affected due to work suspension under GRAP-III and GRAP-IV will be provided Rs10,000 compensation by the Delhi government.

Meanwhile, violations of the newly issued orders will invite strict penal action under the provisions of the Environment Protection Act.

Earlier, the Delhi government directed schools across the city to switch to hybrid mode for students up to Classes 9 and 11 as pollution levels spiked in the city, following the CAQM advisory. While also announcing complete online classes for students upto class V.

The option to attend classes online has been left to students and parents, read the official order. Schools have been asked to immediately convey this information to parents. The order will remain in force until further instructions. Classes 10 and 12 will continue in offline mode as usual. UNI



Cameron Green Sets IPL Overseas Record

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BANGALORE: Australian allrounder Cameron Green has been bought by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for INR 25.20 crore (\$2.8 million approx.), making him the third-most expensive player sold at an IPL auction, and the most expensive overseas player ever.

KKR also bought the second-most expensive player at the IPL 2026 auction - Sri Lankan fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana for INR 18 crore (\$1.97 million approx.).

KKR, who began the auction with the largest purse of INR 64.3 crore, had to stave off competition for Green from Chennai Super Kings, who had the second-highest purse of INR 43.4 crore. The bidding, though, began with Mumbai Indians (MI), who had to drop out of the race quickly because they had a purse of only INR 2.75 crore. Rajasthan Royals, who had a purse of INR 16.05 crore, took the bid as far as INR 13.40 crore before exiting, at which point CSK joined the bidding against KKR.

Green's bid took more than ten minutes to complete, and he ranks behind Rishabh Pant (INR 27 crore) and Shreyas Iyer (INR 26.75 crore) on the list of most expensive IPL players. The most expensive overseas players before Green were Mitchell Starc (INR 24.75 crore) and Pat Cummins (INR 20.50

crore). Green, however, will get only INR 18 crore due to a maximum salary cap imposed by the IPL on overseas players at mini-auctions. The bid amount in excess of INR 18 crore (INR 7.2 crore) will go to the BCCI for player welfare.

Green first played the IPL in 2023, when MI bought him for INR 17.5 crore. He scored 452 runs at a strike rate of 160.28, and picked up six wickets. MI then traded Green to RCB a year later for the same price. He scored 255 runs for RCB at a strike rate of 143.25, and took ten wickets. Green did not register for the mega auction ahead of IPL 2025 because he was returning from a back injury.

Green was one of only two players sold from the first set of batters on Tuesday, along with South Africa batter David Miller, who went to Delhi Capitals at his base price of INR 2 crore. Jake-Fraser McGurk, Prithvi Shaw, Devon Conway and Sarfaraz Khan were unsold.

The lukewarm bidding continued into the second set of allrounders, with only two of seven players sold. Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) bought Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga at his base price of INR 2 crore. Venkatesh Iyer, who had been bought by KKR for INR 23.75 crore in the IPL 2025 auction, was sold to Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) for INR 7 crore. Liam Livingstone, Rachin Ravindra, Gus Atkinson, Wiaan Mulder and Deepak Hooda were unsold

in the first set of allrounders.

There was more action in the first set of wicketkeepers, with MI buying South Africa's Quinton de Kock, DC buying England's Ben Duckett, and KKR buying New Zealand's Finn Allen - all at their base prices. CSK, who began the auction with the second-largest purse, did not buy a player from the first three sets.

CSK did not bid for Pathirana, who they had released at a price of INR 13 crore after IPL 2025. The demand for Pathirana began with DC and LSG, and once the bid reached INR 15.6 crore, DC dropped out considering they had a purse of INR 17.8 crore. KKR entered the bidding and priced out LSG, who had a purse of INR 20.95 crore, at INR 18 crore. Having missed out on Pathirana, LSG immediately bought South African quick Anrich Nortje at his base price of INR 2 crore.

RCB's second buy at the auction was New Zealand fast bowler Jacob Duffy (INR 2 crore), who could slot in as back-up for Josh Hazlewood.

CSK did bid for legspinner Ravi Bishnoi, but stopped once the price reached INR 6 crore. RR and SRH then bid for Bishnoi, and he was eventually bought by RR for INR 7.2 crore. Akeal Hosein, the West Indies left-arm spinner, was eventually CSK's first buy at the auction, at his base price of INR 2 crore.



Adelaide Test Teams to Wear Black Armbands

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

ADELAIDE: Players from both Australia and England will wear black armbands at the third Ashes Test match at Adelaide Oval this week to commemorate the victims of Sunday's shooting at Sydney's Bondi Beach.

Fifteen people died and many others sustained injuries after gunmen opened fire on crowds gathered in Sydney's eastern suburbs to mark the first night of Hanukkah, the Jewish holiday.

Flags at Adelaide Oval will be flown at half-mast and a moment's silence will be held before the 'Welcome to Country' and national anthems on Wednesday before the first day's play. The Australian folk singer John Williamson will also per-



form his song 'True Blue' as a tribute to victims of the shooting.

Australia captain Pat Cummins, who lives at nearby Bronte Beach, said that he had been "horrified" to learn of the attacks on Sunday night.

"Like most other Aussies and people round the world, [I was] horrified watching on," Cummins said after training on Tuesday. "I'd just put the kids to bed and flicked the news on as that was coming through. Me and my wife were watching in disbelief."

"It does put things into a lot of perspective when you see things like that happen. And for everyone that it's affected, all our hearts go out to everyone. It's a horrible thing to see happen."

"It's a place that is just around the corner from where we live, and we take the kids there all the time. It hit home pretty hard. I really feel for the Bondi community, and Jewish community in particular. Seeing the scenes over the past couple of days has been pretty powerful as well. We'll wear armbands throughout the Test and commemorate the victims." Ben Stokes said that he had watched coverage of the attacks from England's team room in their Adelaide hotel, and that it was an "incredibly sad" day for Australia.

"What happened a couple of days ago was an awful thing to watch unfold," Stokes, England's captain, said. "We were sat in our team room and it came up on the news about what was happening. It was silence from everyone in there seeing that happen."

IPL 2026 to be held between March 26 and May 31

The IPL will kick off roughly three weeks after the T20 World Cup, and clash with the PSL

ESPNCRICINFO

AHMEDABAD: IPL 2026 will be held between March 26 and May 31, occupying the same window it has in recent years.

While the BCCI hasn't announced the full fixtures yet, the 19th edition of the IPL will kick off roughly three weeks after the conclusion of the men's T20 World Cup - scheduled from February 7 to March 8 in India and Sri Lanka - and run for just over two months. It also means that for the second year running, the IPL will clash with the PSL, which is scheduled to be held



between March 26 and May 3.

The IPL teams, who announced their list of retained and released

players in mid-November, are currently getting into the IPL auction on December 16 in Abu

Dhabi, where 369 players have been shortlisted to go under the hammer.

A total of 77 slots are available, including 31 for overseas players. Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) have the most vacancies, 13, followed by Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) with ten. After trades and retentions, KKR also have the biggest purse available: INR 64.30 crore (US\$7.1 million approx.). Chennai Super Kings (CSK) are next with INR 43.40 crore (US\$4.8 million approx.). The IPL 2025 final was won on June 3 by Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), who made it their first IPL title win with a six-run win over Punjab Kings (PBKS) in Ahmedabad.

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